



Voices of the Young

2007

Voices of the Young

Towards Habitat Young Visionary Award 2007



India Habitat Centre



India Habitat Centre is involved in building care, commitment and awareness in the citizenship for issues of common concern; and strives to position the Habitat discourse in the public domain for better governance for framers and consumers of public policy.

The essays in this publication constitute the short-listed submissions for the Habitat Young Visionary Award and have therefore been carried verbatim. The views expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the India Habitat Centre.

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Publisher: India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003
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Designed and produced by: Silverline Communications
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Mr. Roystan Abel

Film Maker & Theatre Director

Dr. Yogesh Atal

Former Principal Director, UNESCO

Ms. Urvashi Butalia

Director and Co-founder of Kali for Women

Mr. M. K. Dhar

Joint Director - Intelligence Bureau (Retd.)

Mr. Pawan Duggal

Advocate, Supreme Court of India

Ms. Antra Dev Sen

Editor - Little Magazine

Finals

Mr. Randeep Singh Surjewala

Minister, Government of Haryana

Prof. B B Bhattacharya

Vice-Chancellor, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, Delhi

Mr. Joy Bhattacharya

Sr. Vice President (Programming), National Geographic Channel

Ms. Sindhushree Khullar

Chairperson, New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC)

Ms. Teesta Setalvad

Renowned Social Worker



Chief Guest

Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia

Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, India





Foreword

Search for Young Visionaries Continues

India Habitat Centre has been enabling platforms for public discourse on a wide array of themes. In the process we attempt to connect all segments of the citizenry who seek avenues for expression of their concerns or dreams on a range of issues. This has included a variety of stakeholders in our society. Amongst these different segments has been the youth and the Centre has been particularly keen to discover the ideology and the guiding beliefs of the young minds in so far as they deliberate on the national environment, place them in the public domain and help generate an inter-generational understanding of perspectives. In particular our effort is to help them identify our heritage, associated value systems and their stake in the tomorrows of the country.

The Habitat Young Visionary Award was instituted in 2004 to address this intent and this initiative is now in its fourth year. The finalist is awarded a summer fellowship at Cambridge University, UK. Since its inception the competition for this Award has become more broad-based as participation has been extended to cover colleges all over the country. It has indeed become a sought after opportunity amongst the serious young minds and those who received the award are unanimous in acknowledging that the summer programme at Cambridge University has been very valuable and immensely useful. However, we also seek to emphasize that participation should not end in itself or in being awarded the Fellowship. It must in fact continue with the journey of progressing with the thought process that has been triggered by this participation.

The themes for this year's Award are:

- What I do for a living is more important than how much I earn.
- The future is ugly, we need to act now.
- Our strengths today that will shape a better tomorrow.
- Mediocrity to excellence: way to get there.
- India - 60 years young and ready to go.

Finally, we see the fully funded Cambridge Fellowship by India Habitat Centre as a social investment in the horizon of the winner. It is also a statement that institutions like ours need to facilitate a dignified public discourse on issues of concern and help societal dialogues to proceed in an air of reconciliation rather than breeding rigid standpoints.

Raj Liberhan
Director
India Habitat Centre





राहुल वर्मा

कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय में मेरा अनुभव

कैम्ब्रिज का मेरा अनुभव तीन हिस्सों में बंटा हुआ है। कैम्ब्रिज जाने से पहले, यंग विजनरी अवार्ड (YVA) के प्रथम वर्ष में प्रतियोगिता में भाग न लेने पाने की छटपटहाट, दूसरे साल इसके फाइनल राउंड तक का सफर, **Ironical** सवालों की वजह से उपजी सहानुभूति की लहर, इस वर्ष अंतिम चरण के बाद अपना नाम सुनने के बाद शून्यता की स्थिति। प्रेस वालों के सवालों के साथ उनके द्वारा अजीब उपलब्धियों से नवाजना, पासपोर्ट और वीजा के लिए भागमदौड़, इनके फटे-पुराने नियमों में 'लूपहोल' ढूंढने की कवायद, मनपसंद विषय पाने के लिए देर से ही सही पर ई-मेल के जरिए प्रयास, पहली बार हवाई जहाज में बैठने की उत्सुकता (एयर होअस्टेस को करीब से मिलने का रोमांच) अंतर्राष्ट्रीय उड़ान की घबराहट, पहली बार विदेशी धरती पर पांव रखने की कल्पना, सुरक्षा जांच का भय और जिज्ञासा, हीथ्रो एअरपोर्ट से कैम्ब्रिज पहुंचने की दास्तान। फिर वहां पर एक महीने का प्रवास। उस दौरान भविष्य और उसके सुनहरे सपनों को लेकर पींगें भी बढ़ाना।

कैम्ब्रिज से वापस आने के बाद अपने मित्रों से ठहाकों के बीच वहां की मंहगाई बांटना। मुझे कुछ ऐसे लोगों ने भी सर आंखों पर बैठाया जिनके सामने मैं बौना हूं। और अब यह एहसास मेरे घर कर गया कि हम विदेशी ठप्पे

को बहुत गंभीरता से लेते हैं, चाहे वो क्रिकेट कोच हो, नेता हो या फिर वहां के विश्वविद्यालय का पढ़ा छात्र।

इस समय जब मैं कैम्ब्रिज में बिताए गये समय के बारे में लिख रहा हूं तो साथ ही उससे जुड़े कुछ सच में उलझा भी हुआ हूं। सच की प्रतिक्रिया में कुछ नियम कानून बदलेंगे, सच स्वीकार भी होगा, सजा भी होगी परन्तु सच से जुड़ी समस्या न तो सुलझेगी और न ही उसकी मासूमियत परखी जाएगी। कुछ साफ न कह पाने की मेरी छटपटाहट आगे भी झलकेगी। सही गलत के अंतर को न मैं जानता था और न ही मानता था। खुद को एक 'ब्लैक होल' में पाता हूं, सपनों के पर लगातार कुतर रहा हूं, सभी चीजों से एक साथ मोहभंग शुरू हो गया है। मेरे लिए 'अनुभव' हमेशा बेस्वाद रहा है, न खट्टा और न मीठा। बिल्कुल सपाट।

कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय के समर स्कूल की सबसे बड़ी खासियत यह है कि आप चाहे तो सैकड़ों संस्कृतियों से मिल सकते हैं। अपने बीसवें बसंत में कदम रख रहे युवा से लेकर 75 वर्ष का बुजुर्ग आपका सहपाठी होगा। आप स्वयं 800 वर्षों से चली आ रही परम्परा की घड़कन करीब से महसूस करेंगे।



खुद को एक ब्लैक होल में पाता हूं, सपनों के पर लगातार कुतर रहा हूं, सभी चीजों से एक साथ मोहभंग शुरू हो गया है।



दरअसल कैम्ब्रिज के समर स्कूल-। मैं मैं “International Politics in global age” पढ़ना चाहता था परन्तु आवेदन देर पहुंचने के कारण मुझे इसमें दाखिला नहीं मिला। खैर, शाम आठ बजे (गर्मियों में यहां रात दस बजे होती है) मैं गिरते-पड़ते कैम्ब्रिज में अपने होस्टल Newnham College में पहुंच गया और जाते ही सो गया। सूरज पांच बजे से ही निकलना शुरू हो गया था और साढ़े छह के समय तो घूप सीधा मुंह पर थी पर अपना दिन भारतीय छात्र समयानुसार आठ बजे ही शुरू हुआ। और यह सिलसिला या परम्परा कहिए आखिरी दिन तक कायम रही। भागकर नाश्ता करना और फिर...

1. Microeconomics in Global age-प्रोड्रोमास ब्लेमिस की यह कक्षा सुबह 9.00 बजे से 10.15 बजे तक लेक्चर ब्लाक 6 में होती थी। भूमंडलीकरण के युग में अर्थशास्त्र के अध्यायों की परिभाषाएं किस तरह बदली हैं, इस विषय का मूलभूत आधार था। भूमंडलीकरण के प्रभाव ने किस तरह बाजार की संरचना का बदल कर रख दिया है, कितने सिद्धान्तों को झुठलाया है, इनके इर्दगिर्द अध्यापक ने व्याख्यान दिया। शेयर बाजार पर दो दिन की विशेष चर्चा अत्यंत ही शिक्षाप्रद थी।

सुबह 10.30 से 11.30 का समय था Morning Plenary lecture और इस बार के ग्रीष्म सत्र के व्याख्यान का थीम था “Secrets and Lies”। इसमें उपस्थिति की अनिवार्यता नहीं थी पर विभिन्न विषयों की रोचकता ने मुझे हर दिन सभागार में बैठने को मजबूर किया।


2. The Rise of Civilisation निकोलस जेम्स की यह कक्षा 11.45 से दोपहर के 1.00 बजे तक थी। पहले दिन उन्होंने सभी छात्रों से जानना चाहा कि हम सबने यह विषय क्यों चुना। अपनी बारी पर मैंने कहा कि हम भारत में इतिहास को धार्मिक कहानियों से जोड़ कर देखते हैं और मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि चार भिन्न सभ्यताओं (Misopotamia, Sumer, Andean and Mesoamerica) को यूरोप में किस नजरिये से पढ़ा जाता

है। हम सब एक दिन संग्रहालय भी गए और सभी ने एक-एक चयनित वस्तु पर अपने विचार भी रखे। इतिहास को मैंने हमेशा धर्म और वर्ग के कोण से देखा और इस विषय से सीखा कि कोई भी शोध किसी भी प्रकार के सोच से नहीं प्रभावित होनी चाहिए। निकोलस जेम्स के अध्यापन के तरीके ने मुझे बहुत प्रभावित किया।

1.00 से 2.00 का समय था लंच का। मेरा अधिकतर समय कॉफी, कोला और अखबार के साथ बीता।

3. The other Middle Ages: The Islamic World and latin debt to Islam पियर्स हाल की यह कक्षा 2.00 से 3.15 तक होती थी। इस विषय का उद्देश्य यह बताना था कि आधुनिक यूरोपीय सभ्यता सिर्फ तीन संस्कृतियों ऐथंस, रोम और जेरुसलम की देन नहीं। मक्का के बिना इसकी कल्पना असंभव है। इस विषय ने इस्लाम की धारणा और उद्भव के बारे में कई जानकारी दीं। छात्रों द्वारा इस्लाम की आस्था पर किये सवालों ने जो बहस खड़ी की उससे अन्य धर्मों पर भी प्रश्न उठे। कहीं न कहीं मेरा विश्वास दृढ़ हुआ कि आज की ईस्लाम और ईसाईयत के बीच पनपे युद्ध का कारण धार्मिक नहीं वरन आर्थिक और राजनैतिक है। Aristotle और Plato के मैं और नजदीक पहुंचा। ईश्वर और धर्म के बारे में मेरी अपनी सोच और मजबूत हुई।

3.30 से 5.30 तक समय सहपाठियों के साथ चाय का था। मार्केट घूमते और लगातार इस शिकायत में बीता कि यूरोप बहुत मंहगा है। 6.30 से 7.30 का समय था डिनर का। जिन्दगी में मैंने पहली बार एक महीने तक लगातार छुरी कांटे के साथ बिना मसाले का खाना खाया। आधी चीजें तो ऐसी खायां जिसका नाम मैं आज भी ठीक से नहीं बोल पाऊंगा। खाने की भिन्नता और डाइनिंग हॉल की भव्यता जरूर भायी। परन्तु डिनर के समय कुछ लोगों की अप्रीकी और एशियाई देशों में फैली भुखमरी पर विशेष चर्चा और चिंता, साथ ही भारतीय मूल और भारतीय छात्रों के बीच वर्तमान भारत के राजनैतिक स्थिति



इसमें उपस्थिति की अनिवार्यता नहीं थी पर विभिन्न विषयों की रोचकता ने मुझे हर दिन सभागार में बैठने को मजबूर किया।



पर चिंता और परमाणु समपन्न भारत की बढ़ती आर्थिक ताकत पर चर्चा गुदगुदाती थी।

शाम 8.00 से 9.00 का समय था Evening Plenary lecture का और कई बार विषय ही इतना नीरस होता था कि हमें एक घंटा अतिरिक्त मिल जाता था Sekoyn College Bar के अंदर और बाहर के जमघट में शामिल होने का। जब की कड़की और मन की तबीयत ने मुझे अधिकतर बाहर ही रखा। एक पाकिस्तानी मूल के सहपाठी गहरे मित्र भी बन गये थे। हमारा साथ बैठना लोगों की आश्चर्य का कारण भी बना। दिन में जब भी मिलते तो एक दूसरे को यही बताने में लगे रहते कि हमारे यहां के लड़के ज्यादा बदमाश होते हैं, कहानियां सुनाते बहस करते और शाम होते-होते हम एक उपमहाद्वीप का रूप ले लेते सबसे टकराने के लिए।

कुछ रोचक यादें

पूरे कैम्ब्रिज विश्व विद्यालय को देखने का सपना लिए City sightseeing बस का पास लेने पहुंचे। टिकट का दाम सुनकर हमने अगले रविवार को नाश्ते के बाद कैमरा लिया और आठ घंटे में पैदल विश्वविद्यालय का कोना-2 नाप डाला। शाम को नक्शे में उन रास्तों को लाल पेन से गोद कर इस विजयी यात्रा को “Cambridge conquered” का नाम दिया। इंग्लैंड के गांव कैसे दिखते हैं इसकी जिज्ञासा हमें पैदल ही “country side” भी ले गई।

समर स्कूल के आखिरी दिन और फ्लाईट के बीच के अगले 24 घंटे मैंने लंदन में बिताए। टावर ब्रिज देखा, रानी मां का कमरा देखने की कीमत सुनकर बर्मिंघम की परिक्रमा से ही काम चला लिया और आखिरी पडाव था वेस्टमिनिस्टर (ब्रिटिश संसद)। लेबनान पर चल रहे इजराइली हमलों को लेकर वहां बहुत बड़ा धरना प्रदर्शन चल रहा था। ड्रम की आवाजों, पोस्टर थामे चेहरे के भावों, मूक पुलिस और लेबनान समर्थकों के कदमों ने मुझसे कहा ‘संघर्ष जारी है’।

भारत पहुंचकर जब मैंने अगले दिन के अखबार में पढ़ा कि तरल पदार्थों से विस्फोट करने की साजिश को लंदन पुलिस ने नाकाम कर दिया,



*एक पाकिस्तानी मूल
के सहपाठी गहरे
मित्र भी बन गये थे।
हमारा साथ बैठना
लोगों की आश्चर्य का
कारण भी बना।*

समझ नहीं आया कि एक दिन पहले पहुंचकर मैं ढेर सारे सवालियों से बच गया या फिर एक ‘अनुभव’ ने मुझसे अपने को वंचित रखा।

सदा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय परिदृश्य की उड़ाने मैं भर भी नहीं सकता, अपनी तो दाल रोटी यही है। न मेरा कद इनता बड़ा है, न ही इतना दूरदर्शी परन्तु मैंने अपने पिछले पांच महीने उत्तर भारत के गांवों में बिताया है और यह दावे से कह सकता हूँ कि मैं अपने जीवनकाल में एक ऐसा भयानक विस्फोट देखूंगा जो कईयों के कान के पर्दे हिला देगा। मैं आज तक नहीं समझ पा रहा हूँ कि हम नक्सलवाद को कानून व्यवस्था से जुड़ी एक समस्या के रूप में क्यों देख रहे हैं। हम बाल श्रमित कानून पास करते हैं और एक पुनर्स्थापित बच्चे पर 26 पैसा प्रति दिन खर्च करते हैं।

कैसे भविष्य का निर्माण हम करने जा रहे हैं ? क्या परमाणु समपन्न होना और सुरक्षा परिषद में स्थायी सदस्यता के लिए हम इतना उतावले हैं ?

मैं India Habitat Centre का धन्यवाद और IHC के उन लोगों का खास शुक्रिया अदा करता हूँ जिन्होंने मेरी मदद की और लेटलतीफी के कारण डांटा भी। आगे आने वाले सालों में मैं इस प्रतियोगिता में छात्रों को प्रतिभागी बनने के लिए आग्रह भी करता हूँ।

अंत में कुछ पक्तियां उनके लिए जो लड़ रहे और उनके लिए भी जो ‘विकास’ के लिए नित नए कागज काले कर रहे हैं।

*इसलिए राह संघर्ष की हम चुने, जिन्दगी आंसुओं में नहायी न हो।
शाम सहमी न हो, रात हो न डरी,
भोर की आंख डबडबायी न हा।
आसमां में टंगी न हो खुशहालियां, कैद महलों में सबकी कमाई न हो,
हो किसी के लिए मखमली बिस्तरा, और किसी के लिए एक चटार्ई न हो।
अब तमन्नाएं फिर न करे खुदकुशी, ख्वाब पर खौफ की चौकसी न रहे, दम
न तोड़े कहीं भूख से बचपना, रोटियों के लिए फिर लड़ाई न हो,
इसलिए राह संघर्ष की हम चुने।*



**What I Do For a Living is
More Important Than How
Much I Earn**

कमाता कितना हूँ इससे बड़ा मुद्दा
यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता
क्या हूँ ?



Shoma Patnaik

Bhawan's College, Mumbai

“Work is love made visible”

-Khalil Gibran

“**W**hat I do for a living is more important than how much I earn” – this is not merely a question of materialism versus idealism; for me it is, above all, a question of love.

There is a man I see quite often on Juhu beach in my city, Mumbai. He isn't remarkable, just one of so many others trying to make it big in the city of dreams. What is remarkable is his obvious love for his job, meagre as it is. For a few rupees he'll sell you a tub of soap solution, a hoop to blow bubbles through and a few moments of joy. He painstakingly arranges the multicoloured tubs into patterns with all the devotion of an artist and smiles at the simple delight he gives to children and to those who want to be children again. It may seem that I'm digressing with this tale of a mundane man and his mundane livelihood, but his dedication to his ordinary job illustrates that even the lowliest trade can touch a

deeper chord; and most importantly that what you do for a living is not the sum of the wages you receive.



*The word
“livelihood” itself
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meaning – it
is the way in
which you
help yourself
to live.*

Few among us find a higher meaning in our jobs. A lowly clerk in a dusty corner of an office cannot fathom that his work can have as deep a purpose as that of a visionary or thinker. I disagree. The word “livelihood” itself reveals its true meaning – it is the way in which you help yourself to live. What could be more spiritual than that? Earning your livelihood is not limited to overdue paperwork, a 9 to 5 workday, a monthly pay cheque. It encompasses a larger reality, touching others and ourselves in more ways than we can imagine.

Earning your livelihood immediately connects you with the world around you. Each one of us contributes to society at large with his or her work. From the migrant labourer who helps build the houses we live in to the industrialist who creates jobs



What I Do For a Living is More Important Than How Much I Earn

for others; every profession is part of a web that connects us. No one can be isolated from this web. You need the farmer to sow wheat in his field, the mill worker to convert it into flour and the tradesman to sell it to you before it reaches your plate as the bread that feeds you. The people in the web do not earn the same amount of money but each of their contributions is essential, without which the others' labour is rendered ineffectual.

Our work does not merely support us; it also defines us. Thinkers like Marx have commented on this intertwining of work and worker – “Tell me what you do and I will tell you who you are”. Look no further than our own land for proof. What else is the caste system based on but profession? Such an intrinsic identification may be positive or negative, but there is no denying its significance. You are your work. Despite his lucre, a gangster cannot claim to receive the respect a teacher does, or to be satisfied with his work.

And this is the most important aspect of your profession – the personal level at which it touches you. At one point, your means of livelihood stops being merely a way to pay the rent and becomes the means to justify your existence, your *raison d'être*. It helps you define yourself, not just in relation to the world around you, but above all, in relation to yourself. It transcends the mundane reality of everyday life to become a passion. One of my role models is the Dutch painter, Vincent van Gogh, who lived in penury, preferring to buy paint rather than

food. It is his passion for his work that I admire much more than his art. Indeed, his artwork is beautiful precisely because of his intense love for what he did. Of course, I'm not implying that only starving artists find a higher purpose in their work. Consider the unpaid teachers in village schools who continue to stay true to their calling out of an honest love for their profession. And it is the passion to make a difference that is spurring many Indians to leave their high paying jobs abroad to work in rural India.

This is the biggest difference between a human and an animal. Both have basic needs – food, shelter and warmth – which require money. However, the similarity ends there because while an animal can be content with a full stomach, a human cannot. A human being needs to achieve as much as he needs to eat. He needs to know who he is and why he is here and he seeks to discover this through his work. Your wages nourish your body, but your actual labour nourishes your soul. Like Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “Happiness is not the mere possession of money, it lies in the joy of achievement, the thrill of creative effort.”

Money, as witticisms go, can buy you everything except poverty. Yet, there are things that cannot be quantified by currency. What is the price of pride a soldier feels on defending his country at war? Will his fees encompass the joy a doctor feels on saving a patient's life? We all know the answer. Economics tells us that the power of money is not inherent; it is



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What I Do For a Living is More Important Than How Much I Earn

we who give it that power. We forget easily that without this human consensus that ascribes value to money, it is simply a piece of paper. And yet, we are often blind to the innate value of our work.

It would be naïve to say that money is completely insignificant, but it would be a grave mistake to say that your labour is not worth more than your salary. In a country where, until recently, the majority of the population hovered below the poverty line, it is natural that a high paying job is seen as the ticket out. Money represents not just all that we need, but also all that we want, an easy life and the ability to hold our head up high when we walk in the world of men. We forget that a nation cannot be made up only of highflying executives. A nation needs labourers, office workers, poets, artists and leaders too. India today is full of people with stifled dreams. The youth are taught from the very beginning that the only kind of job worth doing is one that will get you a fat paycheque every month. Somewhere, in this propaganda and the tangle of schools, colleges, coaching classes and entrance exams, their dreams and aspirations are sandpapered away. A nation is not made up of its people's salaries; it is made up of their hopes. This is the soul of a nation. By creating an environment that compels a potentially brilliant writer to become a dissatisfied engineer, that traps the youth in a mad rush for jobs in foreign companies and MNCs, we are stunting our own growth, both economic and social. Let us not forget that had a young lawyer in South Africa not given up his job, he would have remained only M.K. Gandhi, not the Mahatma.



*Realise that
with the
smallest of
your efforts
you help your
country rise,
you make
yourself
a part of our
nation.*

We are not all leaders and activists. Most of us are the common people of India who live in their own small world. We think we cannot stage a revolution to change this country, but the truth is that each and every one of us can help our country grow, in however small a way, simply by being proud of what we do. Corruption and low productivity, the two issues plaguing India, arise when we do not appreciate our own labour. When we do not realize the important role our work and we play in this world, we are willing to shirk our duties, willing to reduce the entire dignity of labour to a bribe. These are complex problems and this seems too simple a step, but it is the first one. Love what you do, be proud of it. Realise that with the smallest of your efforts you help your country rise, you make yourself a part of our nation. This could be our private revolution.

This is not a simple issue and one runs the risk of being caught up in shallow idealism here. Yet, it is a deeply personal one; one that touches all of us and one that we all need to think about.

In conclusion, I would like to share poet Maya Angelou's advice that every one of us can strive to:

"You can only become truly accomplished at something you love. Don't make money your goal. Instead, pursue the things you love doing, and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you."



उत्कर्ष अमिताभ

दिल्ली कॉलेज ऑफ इंजीनियरिंग

जी विका के लिए करता क्या हूं? चोरी? फ़रेब? हत्या? बमबारी? लूट-पाट? तस्करी? ड्रग-ट्रैफिकिंग? अफीम की नहीं तो औरतों की खरीद-फरोख्त? कोई काला धंधा? देशद्रोह? या कोई ऐसा काम जिसमें जी ही नहीं लगता, कोल्हू का बैल या साइबर-कुली या ई-बहादुर बने ढो रहे हैं जिन्दगी का जुआ मगर जीवन में रस ही नहीं, क्योंकि जो काम हमारे गले पड़ गया है, वह हमारी रुचि का नहीं, हमारी शिक्षा-व्यवस्था अभिरुचि या ऐप्टिच्यूड के हिसाब से हमें काम नहीं देती।

विषय गम्भीर है और इसके गर्भ में दो चिन्ताएं सोई हैं: एक तो यह कि हममें से ज्यादातर लोग इसलिए मन लगाकर काम नहीं कर पाते कि काम उनकी रुचि का नहीं, और दूसरी - उससे भी महत्वपूर्ण चिन्ता यह कि जिसे गांधीजी साध्य-साधन की पवित्रता कहते थे - 'ऑनेस्ट एण्ड थू ऑनेस्ट मीन्स' - उसकी अवहेलना हिप-हॉप संस्कृति वाले इस मास-कल्चर समाज में भरपूर हुई है - येनकेनप्रकारेण कमाया गया काला धन सबके सर चढ़कर 'डिंग डॉन्ग डिंग' बोल रहा है।

इस मास-कल्चर समाज में जब हमारे सारे आध्यात्मिक सोते सूख चुके हैं शॉपिंग एकमात्र धर्म रह गया है, टेस्को

सबसे बड़ा मन्दिर, कॉस्मेटिक्स सबसे बड़ा विचार, स्कूल-कॉलेज टेक्नेशियन-स्तर की शिक्षा और कामचलाऊ ज्ञान की दुकान-भर रह गये हैं, मुस्कान सिर्फ टेलीविजन पर दिखाई देती है, उत्साह सिर्फ दारू-पार्टियों में, काट सिर्फ डिज़ाइनर कपड़ों में, खनक सिर्फ सिक्कों में, पारम्परिक धर्म 'मुंह में राम बगल में छुरी' का साक्षात् मंचन हो गया है, संस्कृति खुद एक बम हो गयी है, स्वतंत्रता रह गई है दो सुपरमार्केटों या दो ब्राण्डों के बीच के चुनाव का प्रश्न, खुशी सिर्फ 'मज़ा' या 'क्विक' बन गई है, नागरिक केवल उपभोक्ता रह गया है - ज्यादातर लोग मानकर चलने लगे हैं कला-साहित्य भी मॉर्फीन या एनेस्थेसिया का इंजेक्शन-भर है और वजूद के प्रश्न कठपुतली के नाच से ज्यादा अहमियत नहीं रखते।

ऐसे में अच्छा लगता है यह देखना कि कोई तो है जो यह प्रश्न उठा रहा है - कमाता कितना हूं, इससे बड़ा मुद्दा यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता क्या हूं! यंग-विज्ञनरीज की एक टोली अपने समय के सब प्रश्नों से बाजाप्ता उलझ रही है! आज भी तरह-तरह के नुक्कड़ नाटक खेले जाते हैं। छोटे-छोटे शहरों, देश-भर के छापाखानों से गिलहरी की चुस्ती-फुर्ती में रोज लघु पत्रिकाएं आपके दरवाजे आती हैं और दोपहर की निद्रा में थोड़ी तो खलल डालती ही हैं। सबके सम्पादक परम योग्य लेकिन अण्डरएम्प्लॉएड, कभी-कभी बाजाप्ता बेरोज़गार लेकिन



*'ऑनेस्ट एण्ड थू
ऑनेस्ट मीन्स'-
उसकी अवहेलना हिप-
हॉप संस्कृति वाले इस
मास-कल्चर समाज
में भरपूर हुई है...'*



कमाता कितना हूँ इससे बड़ा मुद्दा यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता क्या हूँ ?

तेजस्वी युवक होते हैं। इससे बड़ा शुभ संकेत देश के लिए कुछ हो ही नहीं सकता कि इतने विखण्डन के बावजूद मानवीय अर्थवत्ता और हृदय-परिवर्तन का धर्म साहित्य निभा रहा है। कुछ लोग तो हैं जिनमें एकात्मता की प्यास अभी जिन्दा है - एकात्मता साथियों से और सच्चाई से, बृहत्तर संकल्पों से, पूर्णता और समुच्चय से। आपसदारी, जुड़ाव, प्रेम और पहचान के प्यासे हम अब भी हैं। अब जबकि देश-काल की सीमा रही नहीं, दूसरी तरह ही सीमाएं हमें इतना परेशान कर देती हैं कि हम इस तरह मिलकर कुछ करने की सोचने लगते हैं:

सदाहुसेन की एक और बात कहती है।
गिरे को पहले उठाओ कि ताजिया रख दो।



‘खूब पैसा’ और ‘खूब मानसम्मान’ किसी जमाने में सौतेले भाई हुआ करते थे, आज के जमाने में चोर-चोर मौसेरे भाई हैं।

‘ताजिया’ यहां किसी भी बड़े ध्येय या मिशन का प्रतीक हो सकता है या किसी भी ऐसे अभियोजन का जिसे हम अंगरेजी में ‘करियर पर्स्यूट’ और हिन्दी में ‘आजीविका’ कहते हैं। मुहर्रम में जितने अदब और उत्साह से रंग-बिरंगा ताजिया सिर पर धारे हुए हम चलते हैं, उतने ही अदब और उत्साह से ‘करियर’ और एक ऐसी आजीविका का सपना बचपन से ही हमारे सिर पर बिठा दिया जाता है जिसमें खूब पैसा हो और खूब मान-सम्मान भी। विरोधाभास का उत्स यही है। ‘खूब पैसा’ और ‘खूब मानसम्मान’ किसी जमाने में सौतेले भाई हुआ करते थे, आज के जमाने में चोर-चोर मौसेरे भाई हैं। लक्ष्मी और सरस्वती किसी जमाने में सौतिनें मानी गई थीं, अब इन्हें किसी भी ऐसे एडुकेशन शॉप या शिक्षा-मण्डी में साथ बैठकर चाय पीते हुए देखा जा सकता है जहां डोनेशन या ऊंची फी देकर धनकुबेर अपने बच्चों को प्रवेश दिला देते हैं, केम्ब्रिज - ऑक्सफोर्ड तक की डिग्रियों के पीछे ‘एडुकेशन लोन’ का जो भीषण समुन्दर लहराता है, किसी अगस्त्य मुनि के वश का नहीं, उसे चुल्लुओं में गटक सकना - उसके लिए ‘बेसमनी’ या शुरुआती पैसा, गारण्टी-मनी या सुरक्षा - राशि ही इतनी होती है जिसका इन्तजाम दिन-भर की खटनी के बाद रात को फुटपाथ पर स्ट्रीटलाइट में पढ़कर इम्तिहान देने वाले ईश्वरचन्द्र

विद्यासागर जैसे नौनिहाल तो नहीं ही कर सकते, पब्लिक लाइब्रेरी के वाचनालयों में बैठकर ‘प्रतियोगिता दर्पण’ और सेल्फ-ट्यूटर श्रृंखला की अन्य पुस्तकें पढ़ने में दिन-रात एक किए तेजस्वी छात्र भी नहीं।

‘इल गॉटेन, इल स्पेण्ट’ का जमाना भी गया। चोरी का माल मोरी में अब पूर्णतया नहीं जाता, अगली पीढ़ी के लिए भड़कीली डिग्रियां और उससे जुड़ा मान-सम्मान खरीदने में चला जाता है। ऐसे में ‘वैल्यू-बेस्ड एडुकेशन’ और ‘ऑनेस्ट एण्ड थू ऑनेस्ट मीन्स’ के नारे फूटे ढोल की तरह बजते हैं। कहने को तो कहा जाता है कि गिरहकट्ट स्पर्द्धा की अंधी दौड़ में रखा ही क्या है, ‘इवेन इफ यू विन द रैट रेस, यू रिमेन अ रैट’ मगर वस्तुस्थिति यह है कि रैट-रेस में जीते हुए चूहे ही दुनिया पर राज कर रहे हैं,

आजीविका के लिए करता क्या हूँ - गला काटता हूँ कि जेबें, स्मगलिंग करता हूँ कि चोर-बाजारी - कोई पूछने वाला रहा ही नहीं, जो पूछता है, यही पूछता है - लड़के की कमाई कितनी है, लोग तो अब यह भी पूछने में गुरेज नहीं करते कि ऊपरी कमाई कितनी है; कोई यह नहीं सोचता नज़र आता कि धरती तो सबकी थी, उत्पादन के साधन सबके थे, यदि किसी के पास जरूरत से ज्यादा पूंजी आई तो जरूर किसी का हिस्सा मारकर ही आई होगी, उन्होंने या उनके बुजुर्गों ने या तो खुद लूट-पाट मचाई होगी, कोई काला धंधा किया होगा या फिर किसी महाराज, किसी बादशाह या अंगरेजी हुकूमत के किसी बड़े कारिन्दे के आगे दुम हिलाई होगी! ‘द बॉस इज ऑल्वेज राइट’ की मनोभूमि भूमण्डलीकरण की ही देन हो, ऐसा तो नहीं है, मगर हां, भूमण्डलीकरण के बाद पैसों को खुदा मान लेने की जो मनोवृत्ति उभरी है, उससे स्थिति बद से बदतर जरूर हुई है।

पहले गरीब आदमी एक खास तरह के ठस्से में रहता था। उसकी गरीबी उसकी ईमानदारी का चमकीला तमगा होती थी - इस बात का स्पष्ट प्रमाण कि उसने किसी के आगे घुटने नहीं टेके, कोई चोरी नहीं की, कोई डाका नहीं डाला, उसकी रोटी ही वह रोटी है जिसे नानक निचोड़ेंगे तो दूध निकलेगा।



कमाता कितना हूँ इससे बड़ा मुद्दा यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता क्या हूँ ?

धनी आदमी की रोटी निचोड़ने पर निकलेगा खून, औरों का खून जो उसने पिया - धनसंचय की नृशंस प्रक्रिया औरों का खून चूसे बिना पूरी नहीं होती। इसी तर्क पर तो बाइबिल भी कहती है कि सुई की आंख से ऊंट गुजर जाए, यह सम्भव हो भी, लेकिन धनी आदमी का स्वर्ग में प्रवेश असम्भव है।

मेरी माँ बताती हैं कि तीसेक साल पहले तक मोटरगाड़ियों पर स्कूल-कॉलेज जाने वाले लड़के मारे संकोच के स्कूल-कॉलेज गेट के दस फर्लांग पहले ही उतर जाते थे, क्योंकि उन्हें 'ललबबुआ' या 'लाटसाहब का नाती' कहलाना पसन्द नहीं था, उनके मन में अभी भी एक ऐसे समाज का सपना था जहां कोई किसी का हक या अवसर छीनकर बड़ा नहीं हुआ, किसी को धकेलकर किसी ने अपनी राह नहीं बनाई। रेडियो-युग के कुछ प्रसिद्ध नम्बर थे जो हम सबकी मांओं ने लोरी के रूप में कभी-न-कभी तो सुनाए थे, आज उन्हें नए सिरे से याद करने की जरूरत है - 'अपने लिए जिए तो क्या जिए, तू जी ऐ दिल जमाने के लिए।' या वो वाला गीत जहां बहार को आपस में बराबर-बराबर बांट लेने की ललछाँह-सी चर्चा है - 'आइए, बहार को हम बांट लें - जिन्दगी में प्यार को हम बांट लें/भूखा न रहे कोई, प्यासा न सोए कोई/तन्हा न हंसे कोई/तन्हा न रोए कोई/सबकी जीत-हार को हम बांट लें/दर्द की पुकार को हम बांट लें'।

करें वहीं जिसे करने में आत्मिक संतोष हो, हमेशा यह याद रखें कि शास्त्रोक्त जो चार पुरुषार्थ हैं - धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मोक्ष - जीवन में एक तरह का संतुलन (एक्विवाएन्स) कायम करने पर उनका जोर है। 'धर्म' और 'मोक्ष' यदि आध्यात्मिक असम्पृक्तता पर जोर देते हैं तो अर्थ और काम इहलौकिक ऐश्वर्य पर। शिवम् और सुन्दरम् में, नीतिशास्त्र और सौन्दर्यशास्त्र में, योग और भोग में - सच पूछिए तो कोई ऐसा द्वेष भी नहीं है। कठिनाई तब पैदा होती है जब किसी और का हिस्सा छीनकर हम अपनी जेब या तिजोरियां भरने की सोचने लगते हैं। एक ध्रुवीय हो जाती है दुनिया, पूंजी का प्रवाह एक ही तरफ होने लगता है और हम - जैसे नवयुवकों की स्थिति कुछ ऐसी हो जाती है जैसी

मैं इस कविता में पकड़ने की कोशिश करता हूँ।

इस कविता के केन्द्र में मेरा अपना एक दोस्त है जिसे उत्कट योग्यता के बावजूद नौकरी नहीं मिली, क्योंकि उसका कोई 'गॉड फादर' नहीं था, उसके पिता के पास रिश्त के पैसे नहीं थे - बहुतेरे लोगों ने उससे स्थानीय नेता के मुंह जोहने को कहा - शहर में प्रसिद्ध था कि नेता का अपना सगा भाई बड़ा तस्कर है - विश्वासी युवकों की उसको हमेशा जरूरत रहती है, विश्वासी - जी हां 'विश्वासी' - प्रेमचंद की प्रसिद्ध कहानी 'नमक का दारोगा' के साक्ष्य से हम यह आसानी से कह सकते हैं कि बेईमान लोगों को भी तलाश 'भरोसे के लायक' लोगों की ही होती है। 'भरोसे के लायक' वह नवयुवक था - आसानी से उसको ड्रग-ट्रैफिकिंग या औरतों की खरीद-फरोख्त से जोड़ा जा सकता था, पर वो एक ऐसा इन्सान था जिसे हमेशा इस बात का एहसास रहा कि कमाता कितना हूँ, इससे महत्वपूर्ण यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता क्या हूँ। पाप का घड़ा फूट तो किसी वक्त सकता है! एक बार रेड पड़ी या जेल गए तो सारी हेकड़ी निकल जाएगी। यह भय तो अपराधियों को लगा ही रहता है, तभी तो अपने बच्चों को वे अपने से दूर पहाड़ी स्कूल के छात्रावासों में रखकर पढ़ाते हैं कि उनकी पोल न खुले, खुद अपने बच्चों की निगाह में उन्हें गिरना न पड़े, भ्रष्ट से भ्रष्ट व्यक्ति यह नहीं चाहता कि उसकी सन्तान भ्रष्ट हो, कि नैतिक मूल्यों की उसे कोई परवाह न हो, कि कोयले की दलाली में उसके हाथ काले हों। उज्ज्वलता का एक आग्रह तो मानव-मात्र में होता है, परिस्थितियां ही होती हैं जो उसे गिरहकट्ट स्पर्द्धा या 'रैटरेस' का काला चूहा बना छोड़ती हैं वरना श्रम की गरिमा और प्रेम, सदाशयता और सच्चाई किसके मन में सुखद विहान का स्वप्न नहीं रचती।

'सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तुनिरामयः' का यह सुखद विहान ही है जिसके आश्रय कई यंग विज्ञानरीज या युवा स्वप्नद्रष्टा शहर-शहर, गली-गली उम्मीद का एक दीपक जलाए बैठे हैं - पर मन में जो शशोपंज मचती है, उसी का ग्राफांकन मैंने यहां इस कविता में किया है:



करें वहीं जिसे करने में आत्मिक संतोष हो, हमेशा यह याद रखें कि शास्त्रोक्त जो चार पुरुषार्थ हैं - धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मोक्ष...



कमाता कितना हूँ इससे बड़ा मुद्दा यह है कि जीविका के लिए करता क्या हूँ ?

बेरोज़गार

किसी कॉलसेण्टर का
घचर-पचर-सा रतजगा जीवन-
क्या जाने कब बन्द हो जाए!
इन दिनों पढ़ता हूँ बस पुरातन लिपियां
सिन्धु घाटी सभ्यता की पुरातन लिपि
पढ़ लेता हूँ थोड़ी-थोड़ी।
हर भाषा है दर्द की भाषा -
जबसे समझने लगा हूँ -
चाहे जिस भाषा में लिखी हो
मैं बांच सकता हूँ चिट्ठी।
अपने अनन्त खालीपन में
यही एक काम किया मैंने -
हर तरह के दर्द की डगमग
स्वरलिपियां सीखीं।
मुझमें भी एक आग है
लिखती है जो कुछ-कुछ
हवा के फटे टुकड़े पर
और फिर उसको मचोड़ कर
डालती है टूटी खटिया के नीचे।
ये टुकड़े खोलकर कभी-कभी
मां पढ़ती है
और फिर उसके चश्मे पर जम जाती है धुंध।
यही एक बिन्दु है जहां आग मेरी
हो जाती है पानी-पानी।
ये मेरे बंधे हुए हाथ हैं अधीर।
ये कुछ करना चाहते हैं।
इनमें है अभी बहुत जांगर,
ये पहाड़ खोदकर बहा सकते हैं
दूध की धारा।
इनको नहीं होती चिन्ता
कि होगा क्या जो पहाड़ खोदे पे
निकलेगी चुहिया।

खुरदुरे और बहुत ठंडे हैं
ये मेरे बंधे हुए हाथ -
चुनी नहीं इन्होंने झरबेरियां अब तक
बुहारी नहीं कभी झुक कर
अपनी धरती की मिठास
आखिरी कण तक।
कभी कोई पैबंदवाला दुपट्टा
फैला ही नहीं सामने इनके
झरबेरियां मांगता हंसकर।
चांद अब उतना पीला भी तो नहीं रहा-
उसके पीलेपन पर पर्त पड़ गई है
धूसर-धूसर!
उतनी तो चीकट नहीं होती
चीमड़ से चीमड़ बनिये की बही।
अनब्याही दीदी के रूप की तरह
धीरे-धीरे ढल रही धूप
भी उतनी धूसर, उतनी ही थकी हुई।
ऐ तितली, बोलो तो -
कितना है दूर रास्ता
आखिरी आह से
एक अनन्त चाह का ?
'चाहिए' किस चिड़िया का नाम है ?
यह कभी यह
तुम्हारे आंगन में उतरी है ?
बैठी है हाथों पर ?
फिर कैसे कहते हैं लोग -
हाथ की एक चिड़िया
झुरमुट की दो चिड़ियों से बेहतर।
मलता हुआ हाथ
सोचता हूँ अक्सर -
क्या मेरे ये हाथ हैं
दो चकमक पत्थर?



**The Future is
Ugly, We Need
to Act Now**

वीभत्स भविष्य, करना है
तो करें, बस इसी पल



Apurva Harsh


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There is nothing more dangerous for a nation than an utter bankruptcy of ideas. As the Indian nation mired in obscene inequity, agrarian distress and penury, rising unemployment among the educated, a growing Naxalite movement, rising secessionist tendencies, illiteracy, disease and political decadence and apathy moves towards an ugly future of discontent and violence, this absence of vision becomes painfully obvious. The scariest part is that the warning of the impending disaster has been drowned by myopic, self-congratulatory hyperboles and exultations. The unreasonable and cruel euphoria at every new height scaled by the Sensex or every mention of India by the American president, while more than sixty percent of our country's population faces acute penury and starvation, is symptomatic of an entrenched malaise which blinkers our collective outlook. The disjunction between the projected India (the India of 8.9% growth and \$165bn foreign exchange reserves) and the real India merits a closer

examination. A future whose very inception lies in numbers and not in people can never be rosy. The purpose behind this essay is to expose the hollowness of terms like 'knowledge superpower' and 'India Shining' and show how, despite clamorous arguments to the contrary, various indicators – economic, social, political and educational – prognosticate an ugly future for India, unless the current trends are arrested. However, criticism serves its purpose only when constructive. So, the essay also enumerates remedial measures that must be adopted, without any delay, to salvage the situation and rekindle the hope of a bright and prosperous future for India.

We must perceive the fallacy of aggregated numbers. The disaggregated truth is, quite often, very different.

An annual GDP growth rate of more than 8% per annum augurs well for the future. But when it is



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juxtaposed with the fact that half of India's population lives below the international poverty line of one dollar per person per day, it becomes indicative of the perverseness and inequity of this growth. A buffer stock of 6 crore tones of food grain might lead one to presume food security in the near and not so distant future. A reality check would yield the sobering knowledge that India houses one-fourth of the world's malnourished. These contradictory facts indicate the existence of severe want in a world of plenty and carry with them dire forebodings of upheaval and class-conflict.

It is a known fact that growth in India has been exclusive. But now it seems that the Indian nation itself has become exclusive.

There is no other explanation for the highest echelons of power promising continued prosperity when the agricultural sector which employs 60% of the country's workforce is in the pangs of crises and distress. A hi-tech and low nutrition future is a recipe for disaster. While the expertise of McKinsey and the world bank are not to be scoffed at, a country's being run by these institutes and their overpaid and unaccountable consultants is a dangerous proposition. The government's apathy can be gauged from the absence of a concrete and comprehensive agricultural policy. Even the Approach Paper of the Eleventh Five Year Plan has failed to engage vital problems like the issue of land ownership, unavailability of cheap and easy credit to farmers and the lack of agricultural research.

Such callous disregard of agricultural research and land reforms is the chief cause fuelling the Naxalite movement. According to estimates, as much as 27% of India's geographic territory is under Naxal control. Actually, in the interiors of states like Chhatisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, which are not even a speck on official maps, the Naxalites have installed parallel administrative machinery, taken initiatives like collective farming and ingenious irrigation methods and have been richly rewarded by the loyalty and sympathy of the people. This movement will, in near future challenge the territorial and administrative integrity of India.

The resurgence of agriculture and provision of clean administration are prerequisites for the containment of the Naxalite threat and mitigation of inequalities. To begin with, a fresh impetus must be given to agricultural research. The Government must identify key areas for research and commit resources and funds. As the soil and climatic conditions vary greatly from state to state, there is also an urgent need for to refurbish regional research institutes. The research should focus on increasing not only yield but also resistance to pests and inclement weather. The potential of genetically modified seeds is yet to be explored. The government should initially subsidize these seeds with a view of popularizing them. Dry land farming which occupies 70% of agricultural land and contributes only 40% of the produce needs special emphasis. Also, there is a need to build synergies across sectors. For instance, India



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is the largest producer of sugar but not ethanol, cotton but not clothing. Apparently, India has the resources to tap these relatively unsaturated markets. This will not only provide a fillip to demand but also ensure better returns to farmers. These new markets will also suck out the superfluous manpower from the agricultural sector and alleviate the problem of disguised unemployment. Rapid growth of the rural economy will provide greater depth and meaning to overall economic progress.

To solve the problem of availability of reasonable credit, micro-credit and self-help groups can be promoted. The Government must strive to better utilize existing institutions rather than just building new ones.

The dream of a knowledge economy already shows signs of turning sour due to undue reliance on outsourcing and back-office duties. The emphasis on original research which needs to be a hallmark of any economy envisaging knowledge as its key driver is conspicuous by its absence, especially in fields of biotechnology and computer technology where despite many self-aggrandizing illusions we languish at the bottom of the table. Indian software exports of \$5bn annually is a miniscule fraction of the global software industry valued at \$200bn.

In fact, claims of creating a knowledge economy in a country with an illiteracy rate of nearly 40% is nothing short of a 'vision



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fraud'. The unemployment among graduates, supposedly the greatest beneficiaries of the BPO-KPO boom, is rising and currently stands at 17.2%. Couple this with the general lack of education, especially outside the metros, and the picture of a future steeped in disgruntlement and deprivation starts acquiring a more vivid shape.

Had Sherlock Holmes been asked what should be our priority in education, the sleuth might have answered, "Elementary, my dear Watson." For it really is elementary education that needs the most urgent emphasis. Successive governments have taken halting and cosmetic steps towards providing education to all. There is a plethora of schemes but very little outcome. Illiteracy and ignorance are rampant. A nation which sees not the light of knowledge is condemned to a dark and dismal future.

Needless to say, we need to act now. The myriad incoherent schemes which are in various stages of neglect must be amalgamated into one purposive and comprehensive strategy. The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* which is an effort to universalize education through community ownership of schools can be combined with the midday meal scheme to augment its appeal. It can enable us to deal with the high drop-out rate which, at 53%, is the highest in east and south Asia. Besides, the government needs to invest in rural human capital. Paid vocational training wherein villagers receive a stipend for attending vocational classes can yield rich dividend. Handicrafts and cottage industry will also lessen the over-dependence of rural



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India on farming. These steps are vital for the realization of Gandhi's vision of self-sufficient and functional village republics and economies.


The health indicators also tell a story of misery and suffering which, with the current administrative indifference, is bound to continue. An infant mortality rate of 65, undernourishment in two-thirds of all children and unavailability of toilet and sanitation to 70% of the population is shameful even by third-world standards. A crippled population can constitute only a crippled nation. Everywhere the same brazen disparity raises its ugly head. It is an utter travesty that we talk of promoting medical tourism when our own brethren lie famished, diseased and starved. An elusive elite is alienating the rest of the population and plunging the future in a dark abyss of discord and turmoil.

A mere increase in expenditure is not the panacea for all maladies. The delivery mechanism must be tightened. Kerala, with an annual spending of \$28 per person, has health indicators similar to the United States. This reveals the power of an alert and participative citizenry and a committed leadership. This model, with its extensive network of inexpensive and not very fancy health facilities at the grass root level, merits emulation. If an ugly future is to be averted, then the health of infants and children must be a prime concern, for they are tomorrow's India.

It is hoped that the Indian democracy will ensure an inclusive and harmonious future. However, this optimism seems misplaced.

Central to Indian politics, today, is a reinforcement of communal, linguistic and sectional clefs. The past few years have witnessed the most vicious form of caste politics. On the one hand, we have the elite who do not bother to vote and, on the other, the proletariat which votes along caste lines. Development, especially in rural India, is seldom an issue. The Indian democracy is becoming increasingly undemocratic and divisive. The fissures which already exist in the society keep manifesting themselves from time to time, the most recent example being the reservation imbroglio. Untouchability and the caste system will persist side by side imposing malls and hi-tech island cities. The inability of development to percolate to the lowest strata of the society will be the ugliest aspect of India's future.

Most of these problems like, stagnation in agriculture, illiteracy, poor health, the Naxalite movement, administrative indifference and lack of rural development can be alleviated by following a less centralized system of governance. We must empower the lowest levels of administration and work our way up. The Gram Panchayats should formulate and implement policies with the assistance of experts provided by the Central or State Governments. The Panchayats can even collect most taxes (excluding income tax), a fixed



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part of which they can use for local policies and pass on the rest to the State government. Similarly, the State Government can use a fixed part of these collections and pass on the rest to the Centre. This bottom-to-top approach will not only ensure better collection but also a more efficient utilization of resources as the local authorities are the most accountable to and approachable for the people. They can, due to their physical proximity to the people, also identify their needs and resentments quicker. In a way, this will be a step towards Gandhi's dream of self-reliant village republics.

We need to overcome the complacency of our current tendencies to avoid a horrible future of discontent and mediocrity. But people have become so inured to things remaining static that dynamism has died. There is an urgent need for a change. This change has to start not in board-rooms and seminar halls but in the fields, households and universities. The people must reclaim their nation and take responsibility for their actions. We need to act right now and with sincerity and purpose, if we are to arrest this incessant drift towards an ugly, unequal and chaotic future.

The choice is ours. After all, the future is ours.



Arundhati Pandeya

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This statement embodies a strong realization; the sooner we embrace this realization the better. Therefore, at the cost of being branded a naysayer, I, for the better, both embrace and absorb the truth that stares us in the face. It is important for our kind to understand that unbridled optimism is no substitute for camouflage of tribulations that we face. Prudence, I believe, has its basis in acceptance of the downside and the ability to reconstruct post acceptance. So I reiterate - "The future is ugly, we need to act now!"

I take the liberty to focus my writings on the future of India because, albeit I foresee an ugly future for the nation, I believe that we are equipped with the capability to change it.

Simple observation of the system in our country would lead most of us to believe that we live plagued by administrative discrepancies amalgamated with various social, political and economic issues which

are nothing but detrimental to our progress. Countless words can be exhausted in bringing to light these drawbacks, but ironically, to no avail. My perception of the present state of affairs leads me to believe that the mother of all problems unveiled, is the lack of human development which has come to characterize the second (soon to be first) most populous nation of the world. What is a nation but its people, and if the prosperity of the people is undermined then clearly an ugly future confronts us. Development of the population is tantamount to a promising future and the lack of it thus spells otherwise.

A desirable course of action would require us to first get acquainted with the defeatist frame under which we function, leading us to the disturbing fact that India continues to lag behind in quality of life, with its Human Development Index (HDI) remaining static at a low 127. While India might have moved into the premier league



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of world economic growth, the pick-up in growth has not translated into a commensurate decline in poverty. Lack of investment in human capital shines through starvation deaths, malnutrition, grim literacy rates, and dearth of health services among myriad other deficiencies. Our eight per cent average growth rate is nullified since its trickle down dries before it reaches the lower rungs of society. About half the population in rural India is illiterate and suffers from 'Capability Poverty'. A quarter of the villages in the most populous states do not have a primary school, only 22 per cent of the villages have a health care centre. Our numbers for malnourishment are worse than those of Bangladesh and even Sub-Saharan Africa. The rural and ironically the majority are being kept from wholesome development, the spread effects of which have been disguised unemployment, marginal or no up-gradation of agriculture, social stagnation and societal frustration and a severe lack of opportunities throwing the population back into the gallows of poverty and unrest. Forced removal of people from the countryside; either because of 'development as displacement' or simply because of lack of opportunities and infrastructure; has contributed to the swelling up of an already crowded urban periphery. The Indian elite however, continue to be unmindful of the explosive situation developing around them. There is an increasing incidence of depression that is pushing several towards suicide and extreme reactions (Naxalism, today). Our administration and governance is paradoxical, we either starve



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the rural areas of electricity and water fanning the flame of underdevelopment or under the garb of development thousands are driven off their land, getting inadequately compensated very late or never.

I award the credit for distorted development activities to our inheritance of Nehruvian dependence on bureaucracy; dependence for farmers, investors, pensioners, stock markets, the sick, those seeking education, or for running state owned enterprises, or not until long ago, for making bread and bicycles! (I am referring to failed public sector endeavors). Consequently, our future depends not on building capability, not on the participative efforts of the people, but on the bureaucracy, which has come to be more powerful than the legislature. Corruption and its increasingly predatory structure prove to be an impediment towards the bureaucracy's goal of serving the masses. Public distribution schemes, food for work programs, rural employment guarantee acts, etc are all in place, but all of these have been reduced to mere efforts on paper because of bureaucratic bottlenecks. A showcase of this would be the thousands or even lakhs of tonnes of rice being illegally sourced from Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns and then being smuggled. Every one from the District Officer, to the middle men, to the exporter gain; except the poor for which the rice was meant! This is just one of the myriad examples one can offer portraying our corrupt functioning.






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I believe that human development should be the most pressing claimant of our development efforts, because India's present demographic structure boasts of a large 'working' population and this potential is lying undeveloped. We need to act now since India has a short window of opportunity to get this right before their record numbers of youth become middle-aged, and they lose their demographic dividend. This is not just enlightened social policy. This may be one of the profound decisions we will ever make to banish poverty and galvanize the rural economy.

"We need to act now" – This phrase spells out the pressing need for massive reforms without further delay. Rigidity of thought, of understanding, political and societal functioning needs to be eased, now! We need administrative reforms in order to engender development at grass roots. Lethargy in the guise of 'gradualism' must be discarded. Implementation post planning needs to reign. The prospect of an ugly future calls upon the need to shun off centre dominated development strategies, with a metropolis-cum-elite bias and a top-down implementation. A three pronged course of action that the government must follow is, first, the move towards decentralization with the governments at the state and lower levels assuming larger role and responsibility in developmental efforts and policies. The second relates to the shift of emphasis from government's role as an intervener in the economy to a facilitator in areas where other agencies have a comparative advantage over the government. Our

private entrepreneurial spirits are flourishing and this could change the face and future of rural India. This would unlock public resources which could then be directed towards infrastructure building. Thirdly, the government should participate most actively in promotion of human development, undertaking the primary responsibility for building of perspectives, institutions and mechanisms.

Development requires the removal of poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as a systemic social deprivation. This, I concede, is easier said than done. However, there is not much that collimated and continuous efforts can not achieve. First step in this direction would require cleansing of the system and making corruption a high risk activity, contrary to the line of thought which propagates acceptance of some amount of corruption as a quid pro quo for economic growth. We must acknowledge that a framework for empowering the masses and rural development is already in place, which lies inundated by corruption rendering it ineffectual. Therefore it is only a question of reactivation, using the 'power tool' of the 'right to information' that we have been empowered with. Next, priority should be awarded to infrastructural reforms. From power to roads to communication, infrastructural building alone can bail us out of an ugly future. A sound infrastructure in place will remunerate the society with broadened opportunities for better education and healthcare,



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young people will be able to acquire the life skills to navigate adolescence and young adulthood safely, while improved vocational training will help them compete in the workforce. Enhancing the capabilities of the youth (both to work and to reap the benefits of work), would ease the pressure of disguised unemployment borne by the primary sector. This would also facilitate the shift toward industry which is a prerequisite for sustained growth. Human development will prolifically pave the route for sustainable overall growth, the rewards of which will be garnered equally by all.

Sadly, we are a nation of people so accustomed to the mayhem that we choose to live with it. We are a nation who does not read the writing on the wall, instead we deface it! And so ladies and gentlemen, the future is ugly as long as we refuse to eschew the slipshod attitude we patronize. If one thinks about it, one soon realizes that India is poor because Indian society is poor. It is an easy conclusion to arrive at but an immensely bitter conclusion for an Indian to accept. Therefore, instead of being endlessly jubilant of the cultural heirloom, which we all insist we inherited, we need to act, act now!



Chetan Tripathy

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India is a beautiful country and has a civilization more than five thousand years old. And yet, why do I say that her future is ugly? Well, I explain the reasons below.

My father recently had been to China and, on his return, was very sad. He is a patriot and was very sad because China has outpaced India in many frontiers of development. He travelled by Meglev train that traversed forty kilometers from the Pud Dong airport to the city centre in just thirteen minutes, picking up a cruising speed of 432 kilometers per hour. It was like our alliance airplanes – he bemused! Shanghai city centre, he stated, would make Europeans and Americans shy of their cities in grandeur! And the same was the story when he returned from Seoul a few months earlier. He travelled 700 kilometers, from Seoul to Bussan, the eastern most port city in South Korea, just in two hours by train. The Koreans had informed him that they had come to study Indian railway system in the 60s, when we were far ahead of them in railway networking. Although my father is an integral part of the

system, he concluded that our institutions, ideas and actors must change!

And my friend's mother, who went to see her working IT engineer-daughter in Singapore, and went around with her to Kualalumpur and Bangkok, had similar wonderful stories to tell on return. With increasing liberalization, mobility, disc antenna information flow, and promotion of package tours, more and more people are traveling out to discover where we stand and how we manage to stand where we are. Their findings are not very pleasant ones! The grievance of my friend's mother was simple: our institutions, actors, and ideas must change!



Although my father is an integral part of the system, he concluded that our institutions, ideas and actors must change!

China has a communist form of government. Thailand, where they have recently opened a world-class airport named Suvarnabhumi, is a monarchy, one of the fifty-seven monarchies in the world still surviving and thriving. The ones who come from Europe and the Americas have similar stories to tell. They talk of wonderful transportation systems being put in place in Curitiba, Saupolo, Bogota, and Quito.



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Europe has, of course, always beautiful and rich. Here we read how the IT Czars of Bangalore pick up paper war with politicians to solve traffic chaos in the streets. The common point in all these feelings is one: we must change. Our ideas, institutions and actors must change. Or else...

The future is indeed ugly. The problem is not where we are and whether we can make it up in time. The problem is that increasingly more and more people are losing faith in the delivery ability of our political system we have put in place, in the rules of the game we accepted and codified in a document we call our constitution! One proof is that my father felt so sad after his return from China and South Korea. Second is my friend's mother's Nostardumus like prediction. Ideas, actors, and institutions must change. Or else...

But there is a third reason why I believe the future is ugly. This is an article published in the India Today some time back and a serial that came in the Discovery Channel. The former gave a picture of a brilliant and serpentine Naxal arch that stretches through Indian subcontinent today: Nepal – Jharkhand – West Bengal – Orissa – Andhra Pradesh – Sri Lanka! The snake has to just change into a python and role its sides! The serial in the above channel gave a picture of the grim fight between the government and naxals in parts of tribal Jharkhand, and how the unfortunate war is getting intensified when fanned with illiteracy, extreme poverty and a system that seems to have been hijacked by the people in power.

This frightens me and is the reason why I portray the future of India as



More and more people feel less and less sure about the executive's ability to rule and run the system.

ugly, unless of course we act now! But there is another reason, a fourth one, which I see as a great weakness in our system that makes our future ugly. We have reached a stage where the judiciary has to work as the executive, as the constitutional executive has lost its moral legitimacy and inherent willingness to rule. More and more people feel less and less sure about the executive's ability to rule and run the system. In fact, it is so bad that if there is referendum to privatize the executive government, there may be a thumping win for the yes group. I am not thrilled by so called judicial activism. I take this as a symptom of our political sickness and a sad proof of our future's ugliness. I shiver when I think of the India in the coming 50s, when we will surpass China in population figures, and the chaotic portrayal of our future poverty in supplying basic living conditions – food, water, houses, clothing, energy, roads, infrastructure – unless of course we act now.

We need to act now. Of course we do. But what is the road map for the plan of action? What can we do to overcome the deadly combination of crisis in confidence, crisis of faith and faceless and future disasters in the making? The answer lies in what my friend's mother said. She in fact laid the blueprint. The model for our future action is to change our ideas, institutions and actors. May be this is the new paradigm we must plan to shift to.

Model for future action: New paradigm *Ideas:*

Ideas in fact drive societies. This is what the famous historian Toynbee stated in his monumental study of the rise and fall of twenty-one civilizations.





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Civilizations perish when they run out of steam or ideas to respond to emerging or existing challenges.

Hence we must identify, understand and tackle emerging and existing challenges through innovative ideas coming out of collective thinking and brainstorming. No problem is beyond addressing. Correct identification of challenges and problems constitute half of the solution. And we must think big. We must have the ability and willingness to think and dream big to solve our problems and march beyond. Luckily we are not totally short of big ideas. We need to put them into a blueprint and add on to move forward. Hence we must act on our new and big ideas, so that our milestones help us to reach our destination through a pleasant journey.

Actors:

Actors are powerful and creative only when the ideas that drive them are powerful and legitimate. We have actors in every field, who are shackled into a framework that saps their energy into procedures and formalities, into maize of colonial rules and laws. What is important is not delivery or results, but compliance with rules that protect ones territory and authority. Hence actors need to go into a mission mode where actions are based on trust and faith so that new and innovative ideas can be implemented.

Institutions:

Institutions are like the medium through which actors with ideas have to work. Social institutions are like a network of nursery beds that



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provides vital nutrients to actors to grow and shine and achieve social objective. In India, as Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has stated, farmers do not go for mass production, but a system that keeps them into a mould of production by the masses. Introduction and expansion of GMS (Genetically Modified Seeds) gets bogged down in rules and books in the pigeonholes of offices. Implementation fails because there is no harmony between and within actors, ideas and institutions. Planning for the village is not done in the village in the absence of true decentralization of authority. Hence institutions have to change and we must act to change them now.

The goal is to bring in harmony between and within trinity of social institutions, ideas and actors, so that tremendous potential energy gets converted into kinetic energy that enables our society to move ahead and forward. But for that we have to act to change now. Or else...India's future will indeed be more ugly – rather the ugliest.

To quote a few lines from my poem 'As I Lose a New Quest':

*"I have a desire to change the system,
Yes I have a thought too,
And shall not give up my quest,*

*And even if I lose, I have not lost all,
For my hope will still carry me along,
As I walk to think and dream."*



Jasmine Bakshi

Jesus & Mary College, New Delhi

The world economy is growing at a phenomenal rate. Countries like India, China which at some stage were non-existent are now considered to be among the fastest growing nations. Globalization has become the new buzz word with the world economy opening up completely.

The scenario presented above surely makes the picture of the world looking bright and promising. But it is the unspoken and hidden aspect of this future that poses a threat to the world. The world today is on an edge of facing the most devastating consequences of the growth it has achieved over the years.

9/11; a turning point in the world history, a day which marked the entry into a “Chaotic World”. Huge outrage broke in the White House and the result was, as quoted by President Bush - “World’s war against terrorism”. What followed was Iraq’s bombing. A rich country with massive wealth and

home to thousands of innocent people was devastated. Once a flourishing nation, became synonymous to words like smuggling, Taliban, Islamic fundamentalism, war famine and high mortality.

The world recently mourned over the anniversary of the “deadliest of all terror attacks” - 9/11. The media was filled with anecdotes of people who died in the attack. But what we forget are the thousands that die everyday because of air raids in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. The death toll in these countries is far greater than in 9/11 attack. But instead of considering these killings as genocide we justify them as “war against terrorism”. Why? Because these are being conducted by a super power. All of us accept the fact that the war against Iraq had nothing to do with the war against terror. It was a route adopted by U.S. to declare its supremacy over the world and a way through which President Bush could adhere to his misguided temptation to get more oil out of Middle East, by turning a “friendly” Iraq into a private American oil pumping station. The U.S.’



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imperialistic policies that once existed have now been granted a green light for a full blown expanded imperial project under the aegis of the “war against terrorism”. By coining its policy “either you are with us or with terrorists” during the Iraq bombing, clearly showed the countries their fate if they tried going against the U.S. dictated terms.

The violence has escalated around the world since September 11, an unpredictable chain of violent events has been set in motion—and now a “third world war” is awaiting us. A “third world war” in the 21st century, a nuclear age, is the biggest threat which constantly looms over the world. And this threat if transformed to reality, will certainly mark the end of mankind.

The Iraq episode which could have been a learning experience for us has unfortunately made the situation worse. The countries under constant threat from the U.S. hegemonic policies, for their own security have now resorted to acquiring weapons of mass destruction. These nations, threatened with a great power seeking global domination, will go to desperate lengths to redress the balance with weapons of mass destruction being the foremost and the most obvious means of doing so. This attempt of countries to escape the fate of Iraq has rather provoked, than prevented the danger of war. The success of a small country like North Korea's nuclear test has given a boost to other

countries to follow a similar path to fight the domination of the western world. This event has added fuel to the already tense world environment. Strict economic sanctions being imposed, as retaliation to the test, by the other countries will severely affect not only the Korean economy but also the people in the country. Despite an average national income, millions have been spent on these weapons resulting in a deteriorating position of the country. With majority of the population under poverty line, hundreds dying of diseases, the picture of the country is dismal. With the government completely occupied with the development of nuclear programme, the future of people lies in uncertainty. This is not only the story of Korea, but of several other countries trying their best for survival in this complex world.



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While few countries have resorted to an anti-American approach, the others have decided to play safe by formulating policies in accordance with the U.S.' demands. The countries adopting the latter approach (mainly underdeveloped economies) are helped by the U.S., financially by a massive influx of funds in the form of loans, and militarily through technical assistance. However despite adhering to U.S. policies, these are the nations which over the years have suffered tremendously by the double faced U.S. foreign policies, which seek to cripple the country's economy and make it prone to its dictated terms. What is popularly known as the Asian Miracle emerged as a result of the aid given



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by the U.S.. However this was just one aspect of the matter which is far more serious than it appeared. What now poses the danger is the unspoken aspect of all the aid granted. What U.S. intended to do was not actually to help the countries financially, but to create economies that are heavily dependent on its own economy. The economies of these countries have become so highly dependent on the U.S. economic bubble that if the bubble bursts, the effect on the economy of these countries will be far more devastating than on its own economy. It will result in major financial crisis in these countries with huge deficits, and then with all benefits exploited and with no further advantages, U.S. will easily escape the problem by quoting it as “Asian Problem” and having no role to play in it. From the viewpoint of U.S.’ financial interests, the collapse of the economies of such countries will not be a bad outcome. Money will continue to flee to the “safe haven” of U.S. The countries depending on the IMF will have to follow its prescriptions of privatization, all of which will favor U.S. More importantly the IMF entry will again mean the return of U.S. hegemony. Moreover the strength of the dollar as a currency gives yet another and one of the biggest advantages to U.S. The dominating dollar has the power to crash the stock market, which serves as the backbone of every economy. That is why today the supremacy of United States is regarded as the greatest threat to peace in the world, by probably the vast majority of the population of the world.



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world.*

So ironically both these type of countries (following an Anti-American or a Pro-American approach), because of their efforts to save themselves, have in a way escalated the threat hovering over them, making the future dark and gloomy.

Though the danger is not evident directly, but it surrounds us, constantly warning us of the repercussions it will have if nothing is done to combat the imperial ambitions of the superpowers. It is now being realized world over that a global hegemonic peace, would just mark the triumph of coercion. Its foundation would not be equality of any kind but absolute and unchallengeable superiority of one; it will not be coexistence but the right of one, and only one, to execute change.

But can the world in the twenty-first century really be ruled from thirty-five thousand feet? Modern people have the will to resist and the means to do so. The realization among the countries that force can lead only to more force, not to peace has strengthened. Only a turn to structures of cooperative power and democracy can offer hope.

The agenda of a program to build a cooperative world would be to choose cooperative means at every level of political life. At the street level, this would mean choosing satyagraha over violent insurrection — the sit-down or general strike or “social work” over the suicide bombing or the attack on the local broadcasting station.





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At the level of the State it would mean choosing democracy over authoritarianism; at the level of international affairs, it would mean choosing negotiation and treaties over war and, in general, choosing a cooperative, multilateral international system over an imperial one. And at the level of biological survival, it would mean choosing nuclear disarmament over the nuclear terror. The choice at each level is not merely rejection of violence; it is at the same time the embrace of its cooperative equivalent. A global threat requires a global response, and a global response will be possible only if governments work together rather than against one another.

Just as violent revolution creates the conditions for dictatorship, nonviolent revolution paves the way for democracy. Just as dictatorships incline toward war, democracies, if they can resist imperial temptations, incline towards peace. Just a decision for non-violence and adoption of democracy, is a way to exist.

Fifty-eight years after Hiroshima, the world has to decide whether to follow the path of cataclysmic violence or whether to embark on a new, cooperative political path. This decision requires a long struggle and a global resistance to imperial forces. Resistance lives! As we say in India, *Inqilab Zindabad!*



Moonmoon Ghosh

Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi

What will the earth be like 50 years from now? Barren? Or still teeming with life and possibilities? Warm? Or cold? Nobody knows what the future holds for the human race, and for our planet, as a whole. But considering the numerous disastrous experiences the Earth is facing in recent times, many people are painting a truly bleak picture of our future.


These truly are troubling times for us, the human race. Wars are being fought in the Middle-East. Political insurrections are becoming more and more common in countries like Thailand, Ukraine, Romania, etc. If it was the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, then it is the Rose Revolution in Georgia. Political instability and regime changes are affecting the day-to-day lives of civilians, which affects their employment opportunities, health and the right to live. The situation in Middle-East is proof enough.

Thousands of innocent civilians are killed

everyday on the streets of Iraq by the US Army, by Islamic militias. Feuds rage on between Shias and Sunnis. Women, children and elderly citizens have to bear the brunt of the dreadful violence.

Another phenomenon that has led to a skewed economy has been the escalating costs of oil. A barrel of oil costs approximately \$80 today. Such sky-high prices are upsetting the economic situation of nations, particularly those of the underdeveloped and developing countries, which require oil for economic development.

Terrorism is another global menace that has reared its head in a terrifying way. No nation is spared from its ill-effects. Whether it be the spectacular 9/11 bombings in the US, or the London 7/7 bombings, or the explosions in Mumbai on 26/7, none of the major cities of the world are safe anymore. Terrorists are finding creasingly sophisticated methods to wreak havoc on civilians, demonstrated when liquid explosive



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devices were used aboard American planes. The attempts, however, were successfully foiled at the Heathrow Airport.

Terrorism also leads to many other problems, chief among them being “Islamophobia”, or the fear of Islam. Muslims around the world, even if they are moderates or liberals, are caught in the fire today, as their community is held responsible for the spiraling violence. This clearly reflects the growing intolerance among the other communities for Islam. Muslims are being subjected to humiliation and racial discrimination. In Britain, Asians and Muslims are primary suspects whenever violent acts occur. They are detained at airports without proper charges, frisked everywhere - just because their names sound Muslim enough, or they “look” Muslim enough for the “normal” people, who are afraid of them. Instead of cultural assimilation and harmony, what we are now facing is growing segregation and discrimination on the basis of race, religion, culture and identity. Religious symbols and clothing are increasingly turning into causes of concern and debate. A Muslim woman wearing a headscarf or a veil is immediately seen as backward or pre-modern. It is seen as a sign of oppression and backwardness. But who are these so-called “advanced” and “modern” people who have the right to judge and question a person’s identity? Does modernism give them the right to institutionalize racism?

Most of the so-called “developed” nations of the world commit gross violations of human rights. Guantanamo Bay and Abu-Ghraib have become the living symbols of oppression and torture. And they operate under the aegis of the US - the most civilized nation. Third degree torture is practiced there, detainees are tortured without being charged. And what’s more, President George Bush is trying to pass a Bill that will seek to make torture legal within American prisons. Talk about culture and civilization! China, the fastest growing economy, has one of the most brutal and dictatorial regimes. Tibet was unlawfully annexed by the Chinese, and Tibetans today are kidnapped, tortured, imprisoned for life and murdered.



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Another huge problem is the increasing arms sale. A thousand people die everyday due to armed violence. According to a U.N. Report, \$900 billion are spent annually on defence as against a mere \$60 billion on aid. This is such a staggering statistic! An Amnesty International Report last year detailed shipments of more than 240 tonnes of weapons from East Europe to governments in Africa’s war-torn countries, and onto militias involved in mass murder, mutilation and rape. Also, from 1998-2001, USA, UK, and France earned more from arms sale to the developing world than they gave in aid. Thus, the perpetrators of the act are benefiting from it, earning billions of dollars in return. Tough controls need to be placed on the sale of arms. But this is not the only solution because nearly 640



million small arms already exist around the world. Hence, arms need to be destroyed on both sides to restore peace.

A problem related to this is one of Nuclear Proliferation. Countries around the world are circumventing the Non-Proliferation Treaty to build up their arsenals of arms. North Korea recently tested a nuclear device which immediately led to the imposition of economic sanctions by global hegemon US and its crony, the U.N. No one realizes the dangers of possessing nuclear weapons which have the ability to destroy the entire human race. What happened in Chernobyl is there for everyone to see. The after-effects of the radiation are still felt by the population, where children are born deformed, with different kinds of afflictions.

The phenomenon of Global Warming is staring us in the face. It is like an insidious malaise, slowly but surely draining the planet of its resources and longevity. As the carbon levels in the atmosphere keep building up, the Earth heats up. The warmth is leading to complete ice-sheets melting in Antarctica, glaciers melting in Northern Arctic. Thus, sea-levels around the world are rising up, posing a grave danger to the low-lying coastal areas, which are under threat of being submerged. Greenland's ice-cap, for example, is two miles high and is spread over an area twice the size of California. This vast reservoir contains enough water to raise sea-levels around the world by 20 feet. In recent years, the



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ice-sheets of Greenland have been building up in the middle through added snowfall but melting even more around the edges in summers.

According to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in November last year, atmospheric carbon-dioxide levels are now at the highest in 650,000 years. Such rising temperatures would have even more of an impact than predicted initially. Global temperatures rose by an average of 3 degrees centigrade due to climate change. This will cause a worldwide drop in cereal crop growth, put 400 million at risk of hunger, and billions at risk of flooding and without access to fresh water supplies. Also, few ecosystems could survive such a sudden change. This would result in the destruction of half of the world's natural resources. Warming is also posing a threat to Arctic wildlife including polar bears, ice-dwelling seals and several forms of vegetation. As ice-sheets retreat, more and more bears and penguins rue the loss of their habitats. Ecosystems around the world are being ravaged.

The spread of dreaded diseases like AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are posing a threat to our very survival. The African continent has the highest number of AIDS-stricken people, yet nothing is being done about it. Income inequalities around the world are increasing by leaps and bounds. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening day by day. Whereas some people in the richest countries are dangerously obese, millions of children





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everyday die because of starvation and lack of clean drinking water. 4000 children die daily due to diarrhoea caused by unclean water and poor sanitation. 2.6 billion people still have no access to the most basic latrine, even though the technology is making huge advancements. Over a billion people have no source of drinking water.

Such are the immense dangers our world faces. Steps need to be taken by governments, civil organizations and people alike to ameliorate such dreadful conditions. Even though the world is now

painfully and virtually past the point of no-return, we can still make it a habitable place for the future generations. Even though the future may seem dark and ugly, devoid of majestic things, humans still can work towards it. And with definite results. We might still be able to save our beautiful Royal Bengal Tigers; and our verdant green Amazon rainforests; and all the vast blue biome of the oceans, with its diverse sea-life. We might not be able to completely turn over the excesses committed in the past, but salvage whatever little can be, from the impending future.





Parth Phiroze Mehrotra

Kirori Mal College, Delhi

Is it not intersecting and paradoxical that when Akshay Kumar bungee jumps out of a helicopter into the ocean in a Thumbs-up advertisement a disclaimer precedes his exploit; but when sexual practices, which are universally deemed to be unsafe, are beamed into our homes in a constant never drying stream, no disclaimer precedes those exploits.

It is an even more interesting fact and a tragically ironic one given our situation today. Today, India has reached a point where according to UNAIDS, 5.1 million people of our population are living with HIV AIDS. This statistic also implies that India has the highest number of people of any country in the world, living with this infection. A CIA report predicts the epidemic to gallop to 20-25 million cases by 2010. UNAIDS predicts that the economic growth rate of India will slow by up to one percent point per year as a result of HIV AIDS by 2019. The Indian Government hotly disputes most of these figures, but then figures were never my point. The undisputed

fact is that the situation is very grim—we have on our hands a burgeoning HIV AIDS crisis and it will become uglier in the future unless something is done now. Even though no reliable statistics are available detailing the incidence of infection among urban youth, it is a fact that 37% of reported HIV AIDS cases are diagnosed among people less than thirty years of age. Also the NACO estimates that 83% of all new infections are sexually transmitted.



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In brief my point is, not enough is being done in a comprehensive and insightful manner (as may be evident from my introductory example) to safeguard the urban youth. The reason why I talk of safeguarding such a niche section of the population is because I as a part of that section have personally felt inadequately equipped with the right tools to safeguard myself and have also felt misled; and being a part of that demographic I can suggest remedies borrowing from my own experience. My vision therefore deals with the issue of HIV AIDS and the



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urban youth. My vision is one of a mass movement- education and information, dispelling misinformation, shattering stereotypes and building a support base. Very importantly, we need to stop pretending that Indian morality is such a holy cow and be honest. And given that a dialogue on HIV AIDS will invariably include sex and drugs it is one of the most important prerequisites to tackling the crisis.

Considering that the HIV AIDS crisis is quite youth centric, and is fuelled on sexually transmitted infections, I feel that the time has come that sex education on sexual health and safe sex practices become serious business. It is not good enough any more that the television assumes the role of the parent and teacher and does the 'dirty work' not by design but by default. Currently a good lot of the youth receive their information from television and movies. Even if the current abysmal state of affairs on information dissemination is maintained, it is imperative that misinformation and misleading must be plugged. In this context media responsibility and monitoring is crucial. A partnership with the media would also be an added asset to fight the crisis. To illustrate my point on misinformation and misleading I would like to return to me introductory example.

The reason why a disclaimer is deemed necessary for the Thumbs-up ad in question, the Mountain dew ads, Wrestling programmes and other rash displays is to snap the audience out of their fantasy into reality, and to inform them of the real danger involved in these seemingly effortless, harmless and

consequence-less acts. The very existence of the disclaimer accepts the influence of dangerous stunts and imagery on people, and seeks to curb the damage it could potentially do, it dissuades imitation hoping to possibly avoid the death of a young fan that feels even if he jumps off a building Shaktiman will definitely save him.

Depictions of sexual acts in television and film should be no different. An example will make my point much clearer. The television series 'Sex in The City' ran six seasons from 1998 to 2004 on HBO in the United States and is still broadcast in India on the same network. The show focused on the sex lives of four female best friends living in New York City, at the same time dealing with other issues concerning them such as cancer, unplanned pregnancy, deaths of close family members, infertility etcetera. In a nutshell it chronicled the lives of four imaginary women, spinning around the audience (as most television serials do) a web of fantasy and illusion, which made these characters seem real, and their trials and tribulations genuine. The programme detailed with academic precision the fulfillment of every possible carnal desire by these four women over a span of a seven-year period. And oddly while dealing with every sexual issue ever dreamt of it never deals with the very real and scary issue of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV AIDS. Even when frequent casual sex encounters lead to pregnancy the issue of STD detection is never talked of. The lives of these four women proceed in an unrealistic manner, in a



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way as though they have some super natural immunity to infection. Young viewers of this programme (for that matter any viewers) may be inclined to believe the serial to be realistic depiction of life. They may develop the “if it didn’t happen to them, it sure isn’t going to happen to me” attitude. In the face of facts that indicate that viewers are likely to emulate behaviour viewed on television, it is a necessity and a moral duty, for broadcasting authorities to tear this web of illusion through effective and prominent disclaimers.

A system of disclaimers that I have envisioned does not resemble the gutless, impact-less and mild disclaimers usually seen. The disclaimers against unprotected sexual activity must be explicit and lucid. They must be in true public interest and not merely to avoid a lawsuit. They should be large enough, say one-third or half of a TV screen, so that they stop viewers in their tracks, and snap them back to reality. An effective disclaimer played every time the sexual act is talked of or aired will be powerful and will take the steam out of glamorously and sensationally portrayed acts. This way a major channel of misleading will be plugged aside from which correct information will flow to the viewers in an easily accessible and unignorable fashion. Several tragedies due to imitation may be averted. In a way it kills two birds with one stone.

I am not a fan of censorship. In ‘Sex and The City’ the behaviour exhibited by the main protagonists is realistic, it happens. The fact



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that for seven years they never once broke into a cold sweat wondering about their HIV status is also what real people may do. These are plain and simple facts of people’s behaviour. But the fact that they live their lives happily ever after may not be so true. I do not promote cramping artistic license a la Ramadoss; instead I promote information and informed choices. Cynics may claim that in a particular story plot, the characters may actually be indulging in safe sex and so the disclaimer is unnecessary; but this is not so. Because the fact that the sex is safe cannot be visually ascertained; as in the case of a stunt, which is conducted in a safe environment of a film studio-here too, a disclaimer is required to avoid misguided imitation.

The mass movement that will eventually curb the HIV AIDS crisis has to involve a system of information dissemination in a pointed manner targeted specifically at the youth. The time has come where a discourse on the details of all types of sexual activity and the risk of infection associated with them is talked of freely. The fundamentals of transmission need to be talked of and then associated with various sexual and non-sexual activities. Then preventive measures need to be discussed in detail. Cynics invariably argue how sex education will do nothing but increase experimentation and this may cause the crisis to escalate. As far as the urban youth are concerned, I have concluded, not on any scientific grounds, but based on extensive interpersonal interaction that sexual experimentation is a reality of today. To deny this is to





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bury ones head in the sand. Whether or not sex education will promote experimentation is something that I cannot say because I cannot venture to comment on something that has never been put to the test in the Indian context (that I know of). What I can say with full confidence is that once empowered with information of the kind I have talked of it would be an oddly disturbed person who would still court the risk.

Along with education many untruths need to be dispelled. For instance the youth need to be told—yes, a single exposure is good enough for infection. No, a person cannot be diagnosed as HIV negative or positive based on looks alone. Yes, contrary to what “Sex and the City” may lead you to believe, unprotected oral sex is not safe sex. Yes, it can happen to anyone; HIV does not discriminate. The only way to get to know what all untruths the young have come to believe to be true is to have an honest dialogue.

Furthermore information on testing facilities needs to be freely available. This too needs to be a part of the public-youth awareness programme. Support structures for positive people and removal of stigma should also be a part of the programme.

To launch a mass movement targeting the youth it may be fruitful to include the issue of HIV AIDS as a part of the school curriculum. Maybe it could also be introduced as a concurrent or subsidiary subject at the college level. Nothing motivates the urban youth

quite like marks do, and in this way they will be forced to empower themselves with information.

Public awareness campaigns like the “Heroes Project” are indeed beneficial especially since they are youth oriented. But those too need to be far more explicit and lucid. They are too ‘safe’ and need to offer more information not just direct people to sources of information. Of course help lines like the “Heroes Project” are indeed helpful.

My history teacher told my class when I was in school that the anti-child marriage campaign in Tamil Nadu was so strong and mass-based that on the backs of most buses and on many hoardings the minimum marriageable age was displayed prominently. It was her contention that this led the incidence of child marriage to decrease tremendously in the state. My vision for tackling HIV AIDS is similar. We need an active and vibrant mass movement that no one can ignore. From 1986 to 2000 AIDS has claimed an estimated 2.7 million lives. I’m sure that had people simply understood the severity of the virus and basic and simple ways to protect oneself many lives could have been saved. It’s been said so many times, that this line has almost lost it’s meaning but it is true when I say that the answer lies in education (and internalizing education). It is a painful surprise that a problem so large could have a solution so simple.



Sonika Singh

Oriental Institute of Science and Technology, Bhopal

Today we live in a world and time where the future as early as the next minute could be gravely and dangerously uncertain. The probability of it being dangerous more certainly, than not is increasing alarmingly, progressing geometrically day by day. Today living in a country like ours, is living in the midst of the new socio-geo-economic-political order, in the midst of the active region of South-East Asia, in the midst of the eternal aspirations of man to be looked up to, and in the midst of the battle between the haves and the have-nots, the malls and the blistered fields, Gandhigiri and riots, new state-of-the-art laws and state imposed moral policing. India, the country much touted to be the perfect blend of cultures is like a fantasy story of contradictions. The plot is being held together somehow, but is threatening to become a chaotic display of banter hijacked by a few individuals immersed in the idea of the “self”.

How can thus, the future be not dark when all

that we hold so dear to our lives, all that really matters, is, stagnating. Of what good is water infrastructure if there's no water in the rivers? Of what good are policies and statements that polarize society? Of what good is religion that takes lives? Of what good are malls, when the common man has no money to buy essential commodities?

Of what good are laws and law-makers if they busy themselves deciding dress codes, while rape and crime rates spiral? Of what good are public hospitals if they can not treat poor patients, and finally, of what consequence are good GDP figures and bullion reserves when farmer suicide rates are reaching alarming levels? Of what good are international forums if they act as mere toys regularly twisted and bent by pampered nations?

As India marches ahead in the reality of the 21st century it grapples with questions regarding its role in it. We are today at a point where everyone's too eager to just reach at the pinnacle of all-development and achievement, whatever the cost. The future,



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whatever course it takes will hinge on three factors, namely the internal policies of the State, the environment we live in and the international scenario. India's future, however, at the moment seems to have been taken hostage by an obsolete idea of how to develop, misplaced priorities and myopic attitudes.

The great State con

We (in the sense, the State—the elected representative of the majority) are shaping our future in such a way where GDP figures are projected and below poverty line figures are suppressed. Elsewhere in Afghanistan we build roads of rehabilitation (and of influence), but back home the earthquake, cyclone, riots victims come to terms with 'stately' neglect. Today we are inviting malls to open shop here, opening up our economy while the agricultural industry, the backbone of our economy stands crippled. We talk of promoting India as a tourist hub, as a melting pot of cultures when systematically our wildlife, forests, indigenous tribes and their lands are being eliminated. The State today talks of equality and is subsidizing education and is taking away with the same hand, by increasing reservations rather than phasing them out.

Great money is allocated and supposedly spent on the infrastructural plans that will make India like some popular foreign destination. Sadly, India still in many parts is like, it must have been on the eve of independence; while the cities where these plans are implemented come to a halt by something like a

one-day heavy downpour. We talk today of interlinking rivers, when most of them are being reduced to a trickle due to excessive dumpings. Perhaps, it will be easier that way linking them, given the less volume! Great sops during election time are introduced being a great burden on the exchequer but the spiraling prices, hoardings of essential items cannot be controlled. The economy is opening up yet there are higher crime, unemployment rates. Doctors today are beaten up when protesting peacefully, daring to voice their dissent on a politically charged subject.

This, alas, is the crucible where the great Indian melting pot is melting away. Something is terribly amiss here. In the common hurry and chauvinism of the State and the individual of pronouncing India as having finally arrived at the international scene the unwanted and uncomfortable part of the reality has been conveniently pushed under the carpet. Thus we are trying to cure our problems by applying gloss over them...they might look good for a while, but inherently our problems remain and become graver by constant neglect.



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We must develop a better sense of responsibility towards our total environment ...

We all have a clear memory of studying in some class in our textbooks that global warming will show its effects after 50 years. That all fossil fuels will end up in a 100 years, that one day if we go on like this



we might have trees and tigers only in museums, that our coastal cities might drown. All that jargon turning into a nightmarish reality was a possibility in some unseen, absent, futuristic time.

But all the above predictions seemingly have hurtled into the present catching us unawares and grossly under-prepared. There have been increasing, no more subtle, on the other hand, quite loud and noticeable environmental changes, forcing even the worst critics of the global warming theory to take note.

It takes years for world leaders to meet up, formulate topics for discussion, ponder, agree, disagree, and finally pass some understanding in some convention after some decades. The damage is already done by then. Today environmental risks like the Himalayan glaciers melting, leading to flooding and then perennial droughts, wetlands, forests, and parts of central India facing imminent desert conversion, extinction and threat to a large number of ecologically vital species are threats that can potentially wipe the great civilization of the Indus and the Aryans.

The International scene

Not only this, the new world order is beset with new problems like global terrorism and internal militancy. The North, East, West, South, Central India all are dealing with insurgency problems. Today countries are coming to loggerheads at the slightest of provocations.



The globe is becoming a burning hole with vast majorities of innocent people being bombed, burnt alive.

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Nuclear adventurism is the order of the day. The globe is becoming a burning hole with vast majorities of innocent people being bombed, burnt alive. War seems an imminent reality today, though its nature has changed according to how perpetrators of it justify it, as their freedom movement or liberating the people of their “oppressive” regimes.

The solution

Each individual today in his capacity as the “self”, in his capacity in the community and the society needs to act and inspire others in this urgent call of nation building. I would believe in starting a revolution at the personal level, using all my capabilities to make it into a movement. A personal revolution and making it look cool is the only way this country can rid itself of citizens who

look and do not see, who listen but, do not hear, who know, feel but, do not act.

The three tier problem can be solved by a three pronged approach. We as individuals at the local level must create an opinion on matters of concern and make them heard by organizing events and bringing in more people in the fray. The Government today is too used to a silent public. The same approach should be adopted by citizens to make themselves heard for domestic and international issues. These days there are protests for every international convention on poverty, environmental issues etc., but they will be more effective if communities target their home governments first.





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Mobilization of public opinion will certainly have an impact on the power-centric decision makers. Lastly each person has to start at home as far as the environment-related problems are concerned. The recent drastic changes in the environment should be spread like wild fire and an imminent danger.

This is a crucial turning point in the history of the world, especially for our country...today the environment, geo-political situation and humanity itself is on a complex path. We truly need to act now to secure our future so that we do not become mere

puppets in the hands of destiny, to be stirred by the master into a moment's mimicry of life. We need to work hard to make our country and planet a thriving place, full of vitality and life and not a dead, smoky black lump of ash. As they say: *"The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble."*

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."



Srilata Sircar


St. Stephen's College, Delhi

We live in a global village, they say, but globalization is not an easy term to explain or understand. In my perception it is an overwhelming phenomenon that has captivated my generation of urban youngsters to such an extent that we take no time to identify Mariah Carey from Madonna but could easily spend our lives without learning to differentiate the *sitar* from the *sarod*. We know the fine line between hip-hop and jazz but not the intricacies of Raga Basant from Raga Bahar. In our eagerness to grab a passport to global citizenship, we have nearly discarded our identity as Indians. Globalization has brought many boons and will bring more in the years to come, but when I focus my perspective on the socio-cultural front, I sadly find that the future is ugly and we need to act now.

What I am calling for is a Cultural Movement with the initiative of the people and the State alike. It should be aimed at the reclamation of Indian

classical and folk art, culture and music. The path has been paved by bodies like SPICMACAY (Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Among Youth). What we need to create is a wider base and a more pro-active working team. For this I suggest a state-endorsed planned programme to popularize our traditional art forms in the upwardly mobile urban middle class and to simultaneously sustain the survival of these art forms among our rural populace. A three-fold plan of action may prove to be feasible in this regard.

At the very onset, one needs to target the youngest and most impressionable minds - those of first-time school-goers. Citizens belonging to a certain income bracket may be encouraged by the State to train their children in any one Indian folk or classical art form, from the time of commencement of their school lives. As an incentive, the central government could offer them income tax benefits. In the highest income bracket, which would naturally come to include



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corporate big-wigs, the Centre could levy a reasonable percentage of the income as tax for cultural rejuvenation of the country. A ceiling could also be placed on the amount that film producers can invest in films in a year and the outstanding amount could be diverted into the Cultural Movement. The same policy could be applied in the case of corporate houses sponsoring cricketing events. It is perhaps not wrong to think that Karan Johar and Sachin Tendulkar would be no worse off with their bank balance reduced by a crore or so, especially if that saved the heritage of their motherland !

The second step would be to set up a body in the league of the NCERT (National Commission for Educational Research and Training), which would draw up a regularized curriculum in Indian music, dance, theatre and art, to be taught compulsorily in all educational institutions across the country. While at the school level the curriculum could include art forms specific to the particular state in which the institution is located, at the graduate and the post-graduate levels the students could be offered to choose from a variety of performing arts from a number of states. Recruitment to the government body in question, should be through a competitive examination along the lines of the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) examination. At present, bodies like the Sahitya Academy, the Sangeet Natak Academy and the Lalit Kala Academy look into the cultural affairs of the nation. These should

continue with their existing programmes and further intensify their promotional schemes. On the whole, state investment in the sphere of art and culture should be revised and upgraded.

The third dimension of the Movement is completely a state prerogative. Over the last few years, there has been a tendency to project the Bollywood stars as the flag bearers of Indian culture and our ambassadors to the world. From Pandit Ravi Shankar composing music for the 1980 Asiad Games, we have come down to Saif Ali Khan doing a jig for the Commonwealth Games. This has to change.

In all national and international events providing an occasion for performance, classical musicians, dancers and folk performers should be given preference.

If successfully implemented, the revolution could prove to be of immense potential. At present a number of youngsters are forced to leave their training in music or dance incomplete due to academic demands. By incorporating these courses into the regular academic curriculum, we would find our students opting to pursue these art forms by way of profession. The formation of an organized government body and mandatory training of the arts would also generate more employment opportunities in this field. This would go a long way in alleviating the fears of many tribes and groups of performers such as the *Langas* and the *Manganiars* of Rajasthan or the *Chhau* dancers of Purulia, who dissuade their



Karan Johar and Sachin Tendulkar would be no worse off with their bank balance reduced by a crore or so, especially if that saved the heritage of their motherland !



The Future is Ugly, We Need to Act Now

progeny from joining the ancestral trade due to the financial insecurities involved. In short, our art forms would be saved from dying a pathetically early death and our children would learn to value what belongs to them and what they belong to.

However, the onus of salvaging our arts from the mouth of imminent extinction is not on the State alone. Non-Governmental organizations could also go a long way in devising programmes aimed at supporting families who are practitioners of various traditional arts but are lost from the public eye due to lack of education and inaccessibility. Institutions like the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the Delhi School of Social Work, which offer a degree in Social Work could add a choice of specialization in such a field. The media also needs to act with a greater sense of responsibility and not encourage superficial populist acts like the

sons of illustrious musicians walking the ramp for fashion designers to promote themselves. The essence of the arts need not be diluted in a desperate bid to popularize or commercialize them.

What I envision through the Cultural Movement is a strong, unified, globalizing nation that has its roots deeply entrenched in the fertile grounds of its cultural tradition but can sway gracefully to the changing beats of the times. A nation that can adapt to the ways of the world without disregarding the path its people have traveled over the centuries. The yields can be rewarding if globalization is given a more humane face and a little prudence and discretion are exercised before jumping at everything that is up for grabs. It is time we started acting. It is time for globalization to come of age.



**Our Strengths Today,
That will Shape a
Better Tomorrow**

आज की संचित ताकत
कल का सुनहरा भविष्य



Yugank Goyal
NIT, Surat

There was a toy merchant, selling some uniquely carved toys at a fair. One of his masterpieces was a small toy shaped in the form of a young woman, traditionally dressed. When charged, it used to unfalteringly trot forward. But there was a peculiarity. Her hair grew in front and instead of cascading on her shoulder and back, they rippled down her face, veiling it before everyone. When curiously asked, the merchant replied that it was 'the toy of time.' If you want to hold it, you must identify that it's coming, and grab it from front using her hair; because once you missed it, there's nothing at the back and you could then only observe it helplessly marching into oblivion.

India, while missing her for so many years after making 'a tryst with destiny' and 'redeeming her pledge,' has only now, started to 'awake to light and freedom.' She has identified time, and promises herself not to make any further

horological mistake. She has strengths, and knows where to employ them.



*She has
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The Knowledge Society and Corporations

As corporations emerge as the most influential institutions of modern Indian society, creating and distributing a large part of wealth, the immense number of stakeholders is going to act as one of the most powerful tool that will shape the future of India. The values that Indians share in their ethical temperament, which is intrinsically their own and remained fundamentally in place since years is a strong virtue that proliferates the ideas of business families, trusteeship and morality in enterprise functioning and paves way for their unbound progress.

India has ushered into a knowledge sector with a phenomenal celerity. Rapid strides made by telecom sector have continued to amaze us. To see fishermen





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bargain for the best price on their catch while they are still on water, a farmer in Punjab accessing commodity rates in various *mandis* at the push of the button is equally inspiring. India has very quickly transformed from an era of having the sixth-largest telecom network in the world. At the core of all this and many more similar milestones is the wireless revolution—India stands networked and reflects a profound eagerness to learn, which is a prominent factor for its ensured success. According to a recent NASSCOM-KPMG study, the offshore ITES/IT industry is expected to record a CAGR of 35% between 2004 and 2012, resulting in a turnover of USD 148 billion. A key factor to achieving this growth is availability of 3.7 million qualified professionals by 2012. India has recognized biotechnology as the next big economic opportunity in the knowledge sector. It has the potential of generating revenues of USD 5 billion and creating one million skilled jobs over the next five years through products and services, thus propelling it into a significant position in the global biotech sweepstakes.

The Demographic Dividend

A large and diverse group of Indians recently developed four scenarios of what type of country India would become by the interplay of forces that were becoming evident in the country, that were elegantly pictured. The group included economists, educationists, social workers, students, village women and even street children. The most hopeful of the four scenarios was an evocative picture of “Fireflies Arising.” In this

scenario of India’s development, women and youth had a large role in thousands of local initiatives all over the country. People were not waiting passively, but had taken initiatives themselves. Young people were no longer a burden to be provided for, but were agents of change. The picture showed millions of fireflies, each carrying his/her own light, rising from the gloom and collectively brightening up the world.

India has largest number of young people in the world today. We have approximately 65 million children below fifteen years of age, and as many as 400 million young people below the age of 23. These young people will, hopefully, join the ranks of working people in the next few years, thus creating a huge surge of productive activity, incomes and savings. India’s young people can be an asset to the global economy because while India’s population will be getting younger over the coming decades, the population of all the developed countries will be getting older. The richer countries will face a shortage of working age people while India will have a surplus. Therefore, India can bring in more than USD 200 billion of revenues every year from the richer countries and create 40 million additional jobs by providing a variety of services to the rest of the world.

Innovation and Thought

If asked an Indian, some sixty odd years ago, to paint a picture associated with the word invention, (s)he would have conjured up a scene of a vast clinical



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Our Strengths Today, That will Shape a Better Tomorrow

looking place, infested by hordes of busy-looking, white-clad, bespectacled technicians surrounded by an array of vats, test tubes and round bottomed beakers filled with colourful liquids and electronic monitoring machines. Today, if the same request is made to an average bystander, you will be presented with a completely different scenario. Perhaps of a ramshackle garage, still occupied by vats and test tubes, but cluttered and untidy; may be of a geek in glasses, sitting before his computer; or possibly, of a solitary human inhabitant looking contemplative. India today, is condemned to creativity! It is swarming with new entrepreneurs, for whom, profit is the recognition of his creativity and hard work by market and society.



So, rural India represents the largest potential market of the future in our country and one of the largest in the world.

rural retail outlets, there is no active marketing or distribution in these small villages because of uneconomical 'last mile' logistics. Rural India accounts for about 60% of the country's household consumption expenditure. So, rural India represents the largest potential market of the future in our country and one of the largest in the world. It is a huge marketing opportunity, alluded to as 'the bottom of the pyramid' by many. Marketing to the bottom of the pyramid, or the large population of the rural poor, is the new management and marketing mantra. Apart from spawning value-adding industry, the utilization of this untapped resource will enable the creation of substantial employment both on farms and off-farms, thus helping to absorb the excess labour inherent in agricultural productivity improvement. Further, wasteland development

With the recognition of product patents recently, various sectors of Indian industries have been encouraged to consider more innovations and less innovations. But that may be only one part of a broader trend. Multinational players with business built on innovation seem to be participating in a stampede in established R&D hubs in India. India can be envisioned, elegantly decked with a crowd of youth ready to innovate and think, as a natural environment to bring such innovation and supporting business models to life with sufficient adoption that gets it past a tipping point.

The Villages

Nearly 87% of India's 640,000 villages have population clusters of 2000 people or less. Despite a universe of roughly 3.6 million

through promotion of wood and forest based industry can convert over 35 million hectares into productive assets, while simultaneously addressing issues related to biomass depletion, soil erosion, water security, ecological balance and bio-diversity.

The Paradigm Shift in Focus

The anonymity of the convergence of globalization will help in breaking traditional silos of caste and creed. Today, we are a society in flux—we are in throes of moving from a 'caste-consciousness' based society to a 'rule' based one. In a society based on caste-consciousness, your entire future is based on which community or religion you belong to. In a village, your caste is stamped on your



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forehead and your demeanour. In a crowded suburban Mumbai train, however, squashed with hundreds of other commuters, the caste and creed of your fellow travelers are of little consequence. What matters is reaching Churchgate on time. The focus has experienced a paradigm shift. The managerial competence of a ruler becomes more important than a caste based permutations. This in turn leads to demands for a level playing field of opportunities. Once these demands become more vociferous, the only rational way to satisfy all the constituents is to have transparent rules that everyone can live by. Over time, the number of people who have vested interests in these rules will exceed the numbers who have vested interests in caste-consciousness. Once this tipping point is reached, it will be reflected in the kind of people you elect, the kind of rules that you frame and the kind of focus you bring to your governance. A large outcry against the widening scope of reservation policies from nook and corner of the country evinces that the change in focus is taking shape, thus creating a social churn, which will dissolve the inequities of birth and create a society oriented towards performance.


Talking About Predictions

We must take an overview of the famous BRIC's report (by Goldman Sachs), averring that India will become the third largest economy in less than thirty years, and income triples by 2020 (becomes 35 times by 2050). Even this report argues the country's favourable demographics as the key factor in materializing the same. India's pace of reforms and

growth has been slower than many other countries, but is occurring steadily, nonetheless, which affirms an invariant high rate of growth (above 6%) for next fifteen years. India's services led growth strategy is benefiting from both domestic and global demand, and is poised for more. The big areas of market development essentially talks about energy and oil (as the world's most important commodity), income levels (as a standard of living), automobiles (as a major consumer durables) and the level of equity market capitalization (as a proxy for the size of capital markets). The Indian economy will continue to increase their already substantial contribution to global oil demand growth, and can overtake China's in less than fifteen years, owing to the potential for a three fold increase in car ownership, thus emerging as world number two car market in that time. In India, number of people with incomes over USD 3000—a level consistent with the World Bank's classification of entry into middle class—could increase by nearly 14 times the next decade. In the area of global equity markets, China and India alone can account for 60% of the increase in market capitalisation in BRIC's economies to USD 4 trillion.

Conclusion

We have completed a small journey only to embark upon a greater voyage. It is crucial that India maintains a steady progress conditions for growth. Chief among these are openness to trade and investment, sound macro-economic policies, strong institutions and infrastructure (physical, logical, services and health), and education levels (for



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Our Strengths Today, That will Shape a Better Tomorrow

primary, secondary and higher levels). These conditions provide the key to delivering the kind of sustained higher productivity growth that has eluded India in the past. Fostering local initiatives through changes in governance, structures and support through micro-finance, trained volunteers etc. The capabilities and spirit of our youth are critical determinants of India's future. The two vital ingredients of our youth's capabilities are their health and education. Millions of Indians have been lifted out of abject poverty. Now, while fewer Indians may die of starvation, it is shocking that as many as 45% of India's children are malnourished. Therefore, many

agencies will have to think together and understand what the root causes and determine how they may be effectively addressed.

We need to act consciously and morally on our choices. Cracking the value code of India Inc. unveils our social ethics that are impregnated in the very psychological fabric of our countrymen. This creates a unique blend of adaptability with conscious reasoning. This creates a culture, a social order that eclipses quanta of chaos within. We might not, therefore, see things on the surface, but underground, it's already on fire.



साधारण से असाधारण तक
पहुँचने की दौड़

**Mediocrity to Excellence -
Way to Get There**



आकांक्षा त्रिपाठी

वसंता महाविद्यालय, वाराणसी

वर्तमान समय जिसमें कई प्रमुख हस्तियों ने जन्म लिया तथा जीवन की नई बुलन्दियों को स्पर्श किया। ऐसे लोग असंख्य हैं। फिर भी इसमें हम कुछ नामों को शामिल कर सकते हैं। इस भूमिका को हर परिप्रेक्ष्य में रखकर देखा जा सकता है। यह है साधारण से असाधारण तक पहुँचने की दौड़। इसका सकारात्मक पहलू है तथा नकारात्मक पहलू भी है। लोगों ने इसी परिप्रेक्ष्य में पाया तथा समझा है।

भारत को स्वतंत्रता दिलाने वाला एक प्रमुख नाम महात्मा गाँधी इस विशय को उपयुक्त रूप से व्याख्यित करते हैं। यह हमारे राष्ट्रपिता हैं तथा हम इन्हें बापू भी बुलाते हैं। बापू ने अपनी पढ़ाई पूरी कर वकालत की नौकरी अधिगृहीत की। वह दक्षिण-अफ्रीका गये तथा काफी समय तक वहाँ रहने के बाद उन्होंने दासों की स्थिति सुधारने का कार्य किया। तत्पश्चात् उनकी योग्यता को देखते हुए उन्हें भारत बुलाया गया। उन्होंने भारत को स्वतंत्रता दिलाने के लिए अहिंसा का मार्ग अपनाया। सबर्ण तथा निम्न जाति के, विभिन्न वर्गों के व व्यवसाय के लोगों को जोड़ा। बापू ने असहयोग व खिलाफत, सविनय अवज्ञा तथा भारत-छोड़ो

आन्दोलन की सहायता से भारत के स्वतन्त्रता की नींव रखी। इस प्रकार से बापू ने भारत को अखण्डता व एकता के सूत्र में पिरो दिया। यह एक साधारण मनुष्य के असाधारणता की अमर दास्तान है।



इन्होंने हमारे देश
के प्रमुख प्रक्षेपास्त्र
अग्नि का निर्माण
किया। वर्तमान
समय में यह
मेरे साथ कई
अन्य लोगों के
आदर्श हैं।

इस दौड़ में शामिल एक नाम हमारे राष्ट्रपति डा. ए.पी. जे. अब्दुल कलाम का है। जिन्होंने भारत के दक्षिणी भाग में रामेश्वरम् के एक छोटे से गाँव में जन्म लिया, इनके पिता मौलवी थे। अब्दुल कलाम ने आर्थिक व सामाजिक समस्याओं को झेलते हुए एक महान वैज्ञानिक की उपाधि हासिल की। इन्होंने हमारे देश के प्रमुख प्रक्षेपास्त्र अग्नि का निर्माण किया। वर्तमान समय में यह मेरे साथ कई अन्य लोगों के आदर्श हैं।

ऐसा ही एक नाम मु. युनुस का है, यह एक बांग्ला देशी हैं। इन्होंने समस्त दक्षिण एशिया को गौरवान्वित किया है। अतः उन्हें यह सम्मान निर्धनों का अपने जीवन का पुनर्निर्माण करने में सहायता देने के लिए दिया गया है। 32 वर्ष की अवस्था में मु. युनुस ने अकालग्रस्त कृषकों के एक दल को साहूकारों के क्रूर पंजों से बचाने के लिए स्वयं की जेब से





साधारण से असाधारण तक पहुँचने की दौड़

250/- रू. उधार दिये थे। दो वर्ष बाद इन्होंने इस घटना से प्रेरणा लेकर एक ग्रामीण बैंक खोला। आज 6.5 करोड़ लोग इनके ऋणी हैं। इनमें से असंख्य महिलायें हैं। यह वो लोग हैं जिन्होंने स्व-रोजगार के माध्यम से अपने जीवन-यापन की स्थिति को सुधारा है। ढाका में 'द डेली स्टार' की दसवीं वर्षगाँठ के अवसर पर मुख्य वक्ता के तौर पर भाषण देते हुए कहा कि एक निर्धनता मुक्त विश्व का सपना साकार हो सकता है, शर्त मात्र यह है कि समाज में जो समृद्ध जन है उनमें अपनी सम्पन्नता से दूसरों को राहत पहुंचाने की इच्छाशक्ति का सृजन हो। अतः यह भी साधारण व्यक्ति की असाधारण क्षमता को उत्प्रेरित करता है।

इस श्रेणी में हम उस व्यक्ति का भी नाम दे सकते हैं, जिसने काफी हद तक सिर्फ अपने बल पर नेशनल जियोग्राफिक चैनल को नयी ऊँचाइयाँ दी, यह नाम है स्टीव इरविन का। इन्होंने अपने पूर्वजों की पसन्द को अपने जीवन का लक्ष्य बना लिया था तथा अपना जीवन वन्य जीवों को समर्पित कर दिया था। इन्होंने आस्ट्रेलिया में एक चिड़ियाघर भी खोला है। दुर्भाग्यवश कुछ समय पहले एक मछली की फिल्म बनाते समय उसका डंक इनके हृदय में चुभ गया तथा जहर फैल जाने के कारण उसी स्थान पर इनकी मृत्यु हो गयी। इन्होंने निर्भयतापूर्वक अपने जीवन को वन्य जीवों व साधारण जनता के लिए गँवा दिया। इनका परिवार अब इनके कार्य को अंजाम दे रहा है। यह असाधारणता का एक उम्दा उदाहरण है।

इस विषय को हम भौगोलिक रूप से भी देख सकते हैं। इसमें एक प्रमुख नाम है, जापान। जापान चार द्वीपों का समूह है तथा जिसका अधिकतर भाग पर्वतीय तथा पठारी

है। उत्तरी भाग ठण्डा है। संसाधनों व जनसंख्या का अभाव है तथा यहाँ प्रतिदिन नियमित रूप से भूकम्प आता है। फिर भी यहाँ जनता ने अपने हौसले के बल पर तथा मशीनीकरण व वैज्ञानिक आधार के कारण अपने देश को विकसित देशों की श्रेणी में ला खड़ा किया है। पूर्व वर्णित कथांश के अनुसार इस विषय के नकारात्मक पहलू भी हैं, जिसके तहत एक साधारण व्यक्ति अपनी असाधारण क्षमता के कारण दुनिया के सामने उपस्थित है, लेकिन उसकी उपस्थिति दुनिया को कष्ट दे रही है।

इसके तहत एक प्रमुख नाम डी कंपनी के सरगना दाउद इब्राहिम का है। जिसका प्रमुख कार्य तस्करी है तथा इसने 1993 के बाम्बे सीरियल ब्लास्ट को अंजाम दिया। इसी तरह एक प्रमुख नाम ओसामा बिन लादेन का है। इसने 9/11 के प्रमुख दुरूह घटना को अंजाम दिया तथा संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका को तहस नहस कर दिया।

अतः हम इस विषय को सकारात्मक व नकारात्मक दोनों रूप में देख सकते हैं। यह हम पर निर्भर करता है कि हम किस पहलू को अपनाते हैं। इस विषय पर मेरी धारणा यह है कि मैं इस विषय के सकारात्मक पहलू को अपनाना चाहती हूँ।

वर्तमान समय अत्यधिक दुरूह है, इस समय हर व्यक्ति आगे जाने के लिए किसी को भी ठोकर मार सकता है, हमें इस समय को परिवर्तित करना होगा। कलयुग को समययुग में परिवर्तित करना होगा। आतंकवाद व अन्य बुराईयों को समाप्त कर बन्धुत्व, धर्मनिरपेक्षता, प्रेम, स्वतंत्रता, समानता, शान्ति, सादगी का प्रसार करना होगा। हमें एक ऐसा दीपक प्रज्ज्वलित करना होगा, जिसमें बुराई रूपी अन्धकार नष्ट



**समाज में जो
समृद्ध जन है
उनमें अपनी
सम्पन्नता से
दूसरों को राहत
पहुँचाने की
इच्छाशक्ति का
सृजन हो।**



साधारण से असाधारण तक पहुँचने की दौड़

हो जाये। तत्पश्चात् ही विश्व कल्याण सम्भव है तथा हम साधारण से असाधारण की दौड़ में शामिल हो सकते हैं, इसके सकारात्मक रूप को समझ सकते हैं तथा यह सिर्फ हमारे हौसले पर ही निर्भर है। इसलिए किसी कवि ने कहा है कि -

खुदी को कर बुलन्द इतना,
कि खुदा अपने बन्दे से पूछे
बता तेरी रजा क्या है ?”



Vishal Pulikottil

Symbiosis College for Arts, Commerce and Computer Science, Pune

“It is desirable that you should establish railways and telegraphs, that you should open up works of irrigation, and that you should try in all possible ways to promote the material prosperity of the country. All these certainly are desirable; but, after all, these are only external refinements of civilization, for unless the heart of the nation [education] is reformed and purified, there cannot be anything like true and lasting reformation.”

- *Keshub Chandra Sen speaking on English duties to India in London on 24th May, 1870.*

In India, for every genius, there are ninety-nine idiots. Alright, I concede: that is by no means an accurate statistic (or a politically correct one for that matter!) but it does succeed in bringing to our attention a matter worth our concern. For every well-bred, polished, *crème de la crème* IIT/IIM graduate, there are ninety-nine poor, impoverished, benighted young minds stifled by the dearth of opportunity. More often than not, the plight of such people is rendered dismissible by the relative success of our elite institutions. The gentleman I quoted, Keshub Chandra Sen, spoke of the necessity of educating these impoverished masses. He spoke in the context of an India still under the yoke of British rule, independence only a distant, wavering dream.



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I speak in the context of an independent India, poised to take on greater responsibilities as a regional and global power. Historically and socio-politically, we are worlds apart. Yet his conviction that education is central to our sustained development from mediocrity to excellence is all the more true in our present day context. It is necessary for true and lasting reformation to take place in our nation.

I believe that true vision that aims to amount to transformation must begin with a sober assessment of the present situation. Although I am disappointed with our present 64.8% literacy rate, I cannot but commend our government for doing much to alleviate illiteracy in our country in the last sixty years. In 1951,



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we had just over 200 thousand primary schools. This number has tripled. Generally speaking, the number of educational institutes in India has increased exponentially. In 1951, we spent only 0.64% of our GDP on education and much of this amount was spent on higher education. Now we spend more than 4% on education, half of which is invested into primary education. Our total outlay on education is presently more than 80 thousand crores. Under the government's *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* project, 82% of Indian children in the age group 6-14 were enrolled in school by the end of 2003. With respect to female education and the education of the marginalized segments of our country, many new policies have been formulated and much progress has been made. Presently, India churns out an incredible 2.5 million graduates a year, second only to the US and China.¹ Tremendous economic and social development has accompanied the growth of our education system. Sixty years ago, India was associated with snake charmers, wild jungles and oriental mysticism. Today, it is associated with software development, business process outsourcing, technology and progress.

Now, it may seem queer that, given these indications of progress, I still insist that there are grave problems with our education system.



*There are
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I may have come off as pessimistic and unrealistic. Allow me to vindicate myself. According to an Oxford University PROBE survey, 63% of schools had leaking roofs, 52% had no playground and 89% had no functioning toilet. Over a quarter had no blackboards! The prescribed length of an academic year is 250 years; most schools barely make it past 150 days.² It is not unusual to find fourth standard students unable to read simple sentences or even words, leave alone basic mathematics and science. 19% of schools have only one teacher and an overwhelming number of teachers do not even meet basic qualification standards.³ The dropout rate in India is 52.79%.⁴ An average Indian spends two years in school.⁵ Although we produce an incredible amount of graduates every year, a McKinsey Global Institute study concluded that only 25% are employable by multinationals.⁶ A whooping 300 million Indians are illiterate (i.e. there are more illiterate people in India than the entire population of the USA).

Simply put: something is wrong. To start with, our very model of education is flawed and outdated. S.B. Mujumdar, founder and chairman of the Symbiosis (one of the premier educational institutes in India), once said that our education system is all too reminiscent of the Industrial Age. Even our dingy classrooms closely resemble a factory

¹ *Educational Statistics. Department of Education, Government of India.*

² *Public Report on Basic Education. Oxford University Press, Delhi: 1999.*

³ *"Global Campaign for Education – More Teacher's Required". UNICEF India. http://www.unicef.org/india/education_1551.htm*

⁴ *From speech by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, delivered on 21 Feb., 2005.*

⁵ *"The Decline of Public Education". Frontline Vol. 21 Issue 16.*

⁶ *"Engineering Education: Can India overtake China?". George Iype, Rediff Business. <http://inhome.rediff.com/money/2006/jun/09bspec.htm>*

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assembly line. Our education system failed to evolve with the rest of India as she made her way into the Information Age. It still churns out machines when the need of the hour is open-minded, flexible thinkers. The biggest contributor to this dismal state of affairs is our obstinate method of instruction. Untrained teachers coupled with an acute shortage of resources make classroom sessions cumbersome and mundane. A teacher is ideally meant to be a facilitator to a student's learning. Instead, his/her role is reduced to that of a textbook: to spew out knowledge. When you add high teacher-student ratios to this, students learn practically nothing. Secondly, we have an education regime that stresses wholly on marks and percentages where students are usually evaluated purely on the basis of their performance in an annual examination. For an average Indian student, learning how to master the annual exam becomes more important than learning itself. It is not surprising that multinationals find a staggering three-quarters of our graduates unemployable. They need innovative, versatile thinkers, not people who know how to crack an annual exam. In addition to this, our curriculum is far too restrictive. Our students are grossly ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of the Information Age.

When you move down the social ladder, the conditions are aggravated by the lamentable economic situation. For a poor rural family, sending one of their children to school means losing an able

body on the farm. Given the aforementioned problems with our education system, children learn practically nothing at school and can, therefore, do nothing to liberate their families from poverty. As a result, a rural family simply has no impetus to send their children to school. Economically and socially, it is wiser to keep these children on the farm. Our 52.79% dropout rate is explained thus.

It is clear that something needs to be done. To begin with, an increase in government spending on education is of imminent necessity. The Kothari Commission in 1966 recommended that 6% of our GDP should be spent on education. We presently spend only

4%. Also, our primary/upper primary education sector needs far more attention. According to the Oxford PROBE Survey, if all Indian children in the age group 6-10 were attending primary school (which, by the way, is not the case), there would be 113 children per classroom!⁷ Another shocking statistic is that for every three primary schools there is only one upper primary school. So even if a child does make it through primary school, the chances of him getting into an upper primary school are very slim. It is clear that we need many more primary and upper primary schools. And getting children to go to school is only half the task. To teach them and help them learn is another story altogether. Therefore, it is essential that we recruit new teachers and effectively train existing ones. Efforts need to be made to establish and maintain the quality of



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⁷ Public Report on Basic Education. Oxford University Press, Delhi: 1999. Pg. 40.



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education in schools i.e. frequent inspections and penalization of schools that fail to meet quality standards. I wholeheartedly agree: much has already been achieved. But much more is yet to be accomplished. Let us not be satisfied with mediocrity.

The sparkling future India has should it choose to focus more on education in the coming years can be illustrated through the example of Kerala. Kerala is not a particularly outstanding state, especially economically but in 1991, the United Nations certified the State as 100% literate. That being said, I feel it is more than a matter of coincidence that Kerala has an average life expectancy of 72 years, a birth rate of 18 per thousand (far lower than the rest of India) and a female-to-male ratio that is as balanced (if not more) than most countries around the world. Kerala's infant mortality is the lowest in India. Child labour is almost non-existent. A female in Kerala will have a better shot at life than most of her counterparts in the developing world. But perhaps the biggest fulfillment of education in Kerala is how it empowered the common man. In 1988, the government of Kerala recruited 50,000 volunteers to trace 175,000 illiterates in the district of Ernakulam. Then 20,000 volunteer trainers toiled for 13 months to teach this populace basic writing, reading and mathematics. At the end of the project, a concluding exam was conducted to determine how successful the endeavour was. An overwhelming amount scored 80% or more and the program was proclaimed a great success. But the greatest indication



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of the project's success came a few months later when hundreds upon hundreds of letters from these former illiterates started pouring into government offices across the district demanding better roads, hospitals, health-care benefits and so on!⁸ It was as if the sleeping giant of democracy had been stirred from its slumber. The common man had been emancipated.

Kerala has its own set of problems, much like the rest of India. But, unlike the rest of India, it has an enlightened citizenry it can work with, a literate human resource pool it can tap into. And I believe in some ways, the little coastal state of Kerala has secured its future by choosing to invest in its people first. In the same way, what India needs in the coming years is education, not mega-dam projects, six-lane highways or elite engineering institutions. I echo Keshub Chandra Sen's conviction once again: these are but external refinements. Unless the heart of the nation is purified, true transformation shall never occur and mediocrity shall haunt us.

I shall sum up my vision with a beautiful oriental saying:

Where the vision is one year, cultivate flowers.

Where the vision is ten years, cultivate trees.

Where the vision is eternity, cultivate people.

Let it be known: my vision is eternity.

⁸ "What is True Development? The Kerala Model". Bill McKibben. Ashanet Resources. <http://www.ashanet.org/library/articles/kerala.199803.html>



India - Sixty Years Young and Ready to Go

भारत साठ वर्षीय युवा
कदम कदम बढ़ाए जा



Abhishek Hazarika
Amity Business School, Noida

The great mathematician, Victor Hugo once said that “*No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come*”. I believe India is one such idea whose time had indeed come.

India at once is an ancient civilization and young nation. India is in the era of profound change and transformation, a mosaic of challenges and opportunities. Today, India is the second fastest growing economy and the twelfth largest in the world. Indeed India has come a long way from being a recipient of development aid to becoming a business partner to world class companies. India today has dynamism and a tremendous sense of possibilities that has never been there before.

The unshackling of India

In 1991, India was faced with its worst economic crisis and that is when Dr. Manmohan Singh as the then Finance Minister brought about a new economic policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization

that changed Indian business. At recently concluded Economic Times Awards Ceremony he termed many of the award winners as “Children of Reforms” as many of those companies were not even formed then.

Today, many of them including TCS, WIPRO, Infosys, Ranbaxy etc. are in the list of top 100 firms from emerging markets that are globalising most rapidly. In the last decade, it is due to the phenomenal growth in software development, IT enabled services, biotech, auto-components and pharmaceuticals that has led to increase in GDP in the last 4 years at 8%. Indian companies now have the confidence to explore the new markets and withstand stiff competition. According to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia this sustained growth rate will be enough to remove poverty by 2020.

One of the greatest aspects of Indian success story is that it has not followed any chosen path. Consumption accounts for 2/3 of the GDP, 30-40%



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is due to rising productivity rather than increase in capital and labour. It is equally true that India has succeeded because the State is gradually stepping out of the way.

Resurgent India

It is said that calamity is the touch-stone of a brave mind. The crisis of 1991, gave rebirth to a new India. A resurgent India breaking free from the shackles of the license Raj and earning a place in the world map. The global perceptions about India have certainly changed. What are the factors in India's favour?

Demography

One of our greatest assets today is that 70% of our population in the next four decades will lie in the working age group of 17–35 years. The 23% of the increase in the world's working age population over the next 5 years will be in India. The same is not true for China whose demography indicates an aging population.

Globalization

India is increasingly getting integrated with world economy both in terms of labour and capital. There are very few developing countries that are well placed as India to take advantage of the phenomenal changes that have occurred in technology, international trade, and capital movement. Witness the incredible growth of outsourcing M.N.Cs in India, now doing legal and medical work for clients around the world, not

just running their call centers. The momentum from earlier reform continues what with introduction of a national rate of value-added tax and pioneering public-private partnership for developing infrastructure.

Technology

India now plays a critical role at the cutting edge of global research and development and in the field of technology. The challenge is to innovatively use technology and new business models to deliver products and services that the poor can afford. It enables access to markets, to education and to affordable health care through tele-medicine. As demonstrated by the success of initiatives like e-choupal of I.T.C., information access is a key to cutting out the middlemen, bringing down transaction costs and improving transparency. For instance, e-choupal of I.T.C, Arvind Eye Hospital, Narayana Hrudayalaya have not only brought about socio-economic changes but also have opened up huge growth opportunities in emerging markets.

Democracy

India is the world's largest democracy. An open, participatory and democratic society might pose short term obstacles such as slow pace of reforms, multiplicity of interests, million negotiations on any new initiatives, but may provide a long term stability and resilience than China. India has a very unusual combination of a high performing private sector with enlightened business leaders as well as democratically



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elected governments accountable to the people. Clearly we will be able to achieve our targets in the long run.

The Birth of a Great Vision

India's destiny is truly in the hands of her people. India gained political independence in 1947 and economic independence in 1991. Now economic progress of the last 15 years has given birth to a new vision which is shaped up by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. This new vision is to see India being a developed nation by 2020. This will lead to another level of independence – equity independence. A nation where there is no inequality between urban and rural areas, rich and poor, men and women, healthy and the diseased.

Practical Aspect of Fulfilling This Vision

There is a universal admiration for Indian democracy, its vast economic potential combined with dissatisfaction over slow pace of reforms and its failure to deliver sufficient benefits to the poor people.

This is clearly reflected in the lack of infrastructure which together with red-tapism is seen as a major hurdle for a growing number of MNC's eager to set up shops in India. Economic prosperity has been limited to the urban areas and has not spread to rural areas. Agriculture which supports 1/3rd of the population has been stagnant and can only be ignored at its own peril. We need to expand



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agenda of reforms to include education and health care systems as well as infrastructure, manufacturing & banking sectors. There is plenty for the government to do.

At the same time, corporate social responsibility on part of India Inc. is not enough to provide basic public services to the poor. As Ratan Tata of Tata Group of Companies puts it, "everyone is catering to the top of the pyramid, challenge lies in addressing a different market". History is calling the government and corporate sector to work together and take up the challenge of inclusive and participative growth.

Leadership India

As we look to India's future, it is possible to be daunted by the complex set of challenges. But reforms take time to seep down just as individuals, companies and nations take time to change. Reforms in the final analysis are about changing mindsets, taking new directions and thinking out-of-the-box. The "*Chalta Hai*" attitude, our tolerance for errors or less than perfect standards, poor team work must change for the better.

Finally, the road ahead will be defined by the aspirations and concerns of young people. The message of films like "Rang De Basanti" has certainly inspired many unconcerned young people not to wait for things to happen but to be active agents of change. In the future the jobs will go to the best and to the talented. For that a great deal of preparation is needed.



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How Can the Young be Prepared for Leadership?

- Considering educational curriculum in college is not engaging enough practical modules for creating awareness about environmental and social issues and for promoting interaction with rural communities for social work and community development to be made compulsory every year in college. This will be required for attaining the degree. This will provide learning opportunities and will inculcate practical qualities and develop culture of execution and excellence.
- National Integration Camps across borders need to be increasingly organized in greater numbers to promote learning from different communities so that the cancer of terrorism is destroyed early.
- Leadership programmes that address a variety of developmental needs and also a variety of leadership issues across cultural and geographical boundaries in collaboration with national/international agencies need to be offered in decentralized manner on a continuous basis to develop truly global citizens.

Why Little Things Matter ?

No need, no gesture, no act can be insignificant in nation building. There is a parable about someone walking along a beach in Mexico who saw another man repeatedly picking up things and hurling them into the sea. Going closer, he saw him picking up starfish that had been washed ashore and throwing them into the water. Puzzled, he asked the man why. Said the fellow: "I am throwing these starfish back into the ocean because they came in with the high tide and now the tide has receded, they will die here, stranded". "I understand," the curious man said, "but there must be thousands of starfish on every beach. You cannot possibly make a difference". The other smiled, lifted yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, said "Made a difference to that one!"

The aspirations of a new energetic India are full of possibilities. This India is raring to go in order to make a significant difference to the rest of the world.



Ruhul Islam Laskar


Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medical and Technological Science, Guwahati

It's great to be an Indian, more for us, those born in an independent India. Unlike our predecessors and forefathers who suffered under foreign and oppressive rulers, we are able to breathe free air and aim for the sky. Independent India may be just sixty odd years old but then our country has a great and rich history and we, today's generation, have the benefit of the foundation that is firmly rooted in the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharat, Jatakas, Upanishads and countless scriptures that not only provide us knowledge but give us the right direction. The teachings of Gita encourage us to work diligently without bothering about the outcome. If our work is sincere, the results are bound to be good.

We have a tradition to feel proud of, tradition that very few other countries in the world have. That makes us unique, that makes us different from others. Even when most other parts of the world were bereft of wisdom, we had our Indus

Valley civilization lighting the world – findings in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro confirming the fact till this day. Take any field of activity, in medicine we had Susruta, Charaka and Danwantari, in astronomy we had Aryabhata, in economics we had Kautilya and so on and so forth. The fact is that India has been contributing to the treasure of wisdom since time immemorial. A few hundred years of foreign domination did cause us pain but it has not been able to strangle the Indian spirit which is eternal.

Every landmark in Indian history is a lesson for the world. Even the way we attained our independence and threw away the most powerful rulers of the day from our country surprised the whole world. For it was attained in the most peaceful way, by adhering to Gandhi's mantra of *ahimsa* and non-cooperation. Until then no one believed that such great attainments could be had without bloodshed and violence. This has been



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one of India's greatest gifts to the world. Martin Luther King adopted this principle and a whole new world opened up before the Blacks of America. Nelson Mandela adopted the same principles and the Blacks of South Africa are enjoying the fruits today. In spite of her numerous problems, in spite of her poverty, India is always in a position to give the world gifts of eternal value. Does not that make us Indians feel great?

Now take the issue of democracy. There is probably no other country of India's size and proportions which has been able to uphold the spirit of democracy the way we have done. Just look around India's neighbourhood, you will see military coups, dictators throwing away democratically elected leaders, never ending struggle between monarchies and extremists and everything else but true democracy. We have our fair share of problems but we have not allowed that to stand in the way of our democratic way of functioning. Our elections and the functioning of our Election Commissions have won appreciation world over. So, it's anybody's guess – whether we should seek directions from others or others should emulate us.

One of the greatest points for our spirits to soar is that at the moment we have a breed of leaders who are epitomes of excellence. We have a President in A.P.J. Abdul Kalam who is not only a great scientist but also a great motivator for the whole country. We have a Prime Minister in

Manmohan Singh who is not only a learned scholar but also a man of clean character who is respected world over. With such leaders at the helm of affairs, do we really need any other ignition spark to get going – we just have to emulate our leaders.

Our technocrats, skilled and unskilled labourers too have excellent ratings abroad. Our IT personnel are in great demand in the most developed countries. Back home our boys and girls are proving their mettle in the field of business process outsourcing, at the call centres which are serving the advanced countries. In the field of merger and acquisitions, we are not behind. Take for example, the steel sector. L.N. Mittal has already established himself as the most powerful international player in this field. The other Mittal too is not far behind. Sunil Mittal's Bharti Airtel has been rated among the top ten telecommunication companies of the world. Such examples are galore – just to prove that we Indians have to take the initiative and the world will be ours.

We Indians have our strengths. We have to further increase and upgrade them. We Indians have our shortcomings. We have to minimise if not eliminate them. The young generation in particular needs to do a swot analysis and make a fresh start from there. But we must aim at the sky and then we cannot but go up. We are already in the upward swing and we must maintain that.



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Even if we analyse our trip from the day one of our independence till date, we will be thrilled to see that we have made good progress in all sectors. India, a country which faced frequent famines and had to go from country to country with a begging bowl for food grains has already seen green revolutions, one after the other. The success of the white revolution, chronicled by brand Amul, is being replicated in other parts of the country and the world is talking about it. Our railway network is one of the largest and busiest of the world. Our educational institutions in general and the IITs in particular have been rated among the most sought after institutions world over. Be it production of automobiles, IT equipment or textiles, we are on the march and our brands enjoy top ratings all over the world. Now we have to go a step further and make ours the best.

The largeness of our country is our strength. The long coast line and our harbours are our doorways to success. Even the huge manpower resource that we have, if properly harnessed, can give us an advantage which no other nation can match. But we have a long way to go. We have made fine strides in improving the literacy percentage since independence and yet there are crores in the country who are illiterate. They are like speed breakers in our way to success. If every youth recollects the adage 'each one teach one', even this hurdle could be overcome in no time. Let every educational institution motivate its students to



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participate more vigorously in the spread of literacy and then no one can stop us from emerging as the most formidable nation of the world. We can do it.

Simultaneously with literacy, we have to address a few other issues which very often take us a few steps backward while we are striving to march ahead. These issues are women empowerment, superstitions, communal disharmony, untouchability, natural calamities and disasters, terrorism and lack of work culture. All of us have to play our role in this – the politicians, bureaucrats, corporates, institutions and individuals. Youth being the vanguards of the nation and physically most active, their responsibility will be the most in this mission.

Sixty years is a very small period in the history of any country. So, literally independent India is young and vibrant – in the look out for action. The stage is set. We just have to get going. All we have to do is identify our role models in each field – a Mother Teresa in social service, a Ravi Shankar in music, an Amartya Sen in economics, a Tagore in literature, a Vishwanathan Anand in chess, a Mary Com in boxing, an Ambani in enterprise and so on and so forth.

The scope for action in all sectors are opening up – ever more and better ever. Be it tourism or hospitality, be it medical care



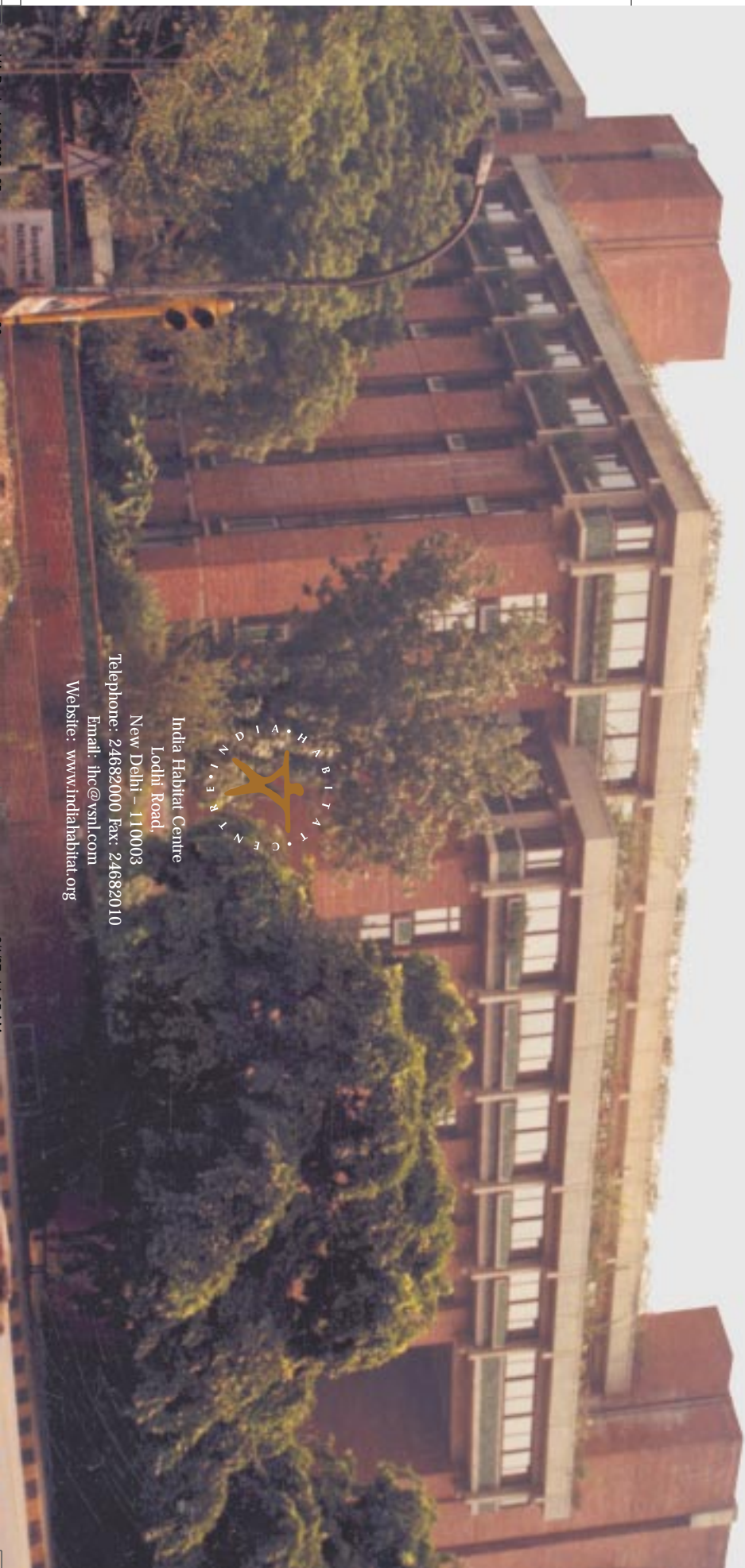
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or care of the senior citizens, the world is turning towards us. We have to make the most of the opportunity.

It's time we take on our wings of fire and paint the globe in the hues of our tricolour – all saffron, white and green. This

motherland of ours is like a great ocean. If we, the youth, go to the ocean with a spoon in hand we will return with a spoonful of water. If we go with a mug, we will bring that much of water. If we advance with buckets in hand, we shall certainly return with much more. The option is ours.





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