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A NOTE TO READERS

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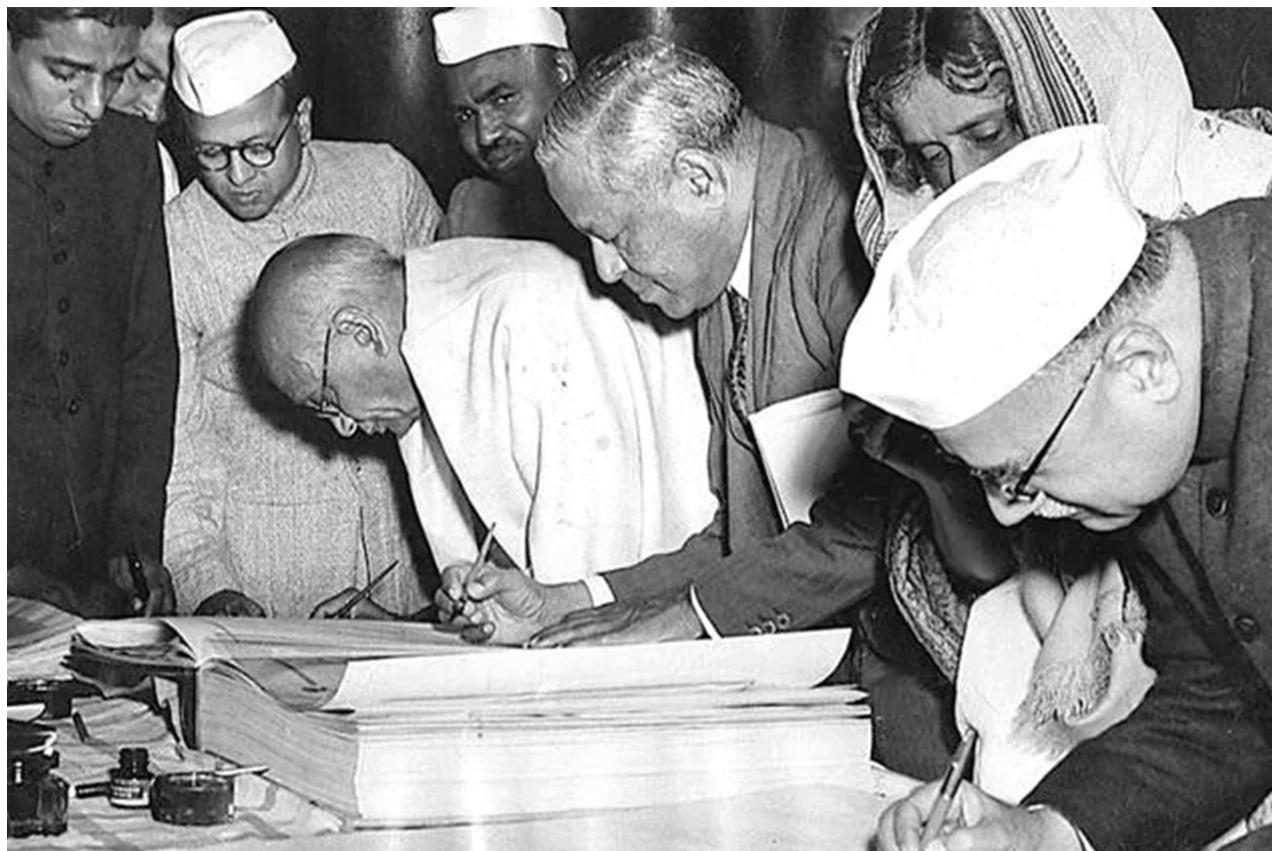
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Federalism – Where?

Dr T.H.Chowdary

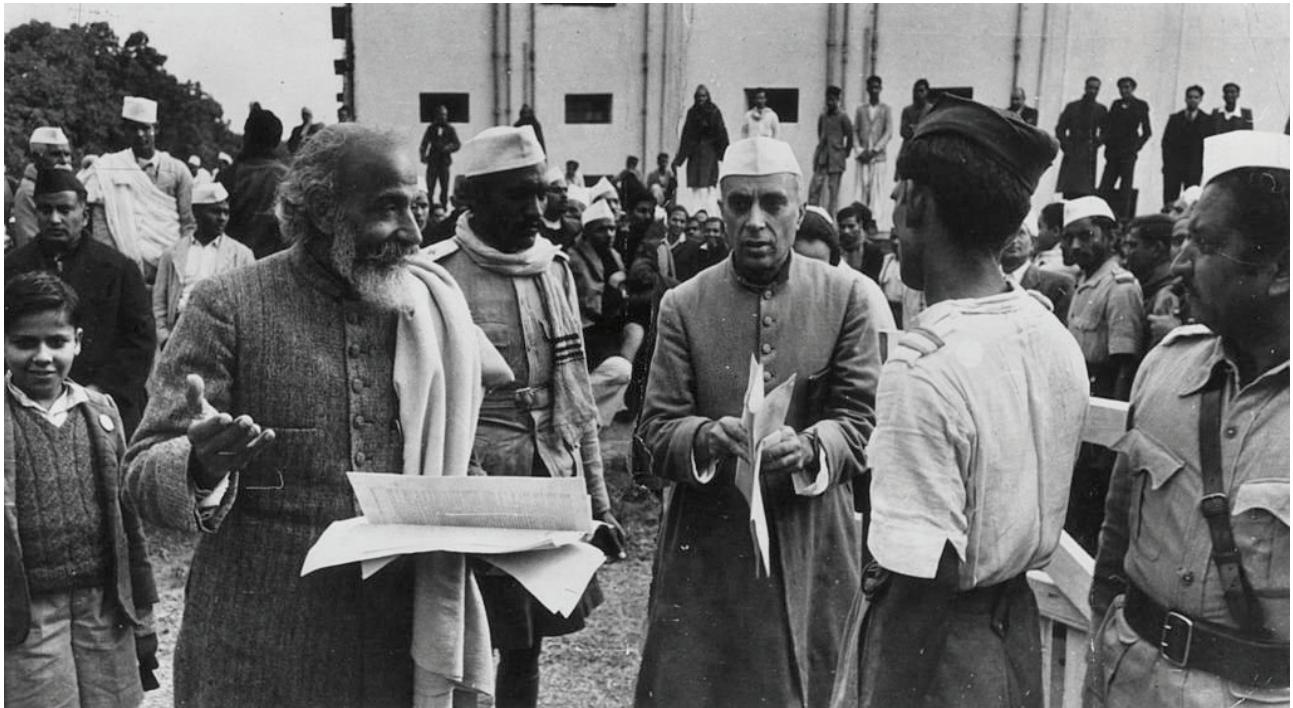


There are 395 Articles and 12 Schedules in the Constitution of India. In not one of them are words, federation, federalism or federation. Our Republic is a Union of States, and state is the word to describe the territories in the Union of India, that is Bharat. The word state in the constitution was coined to replace the words Presidencies, provinces and Commissionerates, terms used in the Government of India Act 1935 and earlier. Leaders of regional parties in their drive for personal (mostly dynastic) power are imputing federalism as the underlying basis of the Indian Republic. They want a weak Central government by a coalition of regional parties, with regional, dynastic casteist interests. Federalism was what the communally divisive Muslim League agreed instead of partition and Pakistan (March- May 1946).

2. The federalism idea involving weak Center with only three subjects, defence, foreign affairs and communication in the Central government and all the rest with the units (Provinces) and their groups, was what the Imperial Britain's Cabinet Mission "sold" to the Congress and Muslim League in March-June

1946 for transfer of power to Indians. Fortunately, the Muslim League repudiated it in favour of partition and Pakistan taking umbrage to Nehru's assertion that Constituent Assembly would decide what free India would be .

3. The Constituent Assembly convened in Nov 1946 in light of the Cabinet Mission Plan of a 3-tier Federal India - Provinces and Groups of Provinces and a Federation of them with limited powers to it. But partition insisted by Muslim League was agreed to by Congress as an evil lesser than federation with weak central government. The Post-partition the Constituent Assembly under the leadership and direction of the triumvirate of Nehru-Patel- Rajendra Prasad and Dr Ambedkar as the Chairman of Drafting Committee, finalized India's Constitution for India as a strong, indestructible Union (not federation) with a powerful Central government which in terms chiefly of Articles* – 3, 352, 356, 360 and 248, 250, 251, 254, 256 and 257 can over-ride the states. The troubled



history of Bharat from the 11th century to 1947 with foreign invasions, loot, cultural destruction and alien rule made our leaders to give us, not a weak federal state but a Union with strong Central government that will not allow Bharat to be disintegrated by regional satraps .

4. The regional parties under the leadership of dynasties and casteists are inventing and attributing to the Union, a federal character to serve their evil purpose of family/ clan / caste rule. Bharatiyas must strongly, decisively and incessantly denounce and reject the regional satraps' talk of federalism, federation and federal. The warnings of history and politics as beautifully perorated by Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee and Dr Rajendra Prasad , President of the Constituent Assembly on the concluding day 26 Nov 1949 of the Constituency must be forever etched in our memories and guide our policies. India is not a federation which can be dismembered or weakened by regional powers - hungry politicians but a strong Union, which can become even unitary under certain circumstances .

* Articles:

3 : Formation of States, alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States
352: Proclamation of Emergency
356: Provisions in Case of Failure of Constitutional Machinery In States - Governor's rule
(Section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935)

360: Provisions as to Financial Emergency
248: Residuary Powers of Legislation
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Essential Amendments to Our Constitution

Dr T.H.Chowdary



We may consider each generation as a distinct nation , with a right , by the will of the majority , to bind themselves but none to bind the succeeding generation more than the inhabitants of another country.

— Thomas Jefferson

The workability of a Constitution is not a matter of theory. It is a matter of sentiment. A Constitution like clothes must suit as well as please . If the Constitution does not please then, however perfect it may be it will not work. To have a Constitution which runs counter to the strong sentiments of a determined section is to court disaster if not to invite rebellion.

— Dr Ambedkar (P365, “Pakistan or Partition of India”)



“Article-39 altered when the Zamindari Abolition Act was thrown out by the Supreme Court. In this context he wrote to the Chief Ministers : “A Constitution must be held in respect, but if it ceases to represent or comes in the way of the spirit, of the age or the powerful urges of the people , then difficulties and conflicts arise. It is wise therefore we have not only stability and fixity of purpose but also a certain flexibility and playability in a Constitution”.

— Jawaharlal Nehru

India's Constitution adopted after nearly three years of labours from 1946 to Nov 1949 is the world's longest with 395 Articles and 12 Schedules. While the 235 year old US Constitution was so far amended 26 times, ours has been amended 103 times in 73 years. The mother of parliaments and democracy, England has no written Constitution. Centuries long conventions are cited as its Constitution. One particular feature of our Constitution is Part-IV which is titled "Directive Principles of State Policy" with 16 Articles (36 to 51A) laying down objectives like Uniform Civil Code (44); compulsory 8 years long free education to children ages 6 to 14 years (45); fundamental duties (51A); prohibition of slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle (48); living wage for workers (43); promotion of welfare of people (38) etc. These, unlike fundamental rights (Part-III) (Articles 12 to 35) are not justiciable unless enacted into laws.

2. A number of Articles in the Constitution are either impliedly or expressively, adversely discriminative against Hindus. Some matters like the necessity to stop run-away growth of population, treating interstate rivers as national resources to be equitably shared by all states, setting a sun-set date for reservations so that their benefits don't create new privileged hereditary classes, setting a definite limit on the proportion, as to which categories of the population qualify for special treatment as minorities, in which states, are some matters which should be introduced by way of amendments in to our Constitution . There is pressing need for following amendments.

3. Article-30 of the Constitution confers extraordinary rights and privileges to religious (and linguistic) minorities to establish and manage educational institutions of their choice. By an unfortunate judgment of the Supreme Court, this Article is being utilized by the religious (and linguistic) minorities to establish professional colleges for engineering, medicine, dentistry, management, computer applications etc. There is no limit to the number and type of colleges a minority can establish. None of these subjects have anything to do with religion or religious culture or that religious civilisation. The admission capacity for these institutions is not at all related to the population of the minorities or more importantly & relevantly, to those who are eligible for admission to these colleges. 70-80% of the seats are being sold to Hindus. The result is minority colleges are for money-making; minority managements are selling seats to Hindus. It is estimated that the Muslim

and Christian minority professional colleges in the two Telugu states alone are selling seats to make about Rs.500cr per year from Hindus. The monies are utilized to destroy Hinduism by conversion and by other aggressive activities. Governments have little control over the management of these institutions and selection and appointment of teachers and other staff. They are thus above the law.

Such a right is denied to Hindus . Hinduism is of several castes . Actually, every caste is a minority. Article-30 must be so amended as to confine educational institutions to which this Article refers, to be concerned only with religion and culture and language and history of these people and not for secular subjects like engineering, medicine, law, education etc. In the alternative, the same right and privilege must be given to Hindus also which should include Buddhists and Jains and every other sect.

4. Art -25 gives the right to profess, practise and propagate religion. Actually, all rights included in Articles - 25 to 30 ought to be to individuals but the rights are exercised by a group of people, call them minority or a religious group. The term propagate is interpreted to include convert also and so is being used by Christians and Muslims to decimate Hindus. Conversion is a full time business by Christian missions and churches and their NGOs with tens of thousands of full time paid propagandists. They receive money from several quarters of the world .They have targets. They have budgets and they have business plans. This cannot be said to be the freedom of an individual but is freedom to aggressive, proselytizing religious organizations to market religion and to gain converts just as any business gets customers.

There are advertisements, there are shows and talks and rallies and assemblies just like companies launch their products and propagandize their services. This has nothing to do with spirituality. It is plain and simple aggression on Hindus who don't believe in conversion. This one- way aggressive trade is obnoxious and amounts to war on Hindus. This article throws the lambs of Hindus as prey to the violent beasts of prey, violence-soaked semetic religions. Art-25 should be amended to restrict the freedom of religion to profess and practise and not to propagate. Propagation by multi -national conversion (MNC) enterprises is aggression on

Hindus and imperils their existence. Opposition to this Article was eloquently and poignantly voiced by prominent Members of the Constituent Assembly, Sri Loknath Misra and Prof. K.T.Shah while speaking on this provision, Sri Loknath Misra, an eminent parliamentarian and scholar observed, "...to my mind article 19 (which became Art-25 in the final version of the constitution) is a Charter for Hindu enslavement. I do really feel that this is the most disgraceful article, the blackest part of the draft constitution. I beg to submit that I have considered and studied all the constitutional precedents and have not found anywhere, any mention of the word propaganda (propagate) as a fundamental right relating to religions...propagation of religion brought India into this unfortunate state and India had to be divided into Pakistan and India. If Islam had not come to impose its will on this land, India would have been a perfectly secular state and a homogeneous state. ...if you accept religion, you must accept Hinduism as it is practised by an overwhelming majority of the people of India...."

Prof K T Shah was another eminent member of the Constituent Assembly. He too was opposed to have this fundamental right to propagate religion put in our constitution. While opposing this provision, he moved an amendment which ran, " provided that no propaganda in favour of any one religion which is calculated to result in change of faith by the individual affected shall be allowed in any schools or colleges or other educational institutions; in any hospital or asylum or in any other place or institution where persons of a tender age or of unsound mind or body are eligible to be exposed to undue influence from their teachers, nurses or physicians, keepers or guardian or any other person set in authority above them and which is maintained fully or partially from public revenues or is in any way aided or protected by the government of the Union or of any state or public authority therein".

The word propagate must be removed from Article 25.

5. Article 26 is about Freedom to Manage Religious Affairs subject to public order, morality and health. Every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right

- (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes.
- (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion
- (c) To own and acquire movable and immovable property
- (d) To administer such property in accordance with law

In compliance with this article the places of worship of Muslims' mosques and churches of Christians are left free to be established, managed and administered by organizations of respective religions. But the temples of Hindus in India, especially in South India are managed and administered by Trust Boards appointed by the state governments and Endowment departments of the states. This is a gross adverse discrimination against Hindus. The members of the Trust Boards are changed every time a different party comes to power in the state. Financiers of the winning party, party men not accommodated as ministers or Directors and Chairmen of state-owned corporations are accommodated as members of the Trust Boards. The Endowment Department compromises of any government servant, whether he is a Christian or a Muslim or a pseudo-Hindu (that is, who produce a false certificate as SC).

The resources financial and other, of the temples are not used for the propagation and defense of Hinduism against its predators that is, Islam and Christianity. They are also not used to establish and maintain schools and hospitals to render service to people; other religious bodies establish them and service through them gain converts. It is therefore necessary that this Article should expressly state that the places of worship and their assets and incomes should not be managed and administered by government. A law should be made prohibiting state governments from managing and administering the places of worship of all religions and their denominational sects. The Supreme Court may be approached to rule that all state governments should disengage themselves from managing and administering Hindus' places of worship.

6. Article 27 is about Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.

During the rule of imperialist, colonial Muslim rule in parts of India a tax, Zexia was imposed on Hindus who did not convert to Islam. The Union and Several state governments are having Minority Welfare Departments . There are Minority Finance Corporations and minority welfare departments to these, from the general budget allocations are made and those funds are utilized for subsidizing Muslims' pilgrimage Haj to Mecca, construction of mosques and Haj Houses; subsidies to Christian's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and construction of churches .

Minority welfare departments' budget funds are spent specifically to the advantage of Muslims and Christians. This is indirect taxation of Hindus as the largest contribution to State and Union governments funds comes from Hindus. A PIL was moved in the Supreme Court to stop the spending of budgeted tax and debt revenues specifically for the religious groups Islam and Christianity. It was not successful. This is indirect subversion of the Constitution. Party governments indulge in this practice purely for garnering minority votes. This Article should be amended to the clear effect that budgeted funds of Union or State government should not be utilized for promoting religious activities of minorities like subsidies to pilgrimage, construction of mosque, Haj Houses and churches and so on.

7. Article 28 is about freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions . Because of this Article, in schools run by governments or aided by them are not giving any instruction about religions and their tenets / philosophies and this affects the bulk of Hindus. Hinduism is not a religion in the sense that the exclusivist Christianity and Islam are . Its basis is dharma. There is absolute freedom for worshiping any god or goddess are not at all and there is no institution to dictate how to worship etc. It is pure morality and ethics.

These are expounded in the contents of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagawata, Upanishads etc. Even during the British rule, in government schools there used to be in the language text book stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagawata. This was to inculcate moral, ethical and dharmic behaviour and duties and responsibilities. In the schools run by Muslim and Christian organisations their

scriptures Koran and Bible lessons are given. These two Abrahamic religions are opposed to one another and also to Hindu Dharma and are competing to convert people of other faith, especially as they are numerous . The Hindus going to government schools are left with no instruction deriving from the sources Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagawata which explain dharma .

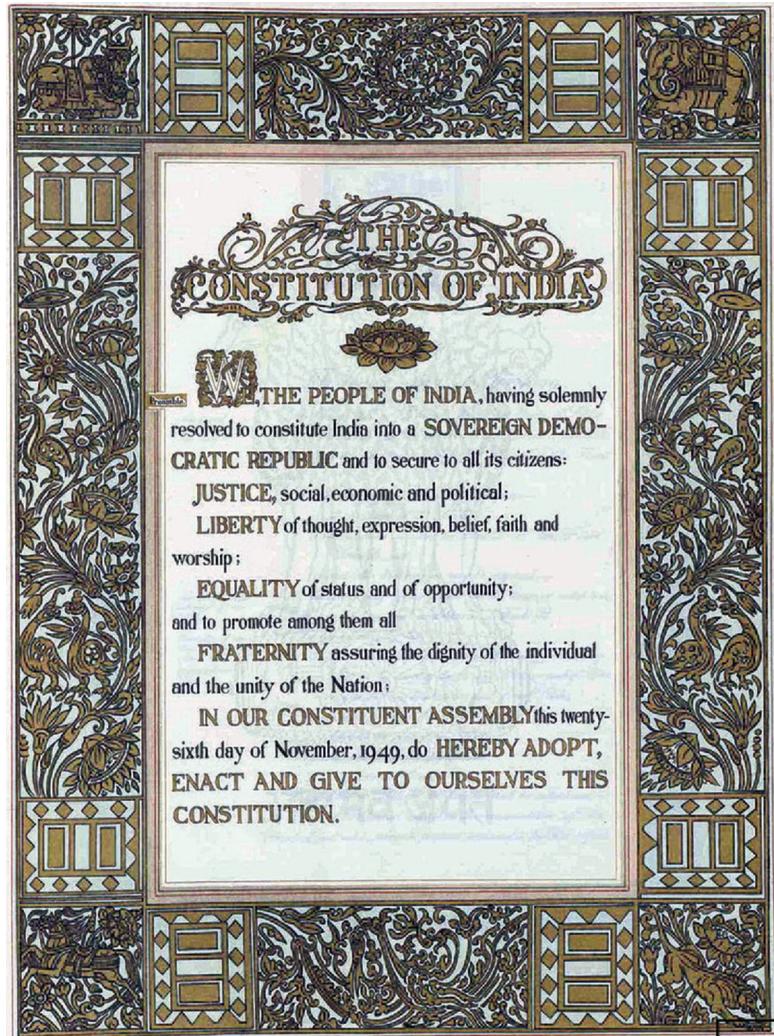
This Article-28 must be suitably amended so that even in government schools Hindu dharma exposition instruction can be given.

The amendment should also provide for the right of the State (Union Government) to delete all passages in the scriptures of every religion which promote hatred and intolerance for other religions, faiths, beliefs and traditions.

8. Article 51A of the Directive Principles lays down Fundamental Duties . The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes duties. 51A should be amended to include the duty of every citizen to have only limited families for which the State will, from time to time depending upon its economic status can alter the size of the family (as in China).

9. In the Preamble, two words "socialist and secular" were smuggled during the Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency (1975-77) . Socialism has no definition even in the communist states which implement dictatorship of the proletariat . Yet their system was called socialist system. One- party ruled China talks of socialism with Chinese characteristics. So the word socialism is like a hat which is worn by several people and worn out and shapeless . It defies definition.

Secularism is a western concept, according to which States should make no laws which promote or penalize any religion or laws derived from religious injunctions. The Constituent Assembly debated about this issue on April 3, 1948 and decided the principle of secularism in the following terms: "Whereas it is essential for the proper functioning of democracy and the growth of national unity and solidarity that communalism should be eliminated from Indian life, this assembly is of opinion that no communal organisation which by its constitution or by the exercise of discretionary power vested in any



of its officers and organs, admits to, or excludes from, its membership persons on grounds of religion, race and caste , or any of them , should be permitted to engage in any activities other than those essential for the bonafied religious , cultural , social and educational needs of the community and that all steps legislative and administrative necessary to prevent such activities should be taken".

(Page- 206; Pilgrimage to Freedom, Vol-1 by K.M. Munshi, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan publication)

The Constituent Assembly very wisely decided not to include either socialism or secularism in the preamble. These were introduced under the influence of communists on Indira Gandhi who sought their support in her struggle to defeat and decimate the official Congress presided over by Nijalingappa in 1969. Another gift that Indira Gandhi gave to the communists was the Jawaharlal Nehru University which has by now become a Marxist madrasa.

10. Finally we may recall the Bhagawadgita's words on change:

vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya
navani grhnati naro 'parani
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany
anyani samyati navani dehi

- BG 2.22

(As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.)

Our constitution will take a new vigorous life with every amendment to alter, add or remove .

Ambedkar on Mopla Atrocities against Hindus and Gandhi's Attitude



What is the outcome when a twisted narrative about certain genocide is portrayed? The truth gets hidden and the perpetrators glorified! This is the case with the Mopla genocide of Hindus that took place in the year 1921. Location: Mopla (also called Moplah), Malabar in Kerala. What started in support of the Khilafat movement and resistance against the British ended up in massacre of thousands of Hindus! Thousands were forcefully converted, Hindu women raped, temples destroyed, and properties of Hindus destroyed and looted by the Muslims. But neither history textbooks nor mainstream narratives describe this brutal atrocity against the Hindus of Mopla.

The Khilafat movement, a pan-Islamist protest launched in India, had nothing to do with the freedom struggle. It was a protest to restore the caliph of the Ottoman Caliphate. But Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi supported the Khilafat Movement, which later led to partition of the country and suffering of Hindus.

Dr BR Ambedkar in his book *Pakistan of Partition of India*, first published in December 1940 by Thacker & Co Ltd., has described in detail about the atrocities in Mopla against Hindus and on Gandhi's attitude. Here are excerpts from the book

Mr. Gandhi has been very punctilious in the matter of condemning any and every act of violence and has forced the Congress, much against its will to condemn it. But Mr. Gandhi has never protested against such murders. Not only have the Musalmans not condemned these outrages but even Mr. Gandhi has never called upon the leading Muslims to condemn them. He has kept silent over them. Such an attitude can be explained only on the ground that Mr. Gandhi was anxious to preserve Hindu-Moslem unity and did not mind the murders of a few Hindus, if it could be achieved by sacrificing their lives.

This attitude to excuse the Muslims any wrong, lest it should injure the cause of unity, is well illustrated by what Mr. Gandhi had to say in the matter of the Mopla riots.

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This attitude to excuse the Muslims any wrong, lest it should injure the cause of unity, is well illustrated by what Mr. Gandhi had to say in the matter of the Mopla riots.

The blood-curdling atrocities committed by the Moplas in Malabar against the Hindus were indescribable. All over Southern India, a wave of horrified feeling had spread among the Hindus of every shade of opinion; which was intensified when certain Khilafat leaders were so misguided as to pass resolutions of "congratulations to the Moplas on the brave fight they were conducting for the sake of religion". Any person could have said that this was too heavy a price for Hindu-Moslem unity. But Mr. Gandhi was so much obsessed by the necessity of establishing Hindu-Moslem unity that he was prepared to make light of the doings of the Moplas and the Khilafatists who were congratulating them. He spoke of the Moplas as the "brave God-fearing Moplas who were fighting for what they consider as religion and in a manner which they consider as religious". Speaking of the Muslim silence over the Mopla atrocities, Mr. Gandhi told the Hindus,

The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruptions. A verbal disapproval by the Mussalmans of Mopla madness is no test of Musselman friendship. The Mussalmans must naturally feel the shame and humiliation of the Mopla conduct about forcible conversions and looting, and they must work away so silently and effectively that such a thing might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them. My belief is that the Hindus as a body have received the Mopla madness with equanimity and that the cultured Mussalmans are sincerely sorry of the Mopla's perversion of the teaching of the Prophet".

The Resolution passed by the Working Committee

of the Congress on the Mopla atrocities shows how careful the Congress was not to hurt the feelings of the Musalmans.

The Working Committee places on record its sense of deep regret over the deeds of violence done by Moplas in certain areas of Malabar, these deeds being evidence of the fact that there are still people in India who have not understood the message of the Congress and the Central Khilafat Committee, and calls upon every Congress and Khilafat worker to spread the said message of non-violence even under the gravest provocation throughout the length and breadth of India."

Whilst, however, condemning violence on the part of the Moplas, the Working Committee desires it to be known that the evidence in its possession shows that provocation beyond endurance was given to the Moplas and that the reports published by and on behalf of the Government have given a one-sided and highly exaggerated account of the wrongs done by the Moplas and an understatement of the needless destruction of life resorted to by the Government in the name of peace and order.

The Working Committee regrets to find that there have been instances of so-called forcible conversion by some fanatics among the Moplas, but warns the public against believing in the Government and inspired versions.....

The resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Congress completely twisted the details of the Mopla atrocities against Hindus. It mentioned only three cases of forcible conversion. To quote from BR Ambedkar's book, In reply to a question in the Central Legislature (Debates 16th January 1922) Sir William Vincent replied "The Madras Government report that the number of forcible conversions probably runs to thousands but that for obvious reasons it will never be possible to obtain anything like an accurate estimate".

Several 'instances of Muslim intransigence, over which Mr. Gandhi kept mum are recorded by Swami Shradhanand in his weekly journal called the 'Liberator'. Swami Shradhanand wrote on the 26th August 1926 in this journal on Mopla genocide and Gandhi's indifference thus,

"The first warning was sounded when the question of

condemning the Moplas for their atrocities on Hindus came up in the Subjects Committee. The original resolution condemned the Moplas wholesale for the killing of Hindus and burning of Hindu homes and the forcible conversion to Islam. The Hindu members themselves proposed amendments till it was reduced to condemning only certain individuals who had been guilty of the above crimes. But some of the Moslem leaders could not bear this even. Maulana Fakir and other Maulanas, of course, opposed the resolution and there was no wonder. But I was surprised, an out-and-out Nationalist like Maulana Hasrat Mohani opposed the resolution on the ground that the Mopla country no longer remained Dar-ul-Aman but became Dar-ul-Harab and as they suspected the Hindus of collusion with the British enemies of the Moplas. Therefore, the Moplas were right in presenting the Quoran or sword to the Hindus. And if the Hindus became Mussalmans to save themselves from death, it was a voluntary change of faith and not forcible conversion — Well, even the harmless resolution condemning some of the Moplas was not unanimously passed but had to be accepted by a majority of votes only. There were other indications also, showing that the Musalmans considered the Congress to be existing on their sufferance and if there was the least attempt to ignore their idiosyncrasies the superficial unity would be scrapped asunder."

What was the Mopla Rebellion? In BR Ambedkar's words, as described in the same book quoted above,

Beginning with the year 1920 there occurred in that year in Malabar what is known as the Mopla Rebellion. It was the result of the agitation carried out by two Muslim organizations, the Khuddam-i-Kaba (servants of the Mecca Shrine) and the Central Khilafat Committee. Agitators actually preached the doctrine that India under the British Government was Dar-ul-Harab and that the Muslims must fight against it and if they could not, they must carry out the alternative principle of Hijrat. The Moplas were suddenly carried off their feet by this agitation. The outbreak was essentially a rebellion against the British Government. The aim was to establish the kingdom of Islam by overthrowing the British Government. Knives, swords and spears were secretly manufactured, bands of desperadoes collected for an attack on British authority. On 20th August a severe encounter took place between the Moplas and the British forces at

Pirunangdi. Roads were blocked, telegraph lines cut, and the railway destroyed in a number of places. As soon as the administration had been paralysed, the Moplas declared that Swaraj had been established. A certain Ali Musaliar was proclaimed Raja, Khilafat flags were flown, and Ernad and Walluranad were declared Khilafat Kingdoms. As a rebellion against the British Government it was quite understandable. But what baffled most was the treatment accorded by the Moplas to the Hindus of Malabar. The Hindus were visited by a dire fate at the hands of the Moplas. Massacres, forcible conversions, desecration of temples, foul outrages upon women, such as ripping open pregnant women, pillage, arson and destruction—in short, all the accompaniments of brutal and unrestrained barbarism, were perpetrated freely by the Moplas upon the Hindus until such time as troops could be hurried to the task of restoring order through a difficult and extensive tract of the country. This was not a Hindu-Moslem riot. This was just a Bartholomew. The number of Hindus who were killed, wounded or converted, is not known. But the number must have been enormous.

To quote further from BR Ambedkar's book,

Malabar has taught us what Islamic rule still means, and we do not want to see another specimen of the Khilafat Raj in India. How much sympathy with the Moplas is felt by Muslims outside Malabar has been proved by the defence raised for them by their fellow believers, and by Mr. Gandhi himself, who stated that they had acted as they believed that religion taught them to act. I fear that that is true; but there is no place in a civilised land for people who believe that their religion teaches them to murder, rob, rape, burn, or drive away out of the country those who refuse to apostatise from their ancestral faiths, except in its schools, under surveillance, or in its goals.

Extracts from Pakistan of Partition of India by Dr BR Ambedkar.

Philosophical Systems Of India

Dr Pingali Gopal

In the first part of a 5-part series, Dr Pingali Gopal introduces the ideas of the great Indian philosophical systems to the uninitiated.

Western Philosophers equate philosophy with only western thought which, puts philosophy between theology and science, and in turn, is either ignorant or dismissive of Indian thought.

Indian philosophy (or Darshanas) does not have an extreme reverence for science and because of the biases of the West, and resulatantly has disappeared from popular discourses; being termed 'religions' and hence lacking any validity in a 'secular' world.

Dr Gopal delves further into classification of Indian systems as orthodox and non-orthodox on the acceptance or rejection respectively of the Vedas as a reliable authority, and uncovers depths of Jainism, Buddhism, Samkhya, Charavaka and Nyaya-Vaisheshika philosophies for the uninitiated.

Further installments of this series will foray into the other orthodox and non-orthodox branches of Indian philosophical systems.

INTRODUCTION

This 5-part series aims to introduce the ideas of the great Indian philosophical systems to the uninitiated. The author claims no expertise or primary scholarship in the subject matter but attempts to disseminate some of the readings he has had in a summary form to some of the curious but ignorant. The books of Ramakrishna Puligandla (Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy), Karl Potter (Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies) and Chittaranjan Naik (Natural Realism and the Contact Theory of Perception) form the core basis of these essays. Hopefully, this should stimulate the readers to explore further and understand how rich and brilliant the Indian systems are and how they significantly compare and contrast with western philosophies in dealing with basic existential questions.

A strictly materialistic or 'scientific' view of the process of perception has caused deep troubles for the western philosophical world to date. Indian thinkers and philosophers had a different and perhaps a better understanding of the process of perception which they covered in their treatises almost a thousand years back. It is the most unfortunate debacle of our education systems after independence, a continuation of the colonial legacy, that they ignored teaching the growing generations the richness, depth, antiquity, and sophistication of Indian philosophy.

Philosophy deals with the most engaging questions for humanity: the purpose of life and Universe; reality status of the world; the presence and role of God; the matter-mind relation; and so on. Philosophers equate philosophy with only western thought which, in turn, is either ignorant or dismissive of Indian thought. This is surprising, because any person, irrespective of time and place, can have philosophical insights applicable to the whole of humanity. Thinking about some basic questions concerning humans cannot be the sole prerogative of a narrow group of people (mainly the White Europeans of the West) looking only through certain lenses (either Christian theological or its social sciences which is many times a secularized theology) developed in their cultural milieu.

The West puts philosophy between theology and science. As Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) says (History of Western Philosophy), like theology, it speculates on matters of indefinite knowledge; like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to the authority of a tradition. The separation of theology and philosophy did not happen in Europe until the Reformation (16th century CE). When we accuse Indian philosophy of being 'religion,' it is an application of a post-Reformation prejudice (religion – a matter of faith; philosophy – for self-reflection or critique but nothing about God or the soul). Hegel (1770-1831), the German philosopher originated this prejudice and largely fashioned the Western image of

India. As Adluri and Bagchee say (The Nay Science), the standard themes were: India only developed an abstract Absolute; it lacks a historical sense; it does not know of concrete individuality; and so on. Once Hegel sent Indian systems to departments of Religion and Indology, Philosophy never reclaimed it.

Indic philosophy has an overriding concern for its 'soteriological' power; an insight leading to intense individual transformation from bondage to freedom.

There is no sacrifice to reason and experience, but characteristically, Indian philosophy (or Darshanas) does not have an extreme reverence for science. Indian Darshanas, unfortunately, disappeared from popular discourses because its paradigms seemed absurd to the dominant Western discourses.

Additionally, western universities (especially German) aggressively pushed Indian philosophical systems as 'religions' and hence lacking any validity in a 'secular' world.

INDIC PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS: BASIC FRAMEWORK AND THE ROLE OF PRAMANAS

Each of the four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva), the earliest source of Indian thought, consist of four parts – Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads; the first three related to rituals and the last to philosophical speculations. They are either successive stages of Vedic literature or suggest parallel ideas. In the Brahmanas portion, ideas of monism start coming when a single supreme principle of both an immanent and transcendent power through all gods, individual souls, and nature takes hold. The Upanishadic teaching (the Vedanta portion or the 'end of Vedas') crystallises the notion of absolute monism which calls the Brahman as the all comprehensive only reality, the ultimate cosmic principle, the source and destination of the whole universe, and accounting for individual selves too as Atman.

The core classification of Indian systems as orthodox and non-orthodox is on the acceptance or rejection respectively of the Vedas as a reliable authority. The non-orthodox systems are Charvaka (materialism), Buddhism, and Jainism. The orthodox systems include the six systems called Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Mimansa, and Vedanta. The orthodox

schools come in pairs; broadly, the first pertains to practice, the second element to theory: Yoga-Samkhya; Nyaya-Vaisesika; and Mimansa-Vedanta.

Any knowledge must have certain 'means' of acquiring it. Pramana (proof or a valid 'means of true knowledge') plays an important role in Indian philosophical traditions. Ancient texts identify six pramanas whose variable acceptance and rejection form a basis for classifying the thought systems. These are:

1. *Perception or direct sensory experience (pratyaksha)*
2. *Inference (anumana)*
3. *Testimony of reliable authorities (sabda)*
4. *Comparison and analogy (upamana)*
5. *Postulation and derivation from circumstances (arthapatti)*
6. *Non-perceptive negative proof (anupalabdhi).*

Materialism (Lokayata or Charvaka) holds only perception as a valid pramana; Buddhism: perception and inference; and Jainism: perception, inference, and testimony. Mimamsa and Advaita Vedanta hold all six as useful means to knowledge.

Apart from materialism, both non-orthodox and orthodox schools have certain core ideas of commonality. Most important is that explanation of reality should not sacrifice reasoning and experience. Philosophy, never a dry intellectual exercise, carries a soteriological power – the power of intense individual transformation from ignorance and bondage to freedom and wisdom. There is no original sin but original ignorance. In all systems (except Charvakism), Karma is a central doctrine of cause and effect at the levels of body, mind, and intellect. Whatever one does, it has consequences, if not in this birth, then in a future birth. Karma thus intricately links to the idea of reincarnation in all systems.

Moksha, a common theme for all, is the final state of enlightenment with no further births, in stark contrast to western focus for an eternal life. Almost all Indian philosophies accept perfect happiness as a state of no further births.



The practical aspects of Yoga and meditation are acceptable routes in all systems to reach the state of liberation. All stress the inability of senses or intellect to understand reality. Reality is an intuitive, non-perceptual, and non-conceptual experience. All are initially pessimistic in that they speak of ignorance and misery, but ultimately become optimistic as they give immense hope in gaining the state of eternal happiness. All focus on individual effort, if necessary, across many births to liberate from ignorance. The role of a teacher or books is only as a guide on the path, but finally, the individual's effort is responsible for one's own moksha, achievable in the present life.

The goal of human life in Indic philosophies firmly remains moksha or enlightenment. The journey starts from an intellectual apprehension of this goal to finally attain moksha through various routes. This is the basic framework of Indian Darshanas. The differences mainly are in the nature of the routes taken to reach there. The multiple routes are all valid like 'various rivers merging into one ocean.'

The distinguishing feature of the varied paths is 'an indifference to differences' with each taking its view as the valid one ('I am true, but you are not false'). The concept of truth stays robust in Indian

traditions. There have been debates, interactions, and assimilation of ideas from across philosophies giving a richness and diversity of thought without fear of persecution. Religious clashes of the European world based on 'truth values' (I am true and you are false) are almost unknown in India. 'Philosophy is dead,' declared scientist Stephen Hawking. In the Indic context, it is relevant perennially ending only with total human freedom.

TRADITIONAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES ARE DARSHANAS, NOT SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHIES

Indian Philosophy often gets the label of 'speculative philosophy.' Unlike in science, wherein the scientific proposition has a criterion of physical verifiability, philosophy in the West had a different criterion. It is for this reason that philosophy earned a notoriously bad name in the early years of the twentieth century when the entire field of metaphysics became 'nonsense.' The attack against philosophy came from the 'Analytical Philosophers.' Hence, in the absence of either empirically verifiable propositions or derivation out of already defined terms, metaphysical statements became meaningless.

Since metaphysics, philosophy, ethics, religion, and aesthetics are all of this nature, the only task that

remained for philosophy was that of clarification and analysis. They concluded that the propositions of philosophy are linguistic, not factual, and philosophy was a department of logic. Based on such assertions, Analytical Philosophy swept aside two millennia of lofty human thought into the dustbin of 'emotive' thinking. Western philosophy had failed to provide a sound basis for epistemology (theory of knowledge) and it became a complex maze of verbiage that ultimately led to the discrediting of everything metaphysical and of philosophy herself, says Chittaranjan Naik (Apaurusheyatva of the Vedas).

In traditional Indian Philosophy, assertions about the objects of the world ground either in perception or in inference. Hence, there is no scope for these assertions to stray into speculative thought. If they do stray, it is only due to the incorrect application of the pramanas and not due to the nature of the philosophy itself. And when it comes to assertions about things that lie beyond the range of the senses, the assertions ground in Scriptural sentences (Shabda) and in inferences that depend entirely on these scriptural sentences. If they do stray here too, it is again due to an incorrect understanding of the scriptural sentences or the inferences drawn from them. There is a lot of misconception about Indian Philosophy that comes from modern authors, both Indian as well as Western.

Traditional Indian Darshanas are not something derived from basic principles to finally arrive at a conclusion. As Naik says: A Darshana is a Single Vision in which all its elements including epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, the practice, and the fruits of sadhana are like various organs that form a single integral whole. Each of the traditional philosophies or Darshanas is eternal and is part of the Vedic structure. That is why they constitute one of the fourteen branches of learning (vidhyasthanas) known as Chaturdasa Vidyas. 'Darshana' strictly is not synonymous with 'philosophy.' However, to avoid confusion and when seen as intellectual activity contemplating the world around us, one can broadly consider them as equivalent terms.

NON-VEDIC SCHOOLS

Charvakism or Lokayata: Materialism

Sage Charvak's ancient Indian tradition, pre-Buddhist and post-Upanishadic, are known mainly from

its criticism in later works. For a materialist, only pratyaksha (perception) is the single valid criteria for knowledge. The major criticism against materialism is that despite rejecting inference, implying rejecting generalizations, their own practice in dealing with the world (a generalization that 'perception and only perception' is reliable) contradicts that stand. For them, God, souls, heaven, hell, and immortality are non-existent. Matter is the only reality and the world forms by a combination of primordial elements- earth, air, fire, and water; it rejects akasa (ether) as an element. Consciousness is secondary to matter.

Nature is enough to explain creation, sustenance, and destruction. Death is the final annihilation with no further births. Of the four Purusharthas, the ends of human life – dharma (right conduct in the broadest sense), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation), only the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment of possessions remain sensible ends to life.

Importantly, Charvakism or Lokayata is not the crude hedonism we tend to associate with the materialists. There were certain ethics in that pleasure should not be at the cost of pain and misery. It was also altruistic. They recognized the need for society, law, and order and certainly did not advocate an anarchic society based on an unbridled catering to the senses. The philosophy tempered with self-discipline, intelligence, refined taste, and a genuine capacity for friendship, says Ramakrishna Puligundla (Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy). Amazingly, in Indian society, Charvaks since antiquity had no issues of persecution by the non-Charvaks of any kind.

Jainism

Prince Vardhaman (540 BCE- 468 BCE), twenty-fourth in the line of perfect souls (Tirthamkaras), popularised Jainism and was not its founder. Unlike Buddhism, Jainism stayed in India where it is still a thriving tradition. There are minor doctrinal differences between the two main sects of Jains – the Svetambaras and the Digambaras. The seven principles of Jainism are: Jiva (soul), Ajiva (matter), Asrava (movement of Karma), Bandha (bondage), Samvara (karma-check), Nirjara (falling off Karma), and Moksa (liberation). Jainism is dualistic-pluralism. The two distinct categories of substances- animate (jivas or souls) and inanimate (ajivas or non-souls),

make up for its dualism. Pluralism is the infinite number of substances.

The substance (dravya) has either 'essential' gunas (eternal and unchanging) or 'accidental' paryayas (allowing for impermanence). Hence, both change and permanence are real features of all existence. For example, the 'soul' in Jain conception has the essential feature of consciousness and the accidental feature of pain and pleasure. All substances (souls, matter, space, dharma, adharma, and so on) except Time (kala) extend into space. Time is the only ajiva which is infinite and all-pervasive where all things and changes take place. The universe has no beginning or end; it is an endless cycle of creation and destruction. Souls grade on the sense organs they possess. Plants have only touch and are the lowest; the soul of man has six, including the mind, and is most evolved. The whole universe is thus throbbing with souls. Jiva, the eternal substance with the essential properties of consciousness and knowledge, is atomic and capable of change in magnitude. The sense organs and material body, attaching as karmic particles, are obstacles for the soul (Jiva) to gain primordial omniscience. The goal of life is to remove the limitations of matter and reach the state of pure, perfect, and all-encompassing knowledge. Jainism upholds karma, rebirth, and transmigration of souls. Any soul can achieve liberation by self-effort, discipline, prayer, worship, austerity, simple life, extreme non-violence, compassion, and truthfulness. Jainism rejects God as a creator believing nature is enough to account for the universe. Jainism rejects both the unchanging Brahman of Upanishads or the 'absolute change' devoid of anything permanent (Buddhism).

Buddhism

BUDDHISM

HINAYANA
(PALI)

MAHAYANA
(SANSKRIT)

Yogachara

Madhyamika

Prince Gautama (563 BCE-486 BCE) following his enlightenment became the Buddha. His teachings

form the basis of Buddhist tradition. The rich and vast Buddhist literature divides into many traditions but two are important: the Hinayana in Pali language and the Mahayana in Sanskrit. The core of the former is the Pali Canon, the original teachings of Buddha after his enlightenment. The Four Noble Truths formed the subject of the first sermon Buddha delivered at Benares:

1. *Life is evil and full of pain and suffering*
2. *The origin of all evil is ignorance (avidya) – not knowing the true nature of the self. The feeling of self as apart from the body-mind complex is false and it is undergoing constant change. Nirvana is cessation of this change. The clinging to the false self is the reason for all misery in life.*
3. *There are twelve links in the 'chain of causation' of evil. This chain starts with ignorance leading to a craving. The unfulfilled cravings lead to repeated cycles of rebirth and deaths. Breaking from this karmic chain of repeated lives, one attains a state of serene composure – Nirvana.*
4. *Right knowledge (prajna) is the means of removing evil. Right conduct was a means to right knowledge in the original teaching.*

The recommended middle path of Buddha for everyone was devoid of severe austerities. Right conduct (sila), right knowledge (prajna), and right concentration (samadhi) are the most important. The rest five of the 'Eight-Fold Path' is for those entering the order of ascetics. Buddhism, spreading to other countries broke up into many schools of thought. Common to the main two creeds is the most important doctrine of momentariness. Everything continues as a series for any length of time giving the illusion of continuity. Regarding differences, Hinayana school was atheistic looking at the Buddha as a human being but divinely gifted; the Mahayana deified Buddha with elaborate worship rituals.

The Mahayana school in turn has two doctrines: the Yogachara and the Madhyamika. The former, akin to the modern subjective idealism, reduces all reality to only thought with no external objective counterpart.

Madhyamika is nihilism which denies reality of both the external world and the self too. The Madhyamika school hence maintains the important doctrine of sunya-vada -the ultimate reality is the void or vacuity-in-itself. Hinayana Buddhism and the Yogachara doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism admit to an Absolute Consciousness, a positive ground for all experience. The goal of life would be to merge in this Absolute. The Madhyamika doctrine rejects any positive ground and the goal is annihilation of all illusion into a void. However, the enlightened person (Bodhisattva) still works for the good of society.

VEDIC OR ORTHODOX SCHOOLS

Nyaya-Vaisesika

Nyaya system is the most systematic application of logic in the acquisition of knowledge (epistemology). Vaisesika is an explanation of the reality around us (ontology), beginning with the description of the indestructible atoms as the basis of all reality. Though arising independently, gradually they merged for common study. In its classical form, Nyaya accepted four sources of valid knowledge (perception, inference, comparison, and testimony); the Vaisesika, only two (perception and inference). Gautama (not to be confused with Buddha) founded the Nyaya school in 3rd century BCE; later modifications resulted in the modern school – Navya Nyaya, by Ganga in 1200 CE.

As the shortest description, Nyaya is logical realism and atomic pluralism. Logic and critical thinking can defend that the physical reality is independent of our awareness not requiring belief, faith, or intuition. Atoms constitute matter and the pluralism stems from the idea there is not one but many entities (material and spiritual) as ultimate constituents of the universe. Nyaya studies philosophy under sixteen categories (padarthas), which includes objects for knowledge (prameyas), the means for knowledge (pramanas), and the purpose of such knowledge. Thus, the Nyaya system studies the Self; the body; the senses; the objects of the senses; the mind, knowledge, and activity; mental imperfections; rebirth; pleasure and suffering; freedom from suffering; substance; quality; motions; universals (samanya); particulars (visesa); inherence (samavaya); and non-existence (abhava).

Nyaya develops the most elaborate rules of logic

for acquisition of knowledge. Indian logic is an instrument for the understanding and discovery of reality quite unlike Western logic- a formal structural inquiry unrelated to the world. The Self is an individual substance- eternal, all pervading, and non-physical; pure consciousness is only an accidental attribute of the Self (unlike Advaita). The aim of Nyaya is liberation of the Self from the bondage and suffering due to its association with the body. Knowledge arising from listening (sravana), intellectual comprehension (manana), and Yogic meditation (nidhidhyasana) leads to cessation of all activity related to the body and thus to liberation. Though there was no focus on God initially, later Nyaya works, especially Udayana's Nyayakusumanjali, offers proofs for the existence of God from different perspectives including atomism.

Kanada was the founder of Vaisesika system and later authors like Prasastapada and Sridhara wrote commentaries. As old as Jainism and Buddhism, it is also known as the 'atomistic school' because of its elaborate atomic theory to explain the universe. However, Vaisesika has a central tenet of particulars (vaisesas) constituting all of existence, out of which some are atomic and some are non-atomic.

Vaisesika, as a philosophy for ontology (explanation of universe), is pluralistic realism. Pluralism, because it holds the universe consisting of a combination of a variety and diversity of irreducible elements. Realism, because it holds reality as independent of our perceptions. Vaisesika recognizes seven padarthas or categories (included in the sixteen of Nyaya) to comprehend the objects making up the world.

Substance (dravya) is the substratum in which qualities and action exist. There are nine ultimate substances in total: five material (earth, water, fire, air, and akasa) and four non-material (space, time, soul, and mind). Material substances except akasa exist as indivisibles called paramanus (atoms), known only through inference. Two atoms combine to form a dyad; three dyads combine to form a triad, the smallest perceptible object. Everything material in the universe is a combination of these triads. Akasa (ether) is non-atomic, all-pervading, and infinite. Only composites made of different combinations of earth, air, fire, and water atoms are perceivable; and being a composite, are transient and impermanent.

The non-material substances – time, space, mind, and soul are indivisible, all-pervading, and eternal. All the non-material substances are known by inference only except the soul known only by direct perception. The most important idea of Vaisesika is the property of 'particularity' (or vaisesas) of the indivisible and eternal substances- atoms, akasa, space, time, souls, and minds. This particularity does not extend to composite objects like tables and chairs. Vaisesika also focusses on samayoga and samvaya between two conjoint objects. Samayoga (a book on a table) is temporary, mechanical, external relation between objects coming together when there is no destruction of the components on separation. Samavaya is a conjoint existence of objects, where separation implies destruction of the component objects. Thus, samavaya is necessary, eternal, and internal relation.

Vaisesika maintains the asatkaryavada view of causation- the effect does not pre-exist in the cause. God is co-existent with the eternal atoms and becomes only a designer of the universe by giving a push to these atoms. Hence, atoms and other substances are the material cause of the universe; and God is its efficient cause. Existence is bondage and ignorance where the soul falls prey to desire and passion to identify itself with the non-soul. Like in all other schools, knowledge is the means to freedom and liberation; and the way to break the karmic chain is cessation of action. In contrast to Advaita, the Vaisesika conception of liberation is a state beyond both pleasure and happiness, a substance devoid of any attributes including consciousness. The points of criticism in Vaisesika are its conception of God and the state of the liberated soul.

Samkhy-Yoga

Samkhy, one of the oldest schools pre-dating Buddha, founded by Sage Kapila, influenced all other orthodox and non-orthodox Indian schools significantly. The earliest of the many commentaries is Samkhy-Karika of the 5th century CE. Samkhy philosophy, summarized as dualistic realism, has two equal and ultimate realities: Purusa (Self or spirit), the eternal experiencing subject and Prakriti (matter), the eternal experienced object. Both Samkhy and Yoga recognise three sources of knowledge: perception, inference, and testimony.

Prakriti is the first cause of all objects of the universe including the body, senses, mind, and the intellect. It is uncaused, eternal, all-pervading, and being subtlest – unperceivable; inferred only by its effects. Prakriti, a dynamic mix of three component essences called sattva (purity), rajas (action), and tamas (ignorance and heaviness), manifests as objects of experience (gross or material) for Purusa. Change and activity are the essence of prakriti.

Samkhy holds the satkaryavada theory of causation where the effect is identical with the cause. The three components sattva, rajas, and tamas are present in each object producing pleasure, pain, or indifference in us depending on the relative amount of each component. Dissolution into the primordial cause following evolution of matter leads to cosmic cycles of creation and destruction. The intellect (mahat), ego (ahamkara), and mind (manas) arise in succession from sattva first. This complex is the internal organ or antah-karana, the basis of our mental life.

Ahamkara or ego, from which two sets of objects emanate, is the central reason for the entire world. The first set consists of the five sense organs, the five motor organs, and the mind. The second set, emanating from the tamas aspect, comprises five elements that again exist in two forms – subtle and gross. The five subtle elements (tanmatras) give rise to the five gross elements by combinations. The five tanmatras are elemental sound, elemental touch, elemental colour, elemental taste, and elemental smell. Elemental sound gives rise to space; sound and touch combine to form air; sound, touch, and colour combine to form fire; sound, touch, colour, and taste give rise to water; and all five combine to form earth. Depending on the constituent tanmatras, the gross acquires its properties. Evolution and dissolution go on constantly.

Purusa (the Self within), the second ultimate reality, is pure consciousness or sentience separate from the insentient prakriti. Purusa is a pure subject, never an object of our intellect or mind, and whose existence is only by inference. The important argument for the existence of the Self is the most indubitable and incontrovertible experience of one's own existence. Samkhy believes in the plurality of purusas- a spiritual pluralism. No two humans are mentally and morally identical. Regarding purposes, Samkhy

Sattva

Intellect (Mahat)

Ego (Ahamkara)

Mind (Manas)

explains by saying that it is ignorance on part of the purusa to get attachment to prakriti; and liberation consists in the knowledge of its absolute and eternal independence from the latter. The liberating knowledge is total independence of the self from the non-self, a state beyond joy and sorrow. Moral perfection is a necessity to achieve this salvation or a state of absolute freedom (kaivalya) from further births. The means of achieving this is through Yoga.

Yoga, as a system of philosophy, closely attaches to Samkhya. Amazingly, despite theoretical differences, all Indian schools, except Charvaka, recommend and recognize Yoga as important means to attain liberation. Yoga differs from Samkhya importantly in the consideration of a Supreme Purusa (or Ishwara, God or the Self) above all the individual selves of Samkhya. The Supreme Purusa guides contact of individual purusa and prakriti to help in the evolution of varying degrees of perfection of purusa. The upper limit of perfection is the Supreme Purusa. Patanjali, not particularly recognizing God in his scheme, however, taught devotion to God for surrendering egoism, the biggest obstacle in the realization of Truth.

Yoga aims for knowledge to free an individual from the shackles of prakriti, most importantly the intellect, mind, and senses. The Yoga-sutras of Patanjali, the first authoritative exposition laying the theoretical and practical foundations, has had many important commentaries later. Yoga has an eight-fold (Astanga-Yoga) path on the route to perfection of an individual. The first five limbs are yama, niyama (control of desires and emotions), asana, pranayama (physical and breath exercises to have a healthy body), and pratyahara (detaching sense organs from the mind). These five are pre-requisites for the further stages of dharana (concentrated focus on limited objects), dhyana (total focus of the mind on a single object). The final stage is Samadhi- the state of pure consciousness where the mind completely dissolves with disappearance of brain-bound intellect.

Can the intuitive knowledge so obtained be a basis

for intellectual knowledge, such as that of science? There are two stages again of Samadhi- the savitarka (with its three knowledge components of sabda, artha, and jnana) and the nirvitarka. In the jnana state of the former, knowledge based on perception and reasoning can build conceptual knowledge. In the nirvitarka, the complete Yogi has an instantaneous cognition and complete knowledge of the manifested universe. The state of pure subjectivity is kaivalya or liberation. Yoga is thus a wonderful whole much more than the physical exercises.

There is a needless discussion on whether Yoga is Indian or is it universal like the law of gravity by prominent personalities on both sides of the fence. The confusion mainly arises from the universal application of the asanas and pranayama in achieving the physical health of the human body. In that respect of a narrow domain understanding of a purely physical aspect Yoga definitely is universal and applicable to any human being. But Yoga as a comprehensive philosophy is definitely Indian where its application leads to moksha or liberation. As regards the origin, Yoga is Indian without any compromise and to give examples like gravity is misleading. There is no confusion, the circles of modern western science, about Newton being the one who discovered gravity.

In the next part, we shall review the most important Darshanas- Mimansa and Vedanta, which dominates Indian traditional thinking. We shall also see some important ideas in Indian philosophy and how the so-called antagonism between the orthodox and non-orthodox schools is a figment of overworked imagination arising especially in the western academia.

Sage Panini: The Sanskrit Linguistic



Panini was born in Shalatula, a town near to Attock on the Indus river in present day Pakistan. The dates given for Panini are pure guesses. Experts give dates in the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th century BC and there is also no agreement among historians about the extent of the work which he undertook. What is in little doubt is that, given the period in which he worked, he is one of the most innovative people in the whole development of knowledge. We will say a little more below about how historians have gone about trying to pinpoint the date when Panini lived.

Panini was a Sanskrit grammarian who gave a comprehensive and scientific theory of phonetics, phonology, and morphology. Sanskrit was the classical literary language of the Indian Hindus and Panini is considered the founder of the language and literature. It is interesting to note that the word "Sanskrit" means "complete" or "perfect" and it was thought of as the divine language, or language of the gods.

A treatise called Astadhyayi (or Astaka) is Panini's major work. It consists of eight chapters, each subdivided into quarter chapters. In this work Panini distinguishes between the language of sacred texts and the usual language of communication. Panini gives formal production rules and definitions to describe Sanskrit grammar. Starting with about 1700 basic elements like nouns, verbs, vowels, consonants he put them into classes. The construction of sentences, compound nouns etc. is explained as ordered rules operating on underlying structures in a manner similar to modern theory. In many ways Panini's constructions are similar to the way that a mathematical function is defined today. Joseph writes:-

[Sanskrit's] potential for scientific use was greatly enhanced as a result of the thorough systemisation of its grammar by Panini. ... On the basis of just under 4000 sutras [rules expressed as aphorisms], he built virtually the whole structure of the Sanskrit language, whose general 'shape' hardly changed for the next two thousand years. ... An indirect consequence of Panini's efforts to increase the linguistic facility of Sanskrit soon became apparent in the character of scientific and mathematical literature. This may be brought out by comparing the grammar of Sanskrit with the geometry of Euclid – a particularly apposite comparison since, whereas mathematics grew out of philosophy in ancient Greece, it was ... partly an

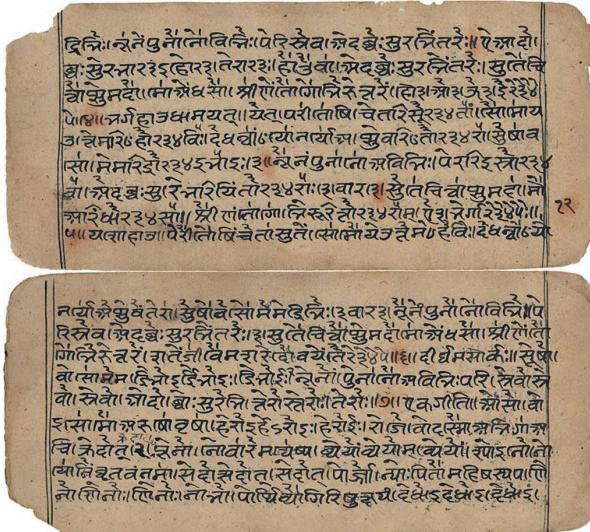
outcome of linguistic developments in India. Joseph goes on to make a convincing argument for the algebraic nature of Indian mathematics arising as a consequence of the structure of the Sanskrit language. In particular he suggests that algebraic reasoning, the Indian way of representing numbers by words, and ultimately the development of modern number systems in India, are linked through the structure of language.

Panini should be thought of as the forerunner of the modern formal language theory used to specify computer languages. The Backus Normal Form was discovered independently by John Backus in 1959, but Panini's notation is equivalent in its power to that of Backus and has many similar properties. It is remarkable to think that concepts which are fundamental to today's theoretical computer science should have their origin with an Indian genius around 2500 years ago.

At the beginning of this article we mentioned that certain concepts had been attributed to Panini by certain historians which others dispute. One such theory was put forward by B Indraji in 1876. He claimed that the Brahmi numerals developed out of using letters or syllables as numerals. Then he put the finishing touches to the theory by suggesting that Panini in the eighth century BC (earlier than most historians place Panini) was the first to come up with the idea of using letters of the alphabet to represent numbers.

There are a number of pieces of evidence to support Indraji's theory that the Brahmi numerals developed from letters or syllables. However it is not totally convincing since, to quote one example, the symbols for 1, 2 and 3 clearly do not come from letters but from one, two and three lines respectively. Even if one accepts the link between the numerals and the letters, making Panini the originator of this idea would seem to have no more behind it than knowing that Panini was one of the most innovative geniuses that world has known so it is not unreasonable to believe that he might have made this step too.

There are other works which are closely associated with the Astadhyayi which some historians attribute to Panini, others attribute to authors before Panini, others attribute to authors after Panini. This is an



area where there are many theories but few, if any, hard facts.

We also promised to return to a discussion of Panini's dates. There has been no lack of work on this topic so the fact that there are theories which span several hundreds of years is not the result of lack of effort, rather an indication of the difficulty of the topic. The usual way to date such texts would be to examine which authors are referred to and which authors refer to the work. One can use this technique and see who Panini mentions.

There are ten scholars mentioned by Panini and we must assume from the context that these ten have all contributed to the study of Sanskrit grammar. This in itself, of course, indicates that Panini was not a solitary genius but, like Newton, had "stood on the shoulders of giants". Panini must have lived later than these ten but this is absolutely no help in providing dates since we have absolutely no knowledge of when any of these ten lived.

What other internal evidence is there to use? Well of course Panini uses many phrases to illustrate his grammar any these have been examined meticulously to see if anything is contained there to indicate a date. To give an example of what we mean: if we were to pick up a text which contained as an example "I take the train to work every day" we would know that it had to have been written after railways became common. Let us illustrate with two actual examples from the Astadhyayi which have been the

subject of much study. The first is an attempt to see whether there is evidence of Greek influence. Would it be possible to find evidence which would mean that the text had to have been written after the conquests of Alexander the Great? There is a little evidence of Greek influence, but there was Greek influence on this north east part of the Indian subcontinent before the time of Alexander. Nothing conclusive has been identified.

Another angle is to examine a reference Panini makes to nuns. Some argue that these must be Buddhist nuns and therefore the work must have been written after Buddha. A nice argument but there is a counter argument which says that there were Jaina nuns before the time of Buddha and Panini's reference could equally well be to them. Again the evidence is inconclusive.

There are references by others to Panini. However it would appear that the Panini to whom most refer is a poet and although some argue that these are the same person, most historians agree that the linguist and the poet are two different people. Again this is inconclusive evidence.

Let us end with an evaluation of Panini's contribution by Cardona:-

Panini's grammar has been evaluated from various points of view. After all these different evaluations, I think that the grammar merits asserting ... that it is one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence.

~ J. J. O'Connor and E. F. Robertson

Ayurveda and Probiotics



In the present era one of the most important words attached with the products sold in the markets is Probiotics. Probiotics are those bacteria which are good for our body and health. There are several kinds of bacteria found in our intestines playing an important role in maintaining the health of body and intestines. These bacteria prevent the growth of harmful type of bacteria and several types of chemicals which are essential for body to maintain healthy state.

In Ayurveda Takra is considered as the source of Probiotic. The present paper highlights each of these points as per Ayurvedic with suitable correlation and concludes as per Ayurvedic concepts.

Knowledge certainly plays a major role in our health according to the Science of Life, Ayurveda.

It is the ancient wisdom of India that embraces health knowledge from more than 3000 years. According to Ayurvedic understanding Takra (yoghurt) is a great probiotic. It is not a food, but an adjunct to food. The continuous use of antibiotics, oxidative stress disturb the balance of useful bacteria in the intestines increasing the growth of harmful bacteria and yeasts in the intestines, thus giving rise to the IBS, colitis like intestinal diseases.

Hence the consumption of Yoghurt in diet is a simple and effective remedy as per Ayurvedic guidelines. A research paper published in Journal of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society March 2002 says – "Your expensive Probiotic powders and capsules are less

effective than a dash of several brands of yoghurt", a study by Australian Naturopath J. Hawrelak. (1) All these information say the importance of Yoghurt for colonic health. The present paper throws a light on these concepts along with modern correlation and an attempt has been made to conclude that the function of Takra is similar to the probiotics over the intestinal flora.

In Ayurvedic medicine, the presence of ama, which is a toxic byproduct of digestion, is responsible for most of the disease conditions. Ama impairs nutrient absorption and tends to accumulate in tissues that are anatomically and physiologically weak causing congestion, inflammation, and degenerative changes. Intestinal permeability is thought to be caused by a substance or combination of substances, such as allergens or toxins, which initiate inflammation in the digestive tract. This inflammation allows for large molecules to pass across the intestinal barrier, including molecules from proteins, fats, parasites, bacteria, fungi. Intestinal permeability or Leaky gut syndrome are terms used to describe an inability of the stomach lining to absorb protein molecules.

Instead of being absorbed and digested, these protein molecules circulate throughout the blood stream. Here, they stimulate the immune system, and, in turn, immune system cells react to their presence as they would to any foreign protein by initiating an inflammatory reaction that leads to autoantibody production and autoimmune disease development. Evidence for this theory includes the presence of Gastrointestinal tissue damage seen in patients with a number of different autoimmune diseases including Ankylosing spondylitis, Irritable bowel syndrome, Rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, Multiple sclerosis, Vasculitis, Thyroiditis and Dermatitis herpetiformis. In many of these conditions, a reduction of digestive inflammation correlates with a reduction or remission of autoimmune symptoms. (2)

Common causes of leaky gut syndrome include antibiotics, alcohol, caffeine, parasites, bacteria, some food preservatives and additives, allergic states such as gluten sensitivity and lactose intolerance, corticosteroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, refined carbohydrates, oral contraceptives. Chronic inflammation from these sources damages

the protective coat of immunoglobulin (antibody) A, which interferes with the body's normal ability to inhibit these substances. The resulting toxins then interfere with the liver's ability to detoxify these substances. One result is increased sensitivity to environmental agents such as cigarette smoke, chemical cleaning agents and strong perfumes. Other symptoms include nutrient deficiencies, acne, headaches, poor concentration, fatigue, and irritability, with aging and exposure to stress, a gradual loss of stomach acid occurs, which can aggravate the problem and contribute to vitamin B12 deficiency and deficiencies of minerals such as chromium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, selenium, and zinc.

Treatment of these conditions is only possible with Oral supplementation of intestinal friendly bacteria and digestive enzymes those help to restore the intestinal permeability. Substances known as probiotics supply these friendly bacteria. Probiotics include tablets containing Lacto bacillus acidophilus, Propionibacterium freudenreichii, shermanii, and Bifidobacterium bifidum. Clinical research shows that oral supplementation of probiotics enhances the immune system's ability to fight foreign organisms (phagocytic property). (1)

Eliminating or reducing substances that promote intestinal permeability also promotes intestinal healing. This includes avoiding antibiotics, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, pesticides, herbicides, and meat contaminated with hormones. Substances that promote healing include high fiber foods rich in antioxidants such as cabbage, cauliflower, beets and onions; omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon and flaxseed, multi-mineral supplements and digestive enzymes such as bromelain and pancreatin.3 The rationality behind explaining this concept is to make clear about the drug combinations, dietary regimens explained in Ayurveda for intestinal diseases. When we go through the classical literatures like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, Chakradatta etc, in the treatment of Grahani, Arsha we get the judicial use of Takra in the form of medication. (4) This helps us to understand the treatment principles retrospectively in relation to the disease pathogenesis.

In Ayurveda we get good number of references to explain the importance of Takra – "He who uses Takra

daily does not suffer from diseases, and diseases cured by Takra do not recur; just as amrita (divine nectar) is for the gods, Takra is to humans" (5) Takra cleanses the channels of circulation (srotas), as a result of which rasa, the end product of digestion of food, reaches the tissues properly. It creates proper nourishment, strength, and complexion. (6) The microchannels carrying nutrients to all cells in the body, when they get clogged or blocked due to any reason, the particular organ or system suffers in efficiency due to lack of nutrition. It is essential to remove such blockages. The herbs or their combinations which tackle these problems are termed "Rasayana" in Ayurveda.

The forces which cause the blockage or resistance must be removed. The channels which cause transport are termed "srotas". Acharya Charaka opines that buttermilk removes such blockages and purifies the "srotas". This causes better movement ('ayana') of 'anna-rasa', the nutrients. When adequate nutrition is obtained by cells ("koshas"), they start working with full force. Due to saturation or ageing of srotas during old-age, the control systems of the body do not get adequate nutrients, which cause aging symptoms such as reduction of memory (dementia), reduced vision, wrinkles on the skin, graying of hair, etc. But those who take buttermilk regularly, do not age faster, keep their arteries flexible for a longer time. Thus buttermilk is an elixir (param-amrutam) (5) which keeps "Jara" (oldage) and "Vyadhi" (disease) away. Little ornamental language has been used to describe the properties of Yoghurt only to give the emphasis upon the advantages of taking it so that people may reap its maximum benefits. Yoghurt is a natural probiotic diet because the friendly bacteria for the intestines and the body are found in abundance in it.

A good quality Yoghurt is made up of several types of bacteria which increase the numbers of friendly bacteria in the intestines benefitting the state of homeostasis. The normally present bacteria in meals get destroyed in the acidic environment of stomach and the salty aquatic environment of small intestine whereas the bacteria of Yoghurt cross over from these environments and reach to large intestine where these Probiotics digest the Prebiotics (food fibers) forming short chain fatty acid from which an acidic environment is created in the large intestine

which apart immune system of body making the body stronger and help to increase the formation of "IgA" named antibodies. A bacterium of Yoghurt cooperates well in absorbing the minerals as well, particularly the calcium and the iron.

Conclusion:

Butter milk detoxifies body and cleanses the intestines, relieves constipation and helps to replenish intestinal flora. It has less fat compared to milk and is rich in calcium, potassium and Vit B12. Hence in Ayurveda prime importance is given to buttermilk. It is suggested as a medicine either singly or in combinations especially in the diseases of the colon where homeostasis of digestion and absorption is inevitable. This is the reason in Ayurveda why we find vivid explanation of Takra in the management of diseases related to the GI tract.

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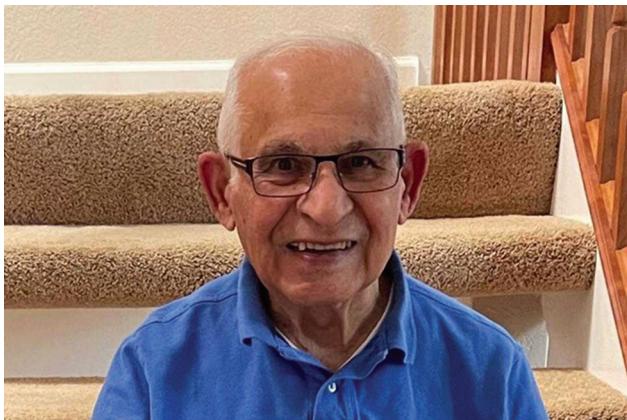
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Partition's bloody legacy: a conversation with survivor

Narendra Kalra

Syama Allard



Kalra poses for a photo at his home in California 75 years after surviving Partition. It is, undoubtedly, one of the worst atrocities to have ever take place.

What was life like before Partition?

I was born in Lahore in 1936, but spent the first seven years of my life living in the city of Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). I remember the three different locations we lived in. The first two we shared with another family. The last was a small house in a very nice neighborhood that was part of a government quarter's area. Made up of many other similar houses, the area was like a sort of colony with a big park in the center we used to play in during the evenings.

On one side of this colony there were really large bungalows with flowers like roses and sunflower bushes. On the other side was a slaughter house and we could see blood moving in the open gutter. I only came across Hindus at that time as far as I remember, but I was young and didn't fully understand much about religion.

In 1943, I lived with my paternal grandparents in Lahore for approximately 3 months. At that time they

were living in an area known as Janakpuri, which was 100% Hindu. I was there during Diwali, and remember participating in children's races and fireworks.

In 1947, my father moved to Dhrangadhra, Gujarat for work and my mother decided to take my two brothers and I to visit her parents in our ancestral town of Dera Ismail Khan (located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), before also going to Dhrangadhra. After a couple of months in Dera, we found out that my bua (paternal aunt) and dada (paternal grandfather) in Lahore had passed away, and so my mother traveled to the city with my two brothers to see family there before finally moving to Gujarat. Because I was supposed to be in school and my mother was concerned about how having to learn a new language would affect my schooling (all of my education up until then had been in Urdu), she decided to leave me with my nana (maternal grandfather) and nani (maternal grandmother) in Dera, and have me continue school there.

Dera was a good-sized city. Most people there – Hindus and Muslims – lived in separate areas. We lived on a long street (Shiv Shah Street) with about 100 homes. One end of the street was walled in, while the other end had a large gate, which closed at night and opened in the morning. Behind our house, there was a road and another walled-in area, which was a Muslim neighborhood with a mosque. From there, I could hear the Muslim call to prayer very early every morning.

The only interactions I generally had with Muslims were either at the market while buying vegetables, or when they would come to our home to deliver firewood. My nana however, who had been a doctor in the government hospital, had a lot of positive interactions with Afghan and local Muslim patients.

He was even fluent in Pashtun.

Like many other Hindus in that region, several of my relatives were active with the Arya Samaj (a religio-social organization), which was popular amongst Hindus in Punjab and the North-West Frontier. They would also regularly visit the local gurdwara.



Kalra's nana, or maternal grandfather (right), poses for a photo with his friend and colleague in the North-West Frontier (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) prior to Partition. It was in Dera Ismail Khan his grandfather worked as a doctor in a government hospital, regularly interacting with local Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim patients.

How would you describe the period directly leading up to it?

Though I stayed in Dera for school, I never actually ended up going as we learned, on what was supposed to be the first day, that the building had been burned down. According to the local Muslims, it hadn't been done by them, but by Afghan extremists. In any case, the school was never opened and I was never able to attend, though I continued to stay in Dera.

As tensions continued to rise leading up to Partition, my father and paternal grandmother decided it would be better if I went to live in Lahore, so they made travel arrangements for me to go there. But before I could get on the buggy that was supposed to take me to the train station, my nana, who suddenly had a bad feeling, changed his mind, and stopped me from leaving. We later found out that the train I would have traveled on was attacked, and all the people on it (Hindus and Sikhs) were butchered.

When Partition talks were going on, many from our street, though a relatively safer area at the time, began leaving, while many – including my youngest masi's (mother's sister) family and extended family who

lived in nearby areas more exposed to the violence – actually sought shelter in our neighborhood. My masi's family, in particular, was targeted because her husband was a community activist who was outspoken on Hindu-Muslim relations.

As Partition grew nearer, I remember hearing about curfews and riots taking place in the city, as the gate on our street was locked, and people stopped coming in and going out. For many days, we couldn't go out to get fresh vegetables, and so lived only on food that was already at home, like dal (lentils) and roti (whole wheat flatbread). We also couldn't even get the outhouses cleaned.

I didn't witness violence myself because they tried not to let us go out as kids, but I heard a lot about it. At the end of the street where it was walled off, some people from our neighborhood created a platform and sat on top with guns to protect the area. I heard gunshots at times but I wasn't sure if they were fired into my street, or from my street to the outside.

When the curfews ended, many more Hindus started leaving for India and many more of the houses became empty. Many who left still had relatives living in the villages, who came to our neighborhood and used it as a transition area before migrating to India by train or bus.

My youngest masi left and went to Delhi. My nani's younger sister came from a village to live with her brother, and then left the area to go to India. One of my dada's relatives also came from the village and lived on our street for a couple of months before leaving for India. My eldest masi in Lahore had gone to stay with her sister in Delhi before Partition, thinking she would return home after things settled down, but she never did.

After Partition, when things started to get normal again and people went back out to the market, I began going into town and visiting relatives who were still there. The government hospital where my nana used to work asked him to come back even though he had already retired. Happily agreeing to serve, he was picked up by a jeep every morning and then dropped off in the evening. At this point, he had decided that he didn't want to leave Dera, and would stay as long as he possibly could. He was, after all, in his mid 70s,

and had no desire to have his life uprooted.

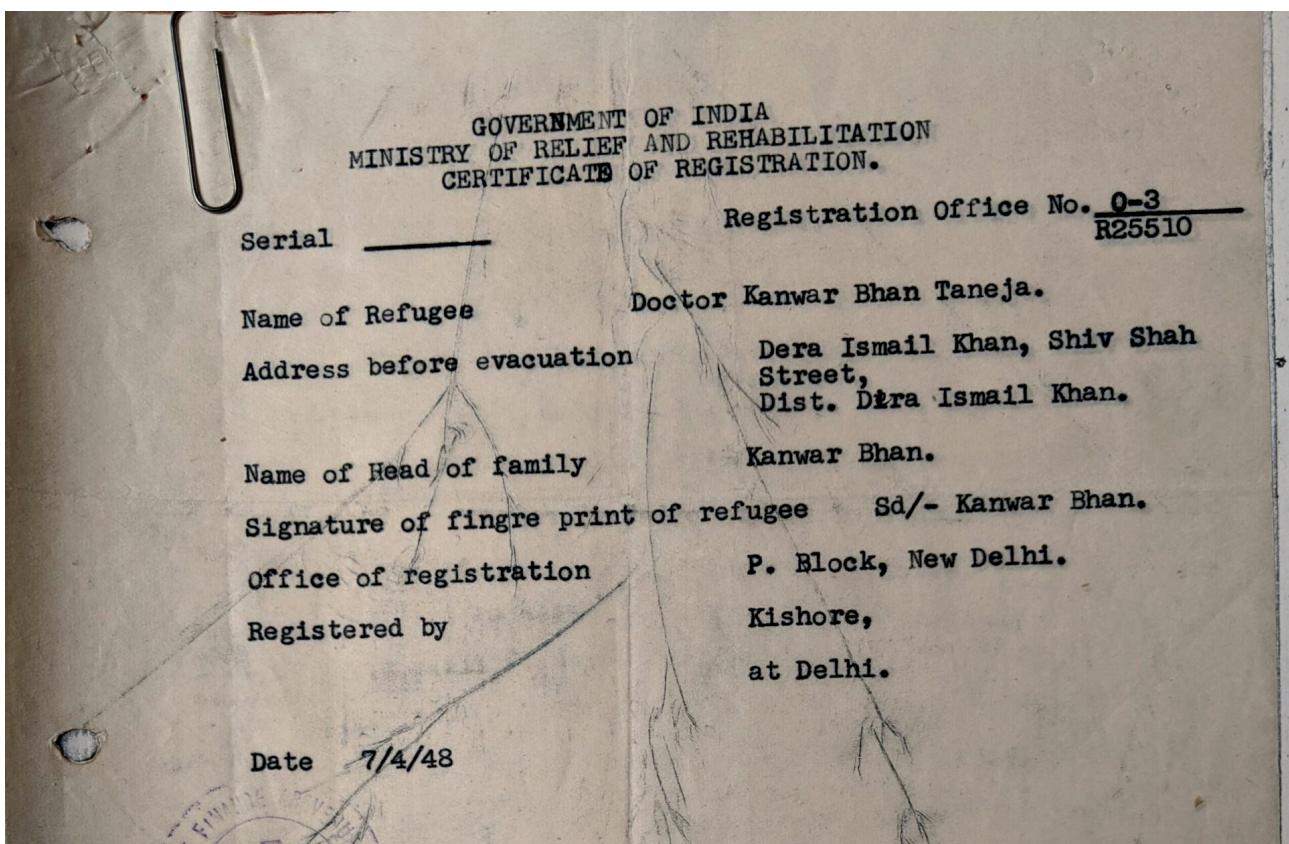
When and how did you leave your home?

Many of my father's relatives who were living in Lahore ended up leaving because of the widespread riots. When my uncle, who was in the military, heard of the danger, he immediately went to my dadi's in a jeep, who was at home alone, and helped her escape. Told to flee as fast as she could, she didn't pack any clothes, or even have the chance to put on her chunni (a type of scarf) or shoes. Her house, as it turned out, was burned down and destroyed after she left.

She and my other relatives were taken to Model Town in Lahore. From there a military convoy took them to the border, after which they went on to Jalandhar. Model Town became a transition area where people from the Pakistani side were taken to the Indian side and people from the Indian side came to Pakistan. By April 1948, most of my relatives had left and my nana was getting a lot of letters from relatives in India to follow suit, and so he finally decided to leave.

could reclaim the house if he managed to return. After thus completing the necessary paperwork for the agreement, we left on a bus, with some of the other remaining Hindus from our neighborhood, for Darya Khan, a town in which the nearest train station was located. From there we were supposed to take the train, but it was so crowded, with people even climbing on its top, that we couldn't get on, so we just stood on the platform and waited. While there, we noticed other Hindus who were also waiting being looted while the police watched and did nothing. I remember feeling scared and crying as I grabbed on tight to my nani.

Feeling it was unsafe, my grandparents, along with the other Hindus we had traveled there with, decided to just get back on the bus and return to Dera. When we got there, however, not only was our house occupied by Muslims, but our whole street was, so we went to stay in what served as both a Hindu temple and gurdwara, which was located nearby. Fortunately, necessary arrangements were made, and the next



Kalra's nana's refugee registration card.

Prior to leaving, my nana gave the house to a Muslim acquaintance on the condition my nana

day my grandparents and I were able to board a Red Cross plane prioritized to help children and the elderly escape. Falling asleep on the flight, when I woke up,

we were at the train station in Ambala, a city on the Indian side of Punjab.

I later heard from relatives that the train we were supposed to take from Darya Khana ended up being attacked and most of the Hindus on it were butchered.

What was life like after? Did you or any family members live in refugee colonies, and if so, what was that like?

My mama (mother's brother) and mosa (mother's brother-in-law) met us at the Ambala train station and escorted us to Delhi. There, my two masis, with their families, were staying with their sister in a very small flat, and my mama and grandparents were staying at my cousin's flat.

My grandparents and I also ended up staying at my cousin's place. We were three families living in a three-bedroom flat, so it was very chaotic. After three months, my mother came from Dhrangadhra to get me. At that time the journey from Delhi to Dhrangadhra took more than 24 hours and involved changing trains three times.

Fortunately my nana, who had been a government employee, got a pension and received some regular income, so he and my nani were better off than my other elderly relatives, who had a lot of difficulty adjusting to life since they had lost all their properties and farmland back home.

In Dhrangadhra I spent the next four years finishing high school, after which I went back to Delhi to visit my nana and nani. Now 1952, things there were completely different. All my relatives had been given small houses in refugee colonies in Rajinder Nagar and Kingsway Camp (two of the many refugee colonies set up by the government).

What was it like rebuilding your life? What of everything you endured during that period was the most challenging?

I had to learn Gujarati from scratch – prior to that, my schooling was all in Urdu. Luckily, I had taught myself Hindi before with the help of my mother, so it made learning the alphabet in Gujarati a little easier.

Dhrangadhra was a very small town at that time. It had a population of about 20,000 and hardly any who spoke Hindi. It was always a little difficult assimilating into the culture even though people were nice. I had

to wing it many times. On the first day of school, for example, they asked what my name was. When I said "Narinder Nath," and they wrote down "Narendra Nath," I decided to just go with it, and so that became my name going forward.

Though my father didn't really experience any financial problems – he had a job and was working most of the time – my parents did have trouble finding a place to rent when they first moved to Dhrangadhra, because they were mistaken for Muslims as my mother always wore a salwar kameez, which no Hindu ladies wore at that time. One of the elders from the Arya Samaj temple my father met, however, helped get them a place. After assimilating as such, they didn't really have any problems.

How did the challenges of that period differ from the older generation to the younger? (In other words, how was it different for you versus your parents or grandparents or other relatives?)

Because I was young and could therefore adjust to a new life more easily, things were much less difficult for me. For many of my relatives who were old, however, they naturally felt a bitterness about Partition, as they lost everything. My youngest masi's husband, who had had income from various investments, rental properties, and farms, experienced the most difficulty – as did another masi's husband. But for those who were able to make it, they felt they had to move on. What else could they do?

All of the relatives talked about how they missed their old lifestyle. How they used to have a nice life back home in Dera, where they all lived close to one another and could visit each other often.

What positivity, if any, came out of your people's struggle?

People are now more aware of their religious similarities and differences. Because we were forced to leave our homeland, we, as Hindus, have come to recognize and appreciate our culture and identity more.

Despite the fact relations varied considerably by region and by ruler, Hinduism and Islam managed to exist alongside each for close to a thousand years in India up through the 19th century. What, in your eyes, caused these relations to deteriorate so immensely in the two-decade peri-

od leading up to partition? What, specifically, led to such violence and horror?

We may have existed alongside each other, but there was only a truce because Muslims, who ruled for a long time, were able to convert Hindus quite easily. Other than that, I'd say, for the most part, relations were always strained between Hindus and Muslims even when they appeared ok externally. There were, of course, always exceptions, but given the history of the relationship, it was not surprising that such violence took place.

What have been the ripple effects of Partition from one generation to the next? How have you/do you pass on memories to children and grandchildren?

We didn't lose our culture completely — I used to speak my native language of Derawali (a dialect of Punjabi) at home with my mother — but overall, as we assimilated to our new circumstances, there was some loss of identity and culture.

For those who lived in the refugee colonies in Delhi, many were able to hold onto their culture and language at first. My youngest masi's husband, for example, started a newspaper called Derawali Sandesh, which was published in our language. Each generation, however, held onto less and less, and the reality has become that very few people in India and the diaspora can speak the language anymore.

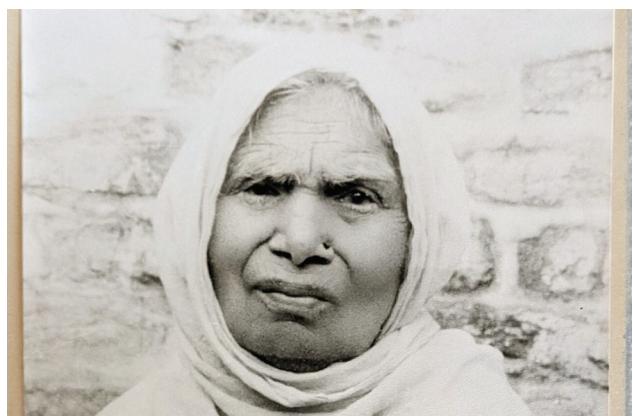
I've tried to tell my kids the stories I remember about that time and what happened. I've also shown them old pictures and have taken them to visit some of my relatives who lived in Rajinder Nagar many years ago. The more my children have asked me about Partition and its period, the more I've told them, as they, in turn, tell their own children.

How do the events of Partition continue to affect life throughout the subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) today? In retrospect, are you convinced that Partition was ultimately for the best?

It's difficult to say whether Partition was for the best. I'd say the jury is still out. Ultimately, Hindus lost out on more proportionately, as many Muslims were able to remain in India and keep their properties, while many were also able to secure land with the creation of Pakistan.

Most Hindus, on the other hand, were forced to

uproot their lives and leave Pakistan, while the few who stayed behind had miserable lives. It was, thus, much more of a lose-lose situation for them.



Taken after she was widowed, Kalra's nani, or maternal grandmother, poses for a photo while living in Rajinder Nagar (a Delhi refugee colony) during the 1950s. All of Kalra's relatives in Delhi had been given small houses there.

Have you had a chance to go back to your childhood or ancestral home? What would you like to see or do "back home," if given the chance?

I haven't had the chance to go back and visit yet. If I had the chance, I'd like to see some of the old neighborhoods where my family lived, the neighborhood where I was born and used to visit my paternal grandparents in Lahore, our old homes in Peshawar, and my home in Dera.

Many years ago, I came across a person from Dera in California who previously worked in the Indian Embassy in Islamabad after Partition. While he was in Islamabad, he wanted to visit Dera, but the Pakistan government advised him not to go there, stating it may not be safe to do so. It's still not safe there.

What is your hope for the future?

To be able to accept the situation as it is and move on. And that all countries involved respect the sovereignty of each, modernizing in a way that's beneficial for all.

Freedom of Speech

“Those words that do not perturb others, that are true, pleasant and beneficial, and also the practice of recitation of sacred wisdom, that is called austerity of speech.” — Bhagavad Gita 17.15

To understand a Hindu approach to free expression, one must understand that central to the tradition's philosophies and practices is the aim of seeking and attaining Truth. Truth is considered universally accessible through active pursuit, sincere study, reason, and experience. It is this feature of Hindu spiritual life that has contributed to the incredible variety of spiritual and religious expression we see within and throughout Hinduism.

Hinduism is about having the freedom to ask questions and pursue answers, to discern truth from untruth, and to act in accordance with dharma (righteousness) and avoid those thoughts, words, and actions that are adharmic (selfish).

Accordingly, we at the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) are profoundly drawn to the concept of freedom of expression and freedom of thought and belief. We also believe in the goodness of humanity to knowingly demonstrate kindness and compassion (ahimsa), while also being truthful (satya), thoughtful (viveka), and objective (vairagya).

Freedom of speech is also a core freedom and fundamental right in the United States. It's enshrined equally in the First Amendment of the US Constitution as it has traditionally been in the hearts and minds of Americans of all philosophical and political persuasions. The right of all of us to think as we choose, to express our beliefs in speech, in writing, in artwork, on television, and films without fear of restriction, repression, or retribution by the state is a core part of the American experience and American civic life.

Alongside the right to express ourselves is the right of others to express themselves. Naturally, this will give rise to speech that we find running counter to our beliefs. But there is no right, at least in the US, to be shielded from ideas and opinions one may find disagreeable, distasteful, emotionally triggering, or even deeply offensive because freedom of expression also includes hateful speech, ignorant statements,

and outlandish falsehoods.

In these regards, the American and Hindu ideals around freedom of expression are in consonance. As such, we at HAF firmly believe that the response to those views with whom we disagree must simply be more speech, countering viewpoints, and not calling for prohibitions on the right to express oneself. That said, the right to free speech is not absolute — neither under American law nor by Hindu principles which view responsibility as a counter-balance to rights.

Speech that is likely to incite imminent physical harm to others, to incite imminent violence, or speech deemed obscene is not protected by the First Amendment. Nor is spreading falsehoods that defame a person or organization in print or in speech. These are considered libel and slander respectively under the broader category of defamatory speech. Given our work in education and advocacy, we are often called upon to oppose or take action against speech that is perceived to be “offensive” under the notion that it inflames, denigrates, or hurts “religious sentiments.”

In the US, this kind of speech is still considered protected speech. However in India, which is home to the largest population of Hindus as well as the sacred geography from which the Dharmic traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism) grew, speech of this nature may be unprotected speech. The roots of such speech limiting laws in India are colonial, as there is no notion of blasphemy within Hinduism or other indigenous traditions. Laws like Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code, which have been used by adherents of all religions in India, act in ways that are similar (though not the same) to blasphemy laws found in many theocratic states in spite of India being a secular state. HAF opposes blasphemy laws in all forms, both on principle and on the basis of gross human rights violations faced



by Hindus and other religious minorities in countries with such laws in place.

Free Speech vs. Right Speech

While we have a right to say things, we at HAF also hold that there are right ways to say things. This is where HAF looks to the ethics and guidance around right speech or dharmic speech found throughout Hindu sacred texts and stories.

According to Prof. Ruth Vanita, "Debate is the single most important organizing principle in ancient Hindu texts. It may take the form of structured questions and answer, friendly discussion and dialog, or formal shastrartha (debate) between rival schools of thought."^{*}

Practices which have been articulated as being integral to dharmic or right speech include employing nuance; following a logical order of arguments; being decisive and clear of purpose of a discussion; being qualified to speak about the subject; and identifying points of agreement amongst others. There is also advice on tactics one should avoid such as being untruthful; being verbose or in the alternative, too brief; making things unnecessarily complicated; being careless with grammar; or being vague, ambiguous, or incomplete, or demonizing others. Intent is perhaps the most important element to right expression — selflessness or communication

in service of a greater good being vastly preferred to selfish motives or those driven by greed, lust, anger, self-pity, or arrogance.

Bottom line: every individual has the right to free expression, the right to pursue lines of academic inquiry, and the right to philosophical, political, and artistic freedom. This right must be balanced by the responsibility to minimize harm (ahimsa) while being truthful (satya) and dispassionate (vairagya). And the response to any expression with which we disagree must simply be more dharmic speech and not calling for prohibitions on the right to express oneself.

* The Self has no Gender: A Female and a Male Scholar Debate Women's Status in the Mahabharata appeared in the NWSA Journal and was later published in Gandhi's Tiger and Sita's Smile: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Culture (Yoda Press, 2005).

Caste in India and caste in the US

Mat McDermott



Recently two major new surveys on attitudes of Indians and Indian Americans have been released, from Pew Research and Carnegie/Johns Hopkins/University of Pennsylvania respectively.

What have we learned about caste from each of these?

Let's take a look.

1) Most Indians and nearly all Indian Americans have not personally faced caste discrimination

According to the Pew survey, slightly more than 80% of all Indians, regardless of their caste, say they have not personally faced discrimination based on their caste in the year prior to taking the survey.

This is particularly notable considering that, apart from the Jain community, 70% of the Indian population is designated as Scheduled Caste (SC/Dalit), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other/Most Backward Caste (OBC), all of which would seem to be experiencing significant, persistent discrimination based on the manner in which caste dynamics are reported on by Western and English language media.

Flipping the stat, an average of 20% of Indians responding that they had faced discrimination based on caste identity is definitely not nothing. There is regional variation in that average, ranging from just 8% in the western parts of India and rising to 38% in the Northeast and 30% in the South (more below). So caste discrimination does exist, it varies from region to region, but not nearly to the extent of the prevailing stereotypes about India and Indians.

And ideally, we want that to be as close to zero as possible, so clearly more work needs to be done. Discrimination on the basis of caste and other social markers is prohibited under the Indian Constitution. A comparison for readers in the United States (admittedly it's not a direct comparison, but is apropos as there is a growing effort to try to equate caste with race): when Pew asked Americans whether there is racial discrimination in the US, more than 50% of whites and about 84% of blacks said that there is prevalent racial discrimination. Even amongst the SC,



ST, and OBC communities in India, an average of 19% say that there is a lot of caste discrimination.

Also in the United States: if recent articles on alleged caste discrimination in Silicon Valley are to be taken at face value and extrapolated to the Indian American population as a whole, discrimination based on caste is supposedly widespread.

Except, according to the Carnegie survey, it's not. At all.

This survey has found that 95% of Indian Americans (more than half of whom are Hindu, the presumed oppressors according to many activists and progressives) have not experienced any discrimination based on caste in the year preceding the survey.

In short, incidents of caste discrimination in the US are exceptional situations not the norm.

Also confounding the picture is the finding that a significant number of those people reporting facing discrimination because of caste say that it was non-Indians doing so — a situation that left the authors scratching their heads.

These findings also clearly upend the conclusions of the most-cited survey on caste discrimination in the United States, conducted by Equality Labs and uncritically cited by news media since its release. In

fact the authors of the Carnegie survey specifically criticize the methodology, scientific accuracy, and statistical validity of that survey.

While 5% of Indian Americans reporting having experienced caste discrimination needs addressing, the statistic tells a far different story than media headlines or one the State of California's Department of Fair Employment and Housing alleges in its complaint citing to Equality Labs' unscientific and unverifiable data.

Fully half of all Indian Americans reported having experienced no discrimination. And the most common form of discrimination reported by Indian Americans was on the basis of skin color — which squares with what we know about the prevalence of racial discrimination in the US.

2) Every community in India opposes inter-caste marriage

The Pew survey has finely illustrated that inter-caste marriage is opposed by a majority of Indians from every faith community.

What the survey also shows is that two-thirds of all Indians believe inter-caste marriage should be stopped, for both men and women.

Remarkably, the percentage of both "general" caste

and SC communities is identical, with 60% of people from each believing inter-caste marriage should be stopped. Furthermore, the percentage of people opposing inter-caste marriage is higher among ST and OBC communities (67% and 68%) and higher still among Muslims, with 70% of Indian Muslims opposing inter-caste marriage for men and 74% opposing this for women. This attitude is highest among older Indians and those without a college degree, Pew reports.

That said, reported preference when it comes to the background of one's neighbors is almost the opposite to what is expressed by all Indians for marriage. 72% of all Indians identifying as "general caste" say they would be willing to have someone belonging to a scheduled caste as a neighbor.

While the survey offers us information about prevalence of preferences in the context of marriage, it doesn't answer the question of why.

Western readers likely don't know that the thousands of communities or castes in India have their own traditions that have been passed down orally for generations. These may include origin stories, shared history, language and dialect, culture, local deities, special festivals and rites, and other social customs and norms, which could shed light on a variety of preferences when it comes to marriage.

What these findings also say to me is again the predominant media and activist presentation is not the bigger picture nor reflective of on the ground realities. Rather than opposition to inter-religious or inter-caste marriage (or preference for the same) being a Hindu, Hindutva, or upper-caste thing, it's a pan-Indian thing, cutting across all religions and caste identities. It extends from the most disadvantaged communities in the country with equal vigor as it does in the most advantaged.

3) Majority of Indians, but far fewer Indian Americans, primarily make friends with people from their caste. What both the Pew and Carnegie surveys show is that religion is the predominant organizing principle for social networks in India and among Indian Americans. In the US, for example, nearly half of all Indian American Christians, Hindus, and Muslims have networks made up of co-religionists.

But, when it comes to caste, there is a sharp divide between Indians and Indian Americans.

The Pew survey shows that 80% of Indians say all or most of their close friends are from their own caste. But the situation flips in the US, according to the Carnegie survey, where only 21% of Indian Americans say most or all of their friends are from the same caste.

4) Indians of all religious backgrounds identify by caste

In spite of the media (and K-12 public school textbooks, for that matter) inaccurately equating caste and a caste system with Hinduism, it's worth noting the Pew report shows that while 71% of Hindus identify as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, or Other Backward Caste, so do 74% of India's Christians, 98% of Buddhists, 50% of Muslims, and 52% of Sikhs with the remaining respective balances identifying as "general caste."

Moreover, the incorrect yet conventional wisdom would have you believe that caste discrimination is a Hindu issue and that leaving Hinduism will allow one to escape the traditions' purported pyramidal, pan-Indian hierarchy.

Yet, based on the last Indian census, Christianity is the majority religion in three of the Northeastern states and one-third of the total population in a fourth (Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, and Manipur respectively. This is also one of the regions where the highest number of respondents, 38%, reported having faced caste discrimination in the past year.

All of this is to say, caste or communities formed around a variety of social markers is a social phenomenon not a religious one.

Pew Research falls into the same trap as the media, however, as is evident in the report authors trying to "make sense" of their findings about Indians of all religious backgrounds and caste identity and not just Hindus.

Decoding Stress

The nature of life and work is changing in this world and if there is one that seems to connect everyone, it is stress! Ask a school goer and she would say she is stressed out! Stress can be looked at as physical and emotional strain that could be triggered by an external or internal event. The mind-body connect is evident when one looks deeper into stress. A stressed out body impacts emotions and a stressed out mind affects the body. It is difficult to define stress and it is a subjective phenomena. Though there are measurable biochemical parameters within the body, each person experiences it in a different way. Changes in the external environment impact the biochemical process within the body and changes the way we can respond to situations.

People get stressed out not just due to personal reasons but can also be affected by global events. Thinking about the future of the world -pandemics or climate change, nation's economic conditions or political directions can cause stress in a large number of people. Social media adds to this stress. Gadgets can further this. There are just too many dimensions to this stress and hence needs a holistic approach to solving. One cannot just look at a single cause and try to eliminate that. What is possible is an internal transformation and the way we handle stress.

Symptoms of Stress

The level of stress that one experiences varies with situations. It could be mild, high or very high. Emotional pressure experienced for a long period of time can result in chronic stress. Those stressed out show physical and emotional symptoms. Some of them include:

- ~ Tiredness and Fatigue
- ~ Headache
- ~ Indigestion
- ~ Loss of appetite
- ~ Dizziness
- ~ Lack of lustre on face
- ~ Tired eyes
- ~ Nausea
- ~ Constant anger and irritation
- ~ Lack of vigor and energy
- ~ Choking and crying

- ~ Nervousness
- ~ Extreme situations: suicidal tendencies

Body's Mechanism

In the early 1900s, as a practicing physician, Hans Selye observed that people who came for consultation showed common signs. He discovered the General Adaptation Syndrome. He highlighted how hormonal changes due to the demands on the body impacted digestion and vital signs of the body including blood pressure.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system keep our body in balance. When there is an external stimuli, the sympathetic system kicks-in the fight or flight response. This is then balanced by the parasympathetic system which brings the body back to rest state. This communication happens through a variety of neurotransmitters that make the body release chemicals that change the heart rate, blood pressure and other physiological parameters.

The amygdala is the key area in the brain that processes emotions. When this receives any signal of stress or danger it passes it on to the relevant centers of the brain. Stress increases the release of neurotransmitters including glutamate, GABA, serotonin etc. The hypothalamus then passes this signal to the other parts of the body through the sympathetic system resulting in release of adrenalin. This causes the body to exhibit symptoms of stress. The parasympathetic system has to kick-in to bring the system back to normalcy. If it fails to kick-in then the Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenalin axis starts responding to the stress. Cortisol is secreted which pervades the body. Actually cortisol should help to restore balance in the system but with chronic stress and too much cortisol being released, a lot of damage is caused to the system.

Yoga can help

Based on the biochemical reactions that happen in the body due to stress we understand that regulating the cortisol levels in the body is one way to manage the stress. Several scientific studies point to the impact

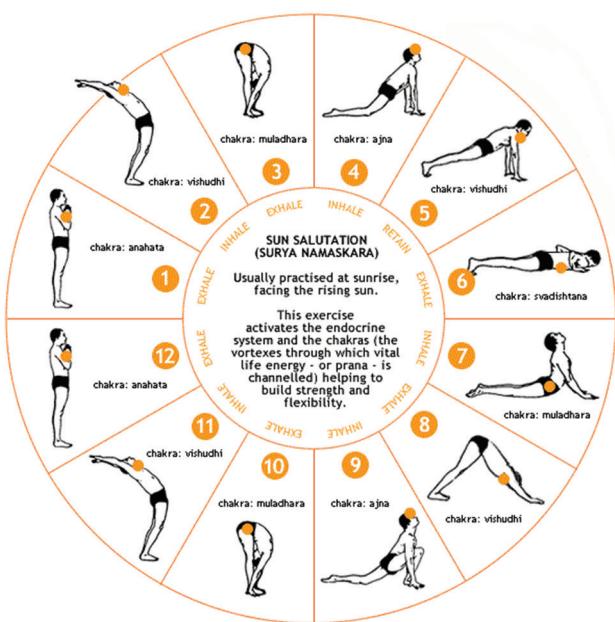
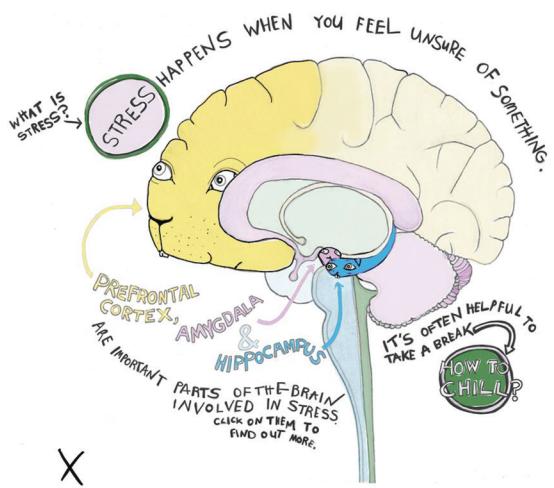
of Yoga on the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. Suryanamaskar, a practice with 12 steps, has been found to reduce somatic stress. Pranayama has had profound impact on patients with depression. It significantly reduces the cortisol levels in patients with depression and brought anti-depressant impact.

Yoga asanas lead to reduced waking cortisol, evening cortisol, systolic blood pressure, resting heart rate, and higher heart rate variability and other physiological measures, compared to controls. Asanas are also associated with better regulation of the sympathetic nervous system and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system in different populations. Even a single session of Hatha yoga can decrease stress and improve stress reactivity and recovery

Asana, Pranayama, Dhyana and mindfulness practices have been found to impact: neurotransmitters, brain wave regulation indicating calmness, reduction in PTSD, reduction in obsessive-compulsive behavior and enhanced brain connectivity.

What can you do combat stress?

- Have meaningful and happy conversations with friends and family
- Observe every situation keenly without being carried away by emotions
- When you feel the symptoms of stress are being triggered, take steps to calm yourself down
- Deep breathing relieves stress. Take up a Pranayama routine
- Asana bring the body back to normalcy after stressful situations. They help to regulate metabolism which goes haywire with stress.
- Dhyana and other contemplative practices bring about calmness as they work on the hormones and regulate them. Set aside some time for Dhyana as well
- Keep a schedule for holistic health practices. A daily 20 minute routine or alternate days of longer duration practices can really help
- If you are already into Yogic practices and would like to go deeper, adopting a silence routine cleanses the entire system. 3 hrs in the morning and 3 hrs in the evening for monthly 1 weekend can bring about amazing transformation.
- If you feel that the symptoms of stress are prolonged then do take a vaidya's help



The Plight of Pasmanda Muslims of South India

Adnan Qamar



Since the 12th century, Muslims have pervaded in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, making up more than 80 lakhs population in both states combined. Strangely, this region never had the influence of Hindutva ideology since the country's independence but the condition of 90 percent of Muslims who belong to Pasmanda communities is politically, socially and economically marginalised.

The proponents of pseudo secular-regional-lingual allied with a handful of elite leaders, such as Ashrafs in the Muslim community and seized control of all the resources from the Pasmandas. Hovering at the bottom of all the areas, the majority of the Muslims are poverty-stricken and stand behind Scheduled Caste (SCs) and Scheduled Tribe (STs) in all sectors. For many decades, the ruling governments of Congress, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) continued to appeal to the Muslim community through elite leaders and religious clerics without narrowly focusing on the

ground reality of Pasmandas. Only the Ashraf families benefitted from this and there was no participation from Pasmandas.

Who are Pasmanda Muslims?

During the mediaeval times, the native people belonging to Adivasis, Scheduled Caste and Backward Castes converted to Islam from Buddhism and Hinduism. They contribute 85 percent of the total Muslim population. Only 3-4 percent of Muslims are foreigners and around 10 percent are upper-caste converts. Hence, the majority of the Muslims belong to Indian origin and the ones left behind are called 'Pasmandas' or the ignored ones.

Today, in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, there are several examples of Muslim groups and individuals from various castes, such as Shaikhs, Patels, Achchukattalavandlu, Attar Saibulu, Nai Muslim, Laddaf, Doodhekala, Qureshi Kassab, etc.

Plight of Pasmanda Muslims

Presently, Pasmanda Muslims lack access to education, jobs, positions of importance, industry openings, land, etc. Unfortunately, 90 percent of the Muslim population doesn't possess any kind of a particular occupation or any kind of employment in the organised sector.

After taking over the most important roles, the Ashraf leaders and religious clerics ran a narrative of a monolithic Muslim identity, forcing Pasmanda Muslims to give up their caste-based occupations. The plight of Pasmanda Muslims began to deteriorate over time, as their degrees of poverty and illiteracy rose. They were eventually forced to give away their expensive possessions.

Certain Muslim mystical teachings propagated the supremacy of the Syed caste and allowed them to control religious affairs, Waqf properties, and minority institutions that resulted in horrifying societal discrimination, extreme poverty, neglect and illiteracy among Pasmanda Muslims. They advocate that respecting a Syed is equal to respecting the family of Prophet Mohammad and dishonouring a Syed will invite God's wrath. The leaders of Ashraf never desired Pasmanda to advance. They engaged Pasmanda in Hindu-Muslim disputes and projected the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to be their biggest enemy. Nevertheless, in reality, they have caused more harm to the entire Muslim community, than anyone else.

Personal Experience

In August 2022, I collaborated with the Indian Political Action Committee (IPAC) on a political survey at the community level. I went to Illuru village in the Khammam district. The village is located on the border of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. It has 2100 SC population and 400 Muslim populace. The Sarpanch of the village, Kota Rama Rao, a retired police officer, belonged to the SC Maala community and did his best to bring the Maalas and Madhigas in the hamlet together. Together, they constructed a community centre, where Babu Jagjivan Ram and Dr BR Ambedkar's sculptures were placed side by side. All of them were well-educated and every household

had at least one member working as a government employee.

The other side of the village had 90 Kutcha houses and one small Masjid belonging to the Muslim community. All of them were agricultural labourers who could speak only Telugu. I happened to meet the Imam of the Masjid, Subhan, a native of Bihar. Subhan told me that he was not paid Rs 8000 salary for two months because the Muslims in the village were very poor and could not afford his salary. He was thinking of relocating to a city.

There is no help from the minority institutions either. The level of ignorance is so high among those Muslim villagers that after returning from the fields in the evening, they sit on the veranda of the Masjid and drink alcohol. They don't possess much land in the village, so they have to work as agricultural labourers. Some of them have moved to the cities to work as construction labourers. They lack religious knowledge and also professional knowledge which is necessary to live morally upright lives.

The Urdu-speaking Ashrafs residing in the urban areas disrespect the Pasmanda Muslims for speaking the Telugu language. They consider Urdu to be an Islamic language and they discriminate against people who speak other languages. These Ashraf preachers live lavish lives and glamorise poverty for Pasmandas. It's high time for the Ashrafs to shun their supremacist attitude, and it's also time for the Pasmandas to stand up for themselves and compete with the world.

Adnan Qamar is a social activist, speaker, election strategist and a student of law working for the upliftment of Pasmanda Muslims. He tweets under @TheAdnanQama.



Scandal-plagued Garcetti heads to New Delhi as US ambassador

Maura Moynihan

US media is expectedly playing down Garcetti's contacts with the CCP, but has reported on how Eric Garcetti was alleged to have covered up an appalling sexual harassment scandal in the Los Angeles mayor's office.

After a rocky two-year campaign, the White House managed to get Eric Garcetti confirmed as US Ambassador to India on 15 March 2023, thanks to a handful of Republican Senators who chose to vote aye on the former mayor of Los Angeles, who has not shown much interest hitherto in the Indian subcontinent but has been accused by his detractors of having connections to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

US media is expectedly playing down Garcetti's contacts with the CCP, but has reported on how Eric Garcetti was alleged to have covered up an appalling sexual harassment scandal in the Los Angeles mayor's office. Los Angeles police officer Matthew Garza, who served as Garcetti's bodyguard for seven years, has filed a lawsuit claiming he was taunted and groped by top Garcetti advisor and fundraiser Rick Jacobs. The lawsuit alleges that

Jacobs tried to fondle Garza saying, "I love me my strong LAPD officers" and that "Garcetti was present on approximately half of the occasions when Jacobs behaved in this way, and witnessed Jacobs' conduct, but he took no action to correct Jacobs' obviously harassing behavior...On some occasions, the mayor would (allegedly) laugh at Jacobs' crude comments." Garcetti's former communications director, Naomi Seligman, claimed that she was told by staff that the mayor protected Jacobs. Seligman called Garcetti's confirmation as Ambassador to India "heartbreaking" for victims and whistleblowers.

Such chronicles alone would have disqualified Garcetti from consideration as envoy to India, a vital US ally and strategic partner, but what is more disturbing is Garcetti's long history of meetings with officials from the CCP's United Front Work Department, the CCP agency which "coordinates and conducts influence operations," according to a report from the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC). The Daily Caller News Foundation (DCNF) launched an investigation into Garcetti's China connections, and discovered a mayoral fund set up by Garcetti

in 2014 which received over \$1 million in donations from business tycoon Walter Wang and East West Bank CEO Dominic Ng. In April 2022, President Biden appointed Ng to represent the United States at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Ng has now been castigated by lawmakers after the DCNF exposed his ties to CCP influence and intelligence front groups.

Shortly after being sworn in as Los Angeles mayor, Garcetti led a trade delegation to the People's Republic of China in 2014, where Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) vice chairman Xu Kuangdi hosted a banquet for Garcetti, purportedly to discuss "climate change." In 2020, the US Department of State designated the CPAFFC a UFWD "affiliate" that "sought to directly and malignly influence state and local leaders to promote the PRC's global agenda." In February 2015, Garcetti returned the favour, hosting CPAFFC president Li Xiaolin and other CCP officials at Los Angeles' city hall.

Garcetti made official trips to China in 2009 and 2016 with the Center for American Progress, run by Clinton operative John Podesta, meeting with China-US Exchange Foundation (CUSEF) leaders. In 2013, Garcetti attended the CUSEF's "U.S.-China 2022" event at the Asia Society in New York on "bilateral cooperation." Scott McGregor, a Canadian intelligence expert and the co-author of "The Mosaic Effect: How The Chinese Communist Party Started A War In America's Backyard" claimed that Garcetti "would be considered leveraged and available for manipulation that favoured CCP strategies against India. These could include gaining trust and targeting key entities for exploitation. Geopolitically speaking, the efforts made by the US in India could be undermined and countered by China."

When the Republic of India commenced diplomatic relations with the US, many distinguished statesmen were sent to New Delhi, men who fostered lifelong relations with India. One of them was my late father, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, so I came to know many of these ambassadors. I never met the 2nd US envoy, Loy Henderson, but admired him greatly, as he saw the CCP capture of Tibet as a dire threat to India and tried to get the US government and UN to do something about it. Chester Bowles adored India and served two terms as US envoy, his wife Steff

was known for riding around Delhi on a bicycle in a sari and was the first ambassador's wife to host Indian classical music concerts at the residence. Our neighbours and friends in Cambridge, Ken and Kitty Galbraith filled the residence with artists, filmmakers and scholars and visited India every year into their late 80s. Ambassadors John Sherman Cooper and Ellsworth Bunker loved India and we often joined them at receptions at the Indian embassy in Washington. Ambassador Moynihan brokered the famed Rupee Deal and created the Indo-US Sub-commission on Art & Culture, which was a huge success, but was shut down by Clinton appointee Frank Wisner in 1995, against the wishes of the Government of India.

There followed some less impressive envoys. Bush appointee Blackwill was a China Hand who frequently called China the "superior civilization." Obama appointee Timothy Roemer was flummoxed when he was summoned to South Block after Obama snubbed the Dalai Lama. I paid him a call at the Roosevelt House residence and endeavoured to explain why such a snub might cause great offence to India, which protects the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees, with the bellicose CCP bearing down upon India from Tibet, but his only interest was promoting smokeless chulas. Two envoys of recent times were true friends of India: Dick Celeste had served as an aide to Chester Bowles and always wore FabIndia kurtas at his memorable receptions filled with Delhi glitterati. Peter Burleigh had been a consular officer in Calcutta during Ambassador Moynihan's tenure and had great admiration for India.

But in the view of his numerous critics, Garcetti has been a witness to atrocious disrespect for his own staff, and has made public his support for strong ties with the CCP, which is India and America's mortal enemy. I do hope that the Indian government pushes back hard should Garcetti follow the CCP playbook that is designed to undermine India-US relations. And if he does, President Biden needs to place the interests of the world's two biggest democracies over his friendship with the former mayor of Los Angeles.

Maura Moynihan is a New York based journalist and author, specialising in the Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet. Her website is: mauramoynihannet

US Banking Crisis: Is the worst yet to come?

Siddhartha Rastogi

Many reasons being cited for the ongoing banking crisis in the United States. The questions are being raised like what did the West do during Covid-19 that triggered the present banking crisis? Why did the US Inflation reach such alarming levels?

करता था तो कर्यं रह्या, अब कर्त्त्वं पछताड़।
बोलै पेड़ बबूल को, अमृत कहाँ तै खोड़॥

This famous couplets (Doha) of Sant Kabirdas, a saint-poet from 15th-century Bharat, suggests, "While performing vile acts, one never thinks of the outcome. Now that the negative repercussions of such actions have come to light, one is feeling apologetic and guilty. What good is the repentant face now? If you sow the seeds of an acacia tree, it will bear sweet delectable mangoes.

Never-ending dilemma

While undertaking certain actions thinking it will yield immediate short-term results, one never imagines it to turn out toxic in the long term. Such outcomes undermine one's existence and even intent.

Today's West is facing an acute conundrum. High inflation is hitting the bottom of the pyramid. But the steps taken to curb such inflation should not lead to interest rates that may trigger a new banking crisis. Policymakers' actions to increase interest rates to soothe the bottom of the pyramid can lead to unintended consequences.

With the rise of interest rates, there can be a possible bubble burst across all asset classes including debt, equity, and real estate where the rich invest and who are largely responsible for paying taxes and running financial markets. With the bubble bursting, the rich would suffer severe financial losses and will end up laying off millions of workers, again hitting the bottom of the pyramid.

So either way, the weakest in the West is under pressure. This eventuality is being felt and is reflected by the pressure being built on the political system as well.



'Five PMs in last 7 years in the UK'

'Four Prime Ministers in the last 6 years in Italy'

And the list is long. For large businesses, the perplexing choice remains between reducing costs and declining profitability. For these corporations in general, input costs have gone up due to Russian Ukraine War, manpower cost has gone up due to the Great resignation during covid and post-covid era, and supply chain issues loom large on account of China's ZERO covid-19 Policy and sometimes due to China's geo-political tensions with the West.

US per capita consumption is the highest in the world. With less than 5 per cent of the World's population, the US uses one-third of the world's paper, a quarter of the world's oil, 23 per cent of the coal, 27 per cent of the aluminum, and 19 per cent of the copper

To top this all, deeply embedded (in the financial markets), greed-driven and propelled crypto (primarily introduced during the covid period) is creating havoc. Some estimates suggest that as of January 2023,

there are 420 million crypto users across the world. This gigantic figure is a result of last few years of crypto-boom. And why not! Crypto promised everyone the promised land with some cryptos delivering as high as 400 per cent returns in a single calendar year of 2021.

Cheap Liquidity, near zero interest rates, lack of focus on addressing supply chain issues (over-dependence on imported goods) created a chimerical environment of Midas Touch, where equities, bonds, cryptos, real estate practically everything was surging. Perils and pitfalls are now being witnessed.

Before we get deep into facts, figures and analysis, let's re-evaluate where the world stands today.

Between 2008 (post the Great Financial Crisis) and 2018, the US pursued a simple policy of expanding its balance sheet size, by buying toxic securities issued by private entities to protect them against default. The money came in the form of incremental borrowing by the US government to support such an initiative. Additionally, the Fed reduced interest rates, promoted consumption by households and expansion of capacities by industry on borrowed funds, leading to higher leverage. As the economy grew, limited action was taken to roll back these freebies.

In 2013, some rollbacks were undertaken partially but the markets witnessed weakness, and then the rollback plan was either halted or altered or slowed down.

When a body is put on steroids as the cure, it will experience some aches when the steroid is withdrawn. But gradual withdrawal is a must. This is what happened with the US. As the intent leading to some action of the QE (Quantitative Easing) – free support from the US Fed was about to slow down, the covid struck. With limited options in sight, the economy was supplied with even further support.

This time stimulus was through direct physical cash dole-outs. In March 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was implemented, providing Economic Impact Payments of up to USD 1,200 per adult for eligible individuals and USD 500 per qualifying child under the age of 17 in the United States.

On top of it, Up to USD 500 per month was handed over for 3 months to Employees who are facing salary loss for at least 3 consecutive months, with an average overall loss of at least 50 per cent.

Unfortunately, this was done despite the very high gross National Debt of the US. At present, the US GDP is ~ 23.5 trillion USD its National debt hovers over 31 trillion USD.

US banks are sitting on a market-to-market loss of 620 billion USD whilst FDIC, the institution that guarantees the security of USD 250,000 per account holder has a balance of 128 billion USD

Despite such a grim financial condition, the US per capita consumption is the highest in the world. With less than 5 per cent of the World's population, the US uses one-third of the world's paper, a quarter of the world's oil, 23 per cent of the coal, 27 per cent of the aluminum, and 19 per cent of the copper. Americans also generate ~half of the globe's solid waste.

When covid struck, free money doles from the Government, as well as lower interest rates (Near Zero) fueled hyper fundraising from corporates. Q2, 2020 peak of Covid Chaos, Goldman Sachs leading American investment bank reported the biggest earnings outperformance in nearly a decade. So was the case of other investment banks. The decline in interest rates created a bond rally triggering a huge upside for bond traders.

During covid consumption of services slipped down, however, consumption of goods jumped as it was believed that the mental distress of covid could be set off by the materialistic world by shopping goods online. Roughly one-third of the goods consumed in the US are produced directly or indirectly in China. Despite tariffs on logistics in 2020, going higher, due to covid, the average American continued on its buying spree.

Actions leading to Reactions

During the period of covid, all investment asset classes flourished and so did crypto. With excess time in hand and zeal to make quick money, the world started chasing Crypto.

1. Crypto has no underlying strength and is solely dependent on demand and supply. As crypto gained momentum during 2020 and 2021, market participants started taking exposure to crypto using it as collateral for lending. Some of the banks mentioned above had significant exposure to crypto and when the crypto collapse happened (cheap liquidity being withdrawn due to a rise in interest rates), the banks became insolvent leading to bankruptcy.

2. Another interesting thing that happened post-covid is the surge in US Gsec Yields as mentioned above. This led to a huge Market to Market (MTM) loss in the Investment book of the banks and financial institutions that were invested in US Government bonds or fixed coupon securities. A rise in yields leads to a drop in bond values. This is true for individuals as well as institutions holding long-dated bonds.

A further rise in yields (on account of rising interest rates) jacked up the losses and banks that were not able to raise money by selling equities (difficult in a weak equity market scenario playing out since Jan 2022), it led to insolvency leading to bankruptcy.

What everyone knows

1 *The US inflation in 2019 was 1.81 per cent and stood at 6.5 per cent in Dec 2022 after hitting a high of 9.1 per cent in June 2022*

2 *The US average home loan rate stood at 3.2 per cent in 2019 (pre-covid) and now stands at 7.5 per cent on average*

3 *The 10-year US Govt bond was trading at a yield of 0.51 per cent in Aug 2020 and hit a high of 4.00 per cent just a few days back, a spike of 350 basis in two and half years*

4 *Genesis Global Capital, one of the largest crypto lenders with 1 billion USD in assets and 10 billion USD in liabilities filed for bankruptcy in Jan 2023*

5 *FTX, (much-published information) – the third-largest cryptocurrency exchange by volume, with over one million users failed and filed for bankruptcy in Nov 2022. The story of FTX was the same: a couple of billion USD in assets and 10 billion USD in liabilities. The second largest crypto exchange Coinbase is*

enveloped in the ominous smoke of its insolvency.

6 *CORE SCIENTIFIC, One of the biggest publicly traded crypto mining companies in the United States, Crypto lender Blockfi, CELSIUS NETWORK a large crypto lending company, VOYAGER DIGITAL, a cryptocurrency brokerage company, THREE ARROWS CAPITAL, The crypto hedge fund filed for bankruptcies within last 6 months. The list of failed institutions in crypto is even longer*

7 *As recently as March 2023, Silvergate Capital, a big lender in crypto, and one of the two main banks for the Crypto industry went bankrupt. The other major one, that supported the Crypto ecosystem, Signature Bank with 50 billion USD of assets also, went down. The story of Silicon Valley Bank or SVB, the 16th largest lender in the United States is quite popular. First Republic Bank, another major bank in the United States failed but got rescued*

3. Account holders in the US banks are assured of Insurance on deposits or balances of up to 250,000 USD or below. But the US Government has extended insurance on larger amounts as well to failed bank deposit holders of Signature and Silicon Valley Bank. There is a huge dichotomy between what people think they have and what exists. (Perceived Safety Vs RealSafety)

At the moment, the US banks are sitting on a market-to-market loss of 620 billion USD (before the 25 basis hike announced on March 22nd by the Fed, 25 basis will further worsen the situation) whilst FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corp), the institution that guarantees the security of USD 250,000 per account holder has a balance of ~ 128 billion USD.

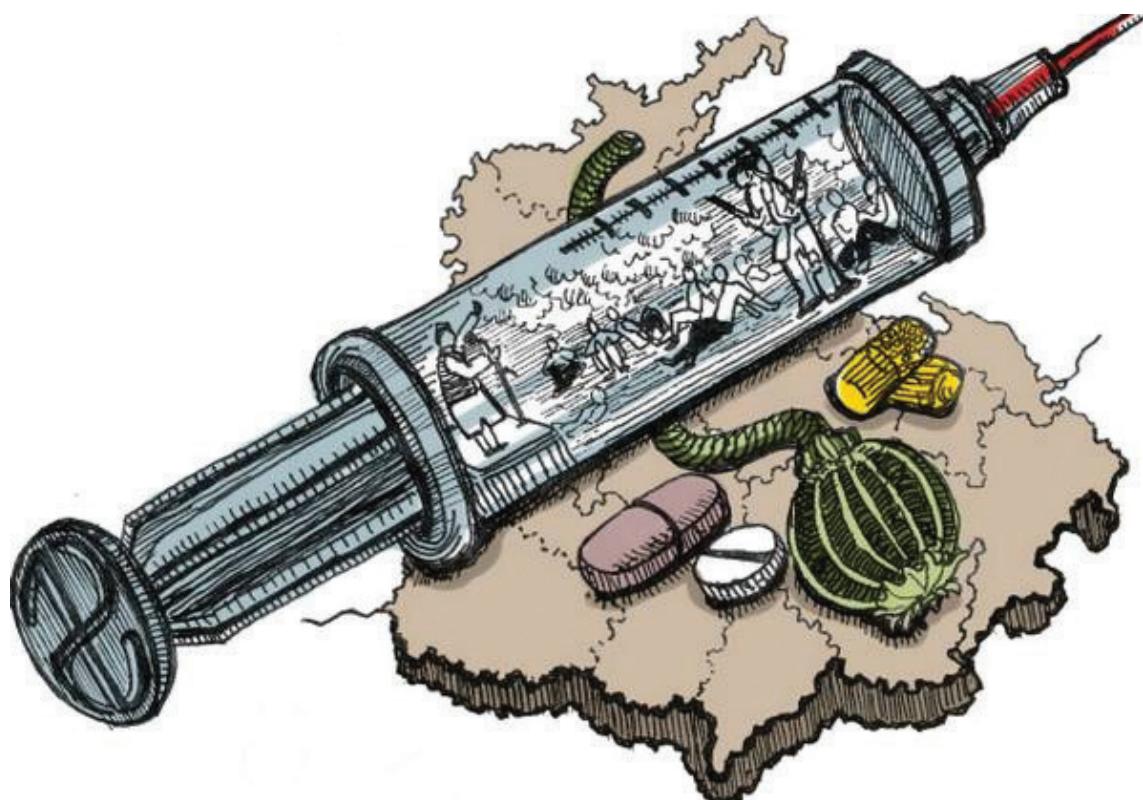
Imagine the time bomb the US banking system is sitting on. Furthermore, where does FDIC invest this 128 billion USD or a large part of it?

FDIC invests in US government bonds, whose yields have risen sharply leading to marked-to-market losses (MTM) within the FDIC portfolio as well. If interest rates don't come off in a hurry, the worst is yet to come before it improves, rattling both Equity capital markets and the lives of people.

War against drugs in Punjab is for all to fight

Tarun Chugh

Drug menace in Punjab has shattered many families in the state. Hospitals are overflowing, and tales of agonies of broken households, financial stress, indebtedness of the rural people, deaths are widely being shared



Punjab prisons are brimming with drug-peddlers and addicts. The social fabric in the state is in deep crisis.

The drug menace in Punjab has wreaked havoc, which has been chronicled by several national agencies. This calls for a national response to deal with the pervasive menace of drug addictions.

The magnitude of the drug-addiction among the people in Punjab is mind-boggling. The people from all walks of lives are being drawn into the cobweb of drug-addictions. While Punjab has been the bulwark of India, Pakistan set its nefarious designs on the state. Pakistan's military designs were crushed on the battlefields. Still, Pakistan persisted to wage proxy

wars, beginning with terrorism exported to Punjab, which India successfully defeated. Now Pakistan has resorted to a new warfare of drugs, which have been weaponised with aims to subdue the bravery of the people of Punjab.

A vast tentacle has been created at the behest of Pakistan to push drugs into Punjab, and drones are being used for peddling drugs. Cross-border smuggling of drugs even through the sea routes to push the drugs sourced from Afghanistan is being used. There is a syndicate of drug-peddlers active in Punjab.



The extent of challenge has overwhelmed the existing facilities of de-addiction centres. Families are shaken. Hospitals are overflowing, and tales of agonies of broken households, financial stress, indebtedness of the rural people, deaths are widely being shared.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has taken several causes. The Central government has come out with policy response to deal with the social challenges. Some of the northern states had a very poor sex ratio in the 0-6 age groups. A few of the states had seen mushrooming of the ultrasound clinics. They had come up solely to meet the growing demand to kill the girl child in the fetus. PM Modi rose to the occasion and gave a clarion call to the nation with 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'.

Within a few years, the practice of killing the girl child is now mostly eliminated. Similar result was seen with the campaign of 'Swachchata Abhiya'. Sanitation became the mantra of nation. This helped India in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic effectively. Now, the BJP is taking out yatra to extinguish drug menace in Punjab.

Battle against drugs in Punjab has to be a social cause, which should be on the top agenda of all the stakeholders. The civil society must step up their resources to deal with the issue. Political parties too must own up the challenge. Social activists must counter the sociological and psychological aspects of the crisis. Religious leaders too have abundant duty to intervene and rescue the people.

Social service drives the Bharatiya Janata Party. Politics for the BJP is the means to serve the people. 'Sewa (service)' is the mantra of the BJP. In times of the Covid-19 pandemic, when the people faced hardships on account of the national lockdown, the BJP workers were on the street for 'Sewa', to ensure that none went hungry and there was no suffering. This has been ingrained in the DNA of the BJP workers. They don't need to be directed by the party leadership to respond to the social crisis. The BJP workers on their own step out. For them, the people in distress are the family members.

The BJP will be launching a 'yatra' in Punjab to free the state from the clutches of drug menace. This is the abundant duty of the BJP workers. Punjab cannot wait anymore. Time to crush the tentacles of drug menace and the cause cannot be postponed for another day anymore.

The top leadership of the BJP has taken a call to launch the yatra against the drug menace in Punjab. Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah will take part in the yatra. The BJP president Jagat Pratap Nadda will also take part in the yatra. Several top leaders of the BJP will walk alongside the people of Punjab to send out the message that the drug menace has to be crushed in the state.

(The writer is National General Secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party)

Selection of a new Tibetan Buddhist leader stumps Xi Jinping

Utpal Kumar

If the 15th Dalai Lama reincarnates in India, and that too before the death of the current one, it would be game up for China's Tibetan stratagem – at least for the time being



The eight-year-old boy was pictured with the Dalai Lama at a ceremony that took place in Dharamshala in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Image courtesy: the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

With reports in the media suggesting that a US-born Mongolian boy has been recognised as the incarnation of the third most important spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism, China's worst nightmare seems to be turning into a reality. The eight-year-old boy has reportedly been regarded as the 10th Khalkha Jetsun Dhampa Rinpoche by none other than the 14th

Dalai Lama during the ceremony in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, where the 87-year-old Tibetan leader has been living in exile since his escape from Lhasa in 1959.

The Chinese government has been on an overdrive for quite some time to make sure that the Tibetan leadership is selected through communist party regulations. It is especially obsessed with the selection of the 15th Dalai Lama, saying he would need to have the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) blessings. In fact, The Global Times, a

CCP mouthpiece, in a 22 February 2023 article, 'Recognition of new Dalai Lama must be conducted in China', while asserting that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama (whose selection has already been compromised by communist manipulation) hold equal positions in Tibetan Buddhism, said that the process of their selection "has been supervised by the Chinese Central Government and conducted within Chinese territory since the late 13th century".

"The reincarnation convention of Living Buddhas in Xizang was established during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), developed in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and improved during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) under the administration of the central government," the article said, as it emphasised how in 1653, "when the 5th Dalai Lama came to Beijing, the Emperor Shunzhi officially conferred the title of Dalai Lama on him". This "marked the first time that the title of Dalai Lama was granted by the central government".

Truth and fair play have never been the strongest points of the communist regime in China. Anyone even partly acquainted with Tibetan Buddhism would know that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama never held "equal position". Equally ludicrous is the claim that Tibet was always a Chinese territory. It was only after Mao's troops invaded the Roof of the World in 1950 that Tibetans came under Chinese control. Traditional China was just a third of the area it is today. It became what it is through the combination of communist planning, deception and force in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

In an article in 1965, noted historian RC Majumdar explained an innate imperialist tendency among the Chinese from the third century BC to the present day: "It is characteristic of China that if a region once acknowledged her nominal suzerainty even for a short period, she would regard it as a part of her empire forever and would automatically revive her claim over it even after a thousand years whenever there was a chance of enforcing it."

Interestingly, the Chinese, especially of the communist hue, don't always scream to forward their undue claims; they at times keep quiet to indulge in a subterfuge. Former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran narrated a story during a public lecture in

2012. Referring to a conversation between former Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs, RK Nehru, and Chinese Premier Chou En-lai in 1962, just before the big war, Saran said, "RK Nehru drew attention to reports that China was leaning towards the Pakistani position that Jammu & Kashmir was a disputed territory. He recalled to Chou an earlier conversation, where when asked whether China accepted Indian sovereignty over J&K, he had said rhetorically – has China ever said that it does not accept Indian sovereignty over J&K, or words to that effect. At this latest encounter, Chou turned the same formulation on its head, to ask: Has China ever said that India has sovereignty over J&K?"

Be it through Mao's strong-arm tactics or Deng's quiet diplomacy, the fact is the communists in Beijing have always wanted to tamper with the selection of the top Tibetan spiritual leadership, especially that of the Dalai Lama. And the recent Dharamshala incident would make them realise that their dubious succession plan won't be a cake walk. If the Tibetan leadership has managed to find the 10th Khalkha Jetsun Dhampa Rinpoche, who is the third most important spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism, after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, outside Tibet, much against the Chinese diktat that warranted the search for the top Tibetan leadership to be "conducted within Chinese territory", what's the guarantee that the successor to the 14th Dalai Lama won't be found outside, especially India? More so when the current Dalai Lama himself is living in an exile in India. The Chinese government could tamper with the selection of the Panchen Lama just because he was found in Tibet. Things won't be easy beyond its frontiers.

But for that the current Tibetan leadership has to make certain amends. The 14th Dalai Lama writes in his memoirs, *My Land and My People*, how with the passing of the 13th Dalai Lama, the search began for his reincarnation, for each Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of his predecessor. "First, a Regent had to be appointed by the National Assembly to govern the country until the new reincarnation could be found and grow to maturity. Then, in accordance with the time-honoured customs and traditions, the state oracles and learned lamas were consulted – as a first step towards finding out where the reincarnation had appeared. Curious cloud formations were seen in the northeast from Lhasa. It was recalled that after

the Dalai Lama died, his body was placed seated on a throne in the Norbulingka, his summer residence in Lhasa, facing towards the south; but after a few days it was seen that the face had turned towards the east. And on a wooden pillar on the northeastern side of the shrine where the body sat, a great star-shaped fungus suddenly appeared. All this and other evidence indicated the direction where the new Dalai Lama should be sought," he writes.

These spiritual signs and visions helped find Lhamo Thondup, who would become the 14th Dalai Lama in 1940, six years after his birth in a farming family at Taktser. But can the Tibetans blindly follow these traditions, given the fact that the Chinese authorities are waiting with bated breath to distort the selection process, as they did in 1995 when the Chinese government detained the Dalai Lama's choice for the successor of the 10th Panchen Lama, named Gendun Choekyi Nyima, when he was six years old. Since then Beijing has refused to give details of his whereabouts. When the Tibetan people revolted, the Chinese government responded by appointing its own Panchen Lama. Today, as there are two Panchen Lamas, thanks to the Chinese subterfuge, what's the guarantee that there couldn't be two Dalai Lamas in future?

The very fact that the institution of the Dalai Lama is most revered in the Tibetan tradition makes it more prone to Chinese attack and distortion. Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari writes in his just released book, *The Dalai Lama's Special Envoy: Memoirs of a Lifetime in Pursuit of a Reunited Tibet*, "The role of the Lama, or the teacher, is the cornerstone of our religious practice, so much so that when we recite the Refuge prayer, Homage to the Guru precedes Homage to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This is not to diminish the central importance of the Three Jewels, but rather to recognise the Lama as the embodiment of all three. Within all the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, the very first salutation is as follows: Homage to the Guru; Homage to the Buddha; Homage to the Dharma; Homage to the Sangha."

The utmost significance of the institution of the Dalai Lama makes it susceptible to Chinese assaults. It is this fear that has made the 14th Dalai Lama say so many things about the institution of the Dalai Lama — from it outliving its utility, to asking people to decide if

they want to continue the Dalai Lama lineage. The institution of the Dalai Lama is an important Tibetan bulwark against the hegemonic Chinese forces. It's the moral duty of the current Dalai Lama to ensure that this is well guarded and secured even after he is gone. One option for him can be to tweak the Tibetan tradition to ensure that his successor is not just announced well before his death; he can also extend the domain of reincarnation process beyond the Tibetan frontiers. Maybe since the current Dalai Lama is in exile in India, it's logical to think that his successor would be born on Indian soil as well. This would not just outwit the Chinese waiting to manipulate the succession process, but also give the wise Dalai Lama enough time to transfer his spiritual wisdom to the successor.

The recognition of the eight-year-old Mongolian boy as the 10th Khalkha Jetsun Dhampa Rinpoche has stumped the Xi Jinping dispensation. One won't be surprised to see China orchestrating a media blitz on how the next Dalai Lama has to have Beijing's blessings, besides greater pressure being put on countries like India and Mongolia to not entertain such Tibetan 'fancies'. Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari's *The Dalai Lama's Special Envoy* rightly says, "As Beijing passes laws asserting control over selection of the next Dalai Lama and pressures Mongolia and India to deny that right to Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leaders beyond China's borders, it is becoming obvious that the many millions of devout followers of His Holiness across Asia will refuse to accept a pretender."

Now that's real worry for Xi Jinping: He knows it well that he can't push the Modi dispensation beyond a point, a trailer for which has been shown by the Indian troops on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) for almost three years now. And in this scenario, if the 15th Dalai Lama reincarnates in India, and that too before the death of the current one, it would be game up for the Chinese Tibetan stratagem. At least for the time being.

The author is Opinion Editor, Firstpost and News18. He tweets from @Utpal_Kumar1.

Supreme Court order on CEC is bringing back old era of judicial activism, declare CJI a God

Dilip Mandal & Nitin Meshram



The Supreme Court's recent order on the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners has transgressed into the legislature's domain. This can have huge ramifications and potentially harm the foundation of Indian democracy, which rests on two constitutional masonic stones. One, there should be separation of powers among the three pillars of democracy; two, the Supreme Court of India should not act as a parallel legislative body.

A five-judge Supreme Court bench called for an independent committee comprising the prime minister, the leader of opposition (or the leader of the numerically largest opposition party in Lok Sabha) and the Chief Justice of India to advise the President on the appointment of the CEC and the ECs – until Parliament enacts a new law. The judgment is based on four points:

First, the Constitution does not have a written law for how the Election Commission should function. Second, the Election Commission should be independent for a healthy and functioning democracy. Third, many people think the Election Commission favours certain political parties. And fourth, the Supreme Court has the power to give "complete justice" under Article 142 of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court argued that the Election Commission isn't functioning properly because of the "pernicious effects of the exclusive power being vested with the Executive to make appointment to the Election Commission."

Currently, the President of India appoints the CEC and ECs based on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers headed by the PM under Article 324 of the

Indian Constitution. The article does not specify the instruments of instruction for the President before making an appointment so does Parliament.

As per Article 324(2), the "appointment...shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President."

It is important to note that the executive powers of the Union are co-extensive with the powers of Parliament as per Article 73 of the Constitution. Therefore, the procedure adopted by the Council of Ministers while appointing CEC and ECs is itself a law. The word 'any' occurring in Article 324(2) is significant because it does not obligate Parliament to make a law as a condition precedent while appointing CEC or EC.

When a law contemplated by the Constitution under 324(2) is not a condition precedent for the appointment of CEC and ECs, Article 142 of the Constitution (which empowers the Supreme Court to do complete justice) will not come into play when law is itself not contemplated as the prerequisite of appointment.

Article 142 can only be exercised for doing complete justice by the Supreme Court. Its invocation was justified for providing judicial legislation in the absence of parliamentary laws. The Constitution itself provided that no decree or order passed by the Supreme Court is enforceable unless it is either backed by a law made by Parliament or prescribed by the order of the President to protect the scheme of separation of powers under the Constitution.

A violation is in order

A comparative study of the various versions of the Article in question can substantiate this claim. The precursor to Article 142(1) was Article 118(1) in the Draft Constitution prepared in February 1948 by the Drafting Committee.

Article 118 (1) The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by

Parliament.

Article 142 (1) The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and until provision in that behalf is so made in such manner as the President may by order prescribe.

It is interesting to note that the additions in Article 142(1) weren't made by any amendment proposed by the Constituent Assembly, but was recommended by the Drafting Committee.

That is to say, an order or decree of the Supreme Court is enforceable only with the sanction of Parliament. And as the sanction of Parliament cannot be obtained expeditiously, it has to be so prescribed by the President.

This provision can be understood as stemming from the principle of separation of powers. Our Constitution does not envisage that the Supreme Court becomes a parallel legislative body. Any order passed by it has to get the seal of Parliament or the executive.

Therefore, the Supreme Court's recent order cannot be implemented unless it is approved by Parliament or the President promulgates an Ordinance under Article 123 of the Constitution giving temporary effect to the order of the Supreme Court.

It is pertinent to note that providing the composition of a committee comprising CJI amounts to a violation of separation of power. We are increasingly bringing the CJI's office within the executive domain, which is not permissible in the Constitution.

Also, we are not paying heed to Dr BR Ambedkar's words in the Constituent Assembly with respect to the Chief Justice. "But after all the Chief Justice is a man with all the failings, all the sentiments and all the prejudices which we as common people have; and I think, to allow the Chief Justice practically a veto upon the appointment of judges is really to transfer the authority to the Chief Justice which we are not



prepared to veto is the President or the Government of the day. I, therefore, think that is also a dangerous proposition," he had said.

We are of the considered opinion that the Supreme Court is on a mission to declare the Chief Justice of India as a 'god' or a deity of the country with the divine power, which we all must reject.

When Parliament did not enact a law in last 73 years and we do not see even a single private member bill introduced for it, that means, the Parliament do not want to interfere with existing mechanism of appointment of CEC and ECs. Last but not the least, the Supreme Court is not an arbiter of what advice is tendered to President and therefore, its interference with a mechanism provided by the Constitution is wholly unwarranted and uncalled for, nay, its unconstitutional.

It's interesting that the same judiciary is not ready for any interference from the executive in its own process of appointments of senior judges by the collegium. The irony is that according to the constitutional scheme, its the executive that was entrusted to appoint the judges of the high courts and the Supreme Court.

That power of the executive was usurped by the judiciary in 1993 through 2nd Judges Case judgment. The judiciary is still defending the collegium system, which was contrarian to the Constitution. But they want to have their say in the appointment of election commissioners.

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North East Elections: Unprecedented rise of saffron in the region



India's Northeast, known as the 'land of rising sun' is witnessing the lotus blooming. Today in all the eight Northeastern states (Termed as 'Asta Lakshmi' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi) NDA enjoys the mandate of the people. In Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Assam, NDA formed Govt while in Tripura, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh, BJP alone got a full majority.

The rise of the BJP in the political landscape of the Northeast bears significance on several fronts. The hotbed of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, India's Northeast shares international borders with China, Bangladesh and Myanmar and is connected to the rest of the country with a mere 20 km width 'chicken neck'. North East, which abounds in natural resources and torch bearers of India's cultural heritage since time immemorial, came to

be known for the wrong reasons—violence became the recurring theme in the socio-political discourse of the region. The development narrative got subverted. Aspirations of the indigenous people remained unfulfilled; issues concerning security remained unaddressed. A sense of alienation took hold. It became a case of a broken dream. "Tute hue sapne ki/sune kaun siski/ Antar ko chir/ Byatha palko par thithki..." Vajpayee ji's poetic lines could best explain the condition. Successionist agitation/militant activities started, and violence killed many. Rashtrawadi organisation's leaders became the target of militant organisations. Pramod Dikshit, Murli Manohar, and Sukleswar Medhi were pracharaks of RSS who were killed by the militant ULFA. Many others laid down their lives to keep the

honour of tiranga intact.

BJP, with its "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" mission, seems determined to expand its base to every nook and corner of the country. Earlier, BJP Leadership stood by the indigenous people of Assam and supported the anti-foreigners agitation launched by the All Assam Students' Union. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in his visit to Assam as Prime Minister, gave a clarion call to narrow down the distance of mind: "Maan ki duriya Mitane hei". BJP has been able to make its presence felt in all the northeastern states, including the

Christian-majority states of Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram.

In the recently held assembly elections in Tripura, BJP got a full majority and formed Govt under the leadership of Manik Saha. In Nagaland, BJP and its allies have won the people's mandate and formed Govt under Neiphiu Rio's leadership. In Meghalaya, BJP made a post-poll alliance with Conrad Sangma-led NPP and formed Govt. In Tripura, BJP won 33 seats with a 38.97 per cent vote share. Once a left bastion, Tripura has witnessed the phenomenal rise of the BJP. The left won 49 seats in the 60-member Assembly election in 2013 with 48.11 per cent votes; Congress won 10 seats with 36.53 per cent vote share. BJP managed to get only 1.54 per cent votes. BJP workers, along with its supportive social organisations, worked hard to change the 'old order' led by CPI(M). Some BJP workers were brutally killed. But the indomitable spirit never gave up. In 2018 Tripura Assembly election, BJP defeated CPI(M) by winning 36 seats in the 60-member Tripura assembly. CPI(M) could win only 16 seats. BJP got 43 per cent vote share and CPI(M) could garner 42.7 per cent votes.

In Nagaland, BJP's ally, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) won 25 seats with 32.22 per cent votes, while BJP got 12 seats with 18.81 per cent votes. NDPP-BJP coalition won 37 seats and formed Govt led by Neiphiu Rio. A decade ago in 2013, BJP managed to win only one seat with 1.8 per cent votes. Indian National Congress got 24.9 per cent votes. This time Congress' vote share declined to 3.55 per cent. The North East remained a bastion for the Congress party for decades after independence. But of late, its political space is fast

eroding. The Christian-dominated state of Nagaland has witnessed the phenomenal rise of the BJP. In the last Assembly election in 2018, BJP won 12 seats with 15.3 per cent vote share. This time vote share has increased to 18.81 per cent.

In Meghalaya, Conrad Sangma-led National People's Party won 26 seats, United Democratic Party 11, BJP 02, and Hill State People's Democratic Party 2 in the 60-member assembly election. These parties have formed a post-poll alliance and formed a government led by Conrad Sangma. Two independent MLAs have also supported the Government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi blessed the swearing-in ceremony of Conrad Sangma on March 7, 2023. A decade ago BJP had little presence in the political landscape of the state.

In 2018 the party could win 2 seats with 9.6 per cent votes. In 2023, it won maintained its seat share. In the 2013 assembly election Indian National Congress got 34.8 per cent votes. In this election, the vote share of the Congress party has declined to 13.14 per cent.

Earlier BJP had won people's mandate in the Christian-concentrated Northeastern states of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. In the 2022 Assembly election in Manipur BJP won 32 seats in the 60-member Assembly. Congress had to be content with five seats only. BJP's vote share in the state increased from 2.12 per cent in 2012 to 36.6 per cent in 2017 and 37.83 per cent in 2022. In the 2012 Assembly election, the party contested 19 Assembly seats but failed to open its account. But in 2017, the party won 21 seats and formed Government with Naga People's Front (NPF) and National People's Party (NPP).

In Manipur, the Christian population is 41 per cent and in Arunachal Pradesh Christian population constitutes 30.26 per cent of the total population. This region of the country is home to more than 400 ethnic communities with their unique cultural heritage. In the last assembly election in 2019 in Arunachal Pradesh BJP got a landslide victory, winning 41 seats in the 60 member Arunachal assembly. Congress, which ruled the state for a long period of time in the past, had to be content with four seats only. BJP got 50.86 per cent popular

votes while Cong could garner only 16.85 per cent vote. In the parliamentary election, BJP won both the parliamentary seats of Arunachal Pradesh. Its vote share increased from 47.80 per cent in 2014 to 58.16 per cent in 2019, while Congress' vote share declined from 43.7 per cent in 2014 to 20.49 per cent in 2019.

Assam witnessed a saffron surge in the 2014 parliamentary election and the April 2016 Assembly election. In a state where the Muslim population constitutes 34 per cent of the state, BJP won 60 seats and 84 with its allies. Its vote share went up to 30 per cent in 2016 from 11 per cent in the 2011 Assembly election. In the 2014 Parliamentary election, the party won 7 seats out of 14. The Congress won 3, and the AIUDF won 3. In the 2019 Parliamentary election, it won 9 with 31.5 per cent vote share. Cong won 3, AIUDF 1 and one won by an independent candidate. In the 2021 Assembly elections, BJP led NDA again got the people's mandate with 75 seats. BJP alone got 60 seats with 33.21 per cent vote share.

Once perceived as a 'Hindi-Hindu' party by the opponent/critics, BJP has now crossed all geographical, linguistic, and religious barriers and enjoys wide acceptance nationwide. The party now spreads in every nook and corner of the country. It has moved ahead with its commitment to development and cultural nationalism.

What explains the surge in India's defence exports?

Kartik Bommakanti

India imported \$24 billion worth of equipment during the last five years making it the largest importer of military equipment in the world.



India has emerged as a considerably consequential defence exporter in the last 5-6 years with the total exports standing at Rs 15,920 crore or US\$1.5 billion for the Financial Year (FY) 2022-23. This figure is in sharp contrast to Indian defence exports in FY 2016-17, which stood at Rs 1,521 crore or a little over \$150 million and over 10 times lower than in FY 2022-23.

The Modi government's aim is to increase it to \$5 billion by 2025 – an export target that is more than three times as much as it is today. India's defence export performance is attributable to at least three critical factors:

Making Defence Exporting Easier

The first is the Ministry of Defence (MoD) simplifying

export procedures by making them conducive and friendlier for Indian industry, which has enabled the MoD to execute military sales abroad. End-to-end procedures have been rendered simpler by the MoD with online authorisation. Consequently, businesses involved in the defence export sector have seen a drastic reduction in delays in clearances and bureaucratic red tape.

Secondly, the MoD has issued an Open General Export License, which has significantly eased the flow of exports in three specific areas such as components and parts, Transfer of Technology and export of key weapons and platforms to select export destinations such as the US, the UK, South Africa, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Japan, Mexico, Italy and France. The Open General



Export License is a one-time clearance and valid for two years from the date of issue.

Consequently, a whole slew of exports has been made according to the MoD such as, "...Dornier 228 aircraft, 155mm Advanced Towed Artillery Guns (ATAGs), BrahMos cruise missiles, Akash Surface to Air Missile (SAMs) systems, Pinaka rockets and launchers, thermal imagers, body armours,...Line Replaceable Units (LRU) and parts and components and avionics and small arms. There is a growing global demand of LCA-Tejas, Light Combat Helicopters, aircraft carrier, MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) activities etc."

The outcome of these internal reforms has made it easier to conduct business through its approach of catalysing higher exports and making products highly attractive in the global arms market.

The BrahMos Breakthrough

The third key factor, which is little known, yet vitally notable, is the competitiveness of specific Indian weapons systems, which has rendered them more export worthy. Take the BrahMos cruise missile, which travels at supersonic speeds, that is a joint venture between Russia and India.

The JV called BrahMos Aerospace was set up in

1998 resulting in a cruise missile co-developed by New Delhi and Moscow. Following extensive and rigorous testing, the Indian armed services have inducted variants of the missile. The supersonic cruise missile was sold to the Philippines as part of a contract signed in January 2022 to meet its coastal defence needs for a price of \$375 million.

Indeed, this sale alone accounts for roughly one quarter of India's total defence exports. What explains the missile's overseas sales? Indian technology firms such as Data Patterns Limited (DPL) have developed low-cost parts also known as Check Out-Equipment (COE) that have served as replacements for more expensive foreign origin parts in the BrahMos missile system.

An estimated 75 percent of savings in direct costs accrued as a result of native manufacture of COE by DPL. Consequently, the BrahMos missile has seen its cost decline making the cruise missile highly competitive in the international defence export market. In addition, prior to the cruise missile's sale to Manila, the Indian armed services had already tested, integrated and deployed the missile, significantly enhancing the exportability of the missile to foreign buyers. Vietnam could be the next buyer of the BrahMos.

A Note Of Caution

Cumulatively, all the factors listed above have boosted exports from a low base in 2016-17 to a high growth plane in 2022-23. Nevertheless, a word of caution is necessary. The recent decision by Ecuador to scrap a contract following four crashes of the Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) developed and manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) for poor mechanical performance and product support is a serious setback, despite the extensive use of the ALH by the Indian armed services.

This episode may have weighed, albeit circumstantially or incidentally, on Malaysia's decision not to pick the HAL developed Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and instead select South Korea's Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) built FA-50.

The latter aircraft as opposed to the Tejas had the advantage of being able to integrate both Western and Russian origin weapons and importantly product support and training, which in all probability influenced Kuala Lumpur's decision to choose the FA-50. Further, despite the noteworthy export performance in 2022-23, New Delhi still imported \$24 billion worth of equipment during the last five years making it the largest importer of military equipment in the world.

This should not serve as a dampener, but spur Indian industry and the government to strive for the better performance of exports in the coming months and years.

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