



# Voices of the Young

confidence

commitment

care

# Voices of the Young

*Towards Habitat Young Visionary Award 2005*



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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*The annual Habitat Young Visionary Award was instituted by India Habiab Centre in 2004 to provide a platform for the voices, aspirations and perspectives of the young to be articulated; and to impact the mainstream of natural and societal consciousness for the creation of a natural environment where excellence prospers.*

*The Award is a fully funded fellowship for a four week summer programme at Cambridge University, U.K.*

*We acknowledge with gratitude the support of  
Indian Express Group  
and Mr. Dhiraj Bakshi and the Best Book Shop  
for their encouragement and gift of books  
to all the Semi-finalists and Finalists.*

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# *The Jury*

## **Semi Finals**

Bibek Debroy

*Director*

*Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies*

Prof. Ashok Chakradhar

*Hindi Poet Laureate and Professor*

Ms. Namita Gokhale

*Author*

## **Finals**

Justice B. N. Kirpal

*Former Chief Justice of India*

Justice Vikramjit Sen Judge

*Delhi High Court*

Dr. Radha Kumar

*Delhi Policy Group*

Mr. P. Joshi

*Chief Editor, Jansatta*

## Foreword

*We are into the second year of the 'Habitat Young Visionary Award' 2005, which is a fellowship to the Cambridge University's summer programme. The last year's award winner Ms. Neha Dutt of Shri Ram College of Commerce had a successful and an educative three months at Cambridge and her experience is a part of this publication.*

*We made two changes from the last year. One, we decided to address the major colleges outside Delhi as well to broaden the participants base and two, we made it an open ended theme to give greater leeway for imagination, originality and individuality of thought and belief. Our last year's experience of having prescribed the themes, was good in its own way, but it is hoped that this format would allow for greater freedom to the participants.*

*The award is a part of our conscious effort to initiate a process wherein young minds while engaged in the pursuit of academic excellence, need to dwell on the concerns of the country as a part of their perspective. Seeking their point of view on how they perceive the contemporary and at what threshold of time would they be called upon to be a part of the solutions, this platform of ours is a unique one and a reflection of our belief that it is a needed one. After all those who have stakes in tomorrows must take responsibility to design their expectations and search for an environment they can create and would like to create.*

*Our second year's efforts have yielded encouraging results. We have managed to interest undergraduate students from outside Delhi even though we did not go through the process of inserting advertisements. We hope, we get rising numbers of participation next year, not only for the sake of the award, but for the chance and the opportunity to make a young voice, carrying a dream, heard beyond the academic portals, by larger audiences.*

*This publications carries the passions, hopes and dreams of the twenty participants, who crossed the first barrier of the grueling three stage contest. The penultimate round, where these twenty participants will articulate their voices is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> November 2004, where six finalists will be selected to compete for the award on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004.*

*I commend for your perusal - the voices of the young.*

*Raj Liberhan  
Director  
India Habitat Centre*



I believe  
that...

*I believe that...*

## *My Experience at the International Summer School II, Cambridge University, U.K.*



— *Neha Dutt*  
*Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi*

I reached Cambridge on Sunday, 1st August 2004, full of awe, initial apprehension, aspiration and excitement. After registering at Lady Mitchell Hall, collecting the itinerary for the following two weeks and my student identity card, I heaved my suitcase all the way up the road to Harvey Court, my place of residence. There I got my swipe card from the porter, who also very kindly gave me an extra map of Sidgwick site, which would help me find my way to all the classes. I slid my card through the swipe lock at the entrance of Harvey Court, Block A. The big wooden door swung open, and as I reached out to grasp the handle, I couldn't help but inhale sharply, as my heartbeat quickened...I was actually finally at Cambridge... Cambridge! Something I had never imagined in my wildest dreams to be a possibility.

I entered my room, A14, and loved it instantly. It was very, very spacious. The walls gave off a gentle glow of light yellow which combined with cream coloured curtains and tastefully chosen wooden furniture, would make any interior decorator agree that the job was one well done. The bed was pushed against the wall, with a lovely big desk opposite it, probably mirroring the routine of the regular students at Cambridge, who hit their books as soon as they woke up or staggered straight into bed, exhausted, after burning the midnight oil.

Well thankfully, my tenure turned out far less stressful and far more refreshing and enriching than that.

As I pulled open the curtains, they revealed two glass sliding doors, right across the width of my room and a gorgeous brick red private balcony that beckoned enticingly. I didn't even bother resisting the temptation of immediately pulling out a chair from my room and onto the balcony. I sat there and gazed at the pristine beauty of the massive gardens beyond, laced with flowers (if I'd taken a summer course in botany, or on 'How to Maintain an English Garden', which was an option, then I might've been able to name some!) and sat there with a smile transfixed on my face.

Our introductory lecture was supposed to be the next day. After I had unpacked all my belongings into the walk-in closet, I sauntered out to see if any other students had checked in. Many hadn't, and so I acquainted myself with people from other courses like Medieval Studies and English Literature, whose courses were still continuing. Rebecca, an American girl, was kind enough to show me where to do my laundry, where the internet centres were and where we assembled to go for dinner. We then went for a quick walk in town to try and catch some good bargains, as there were many sales on then.

*The big wooden door swung open, and as I reached out to grasp the handle, I couldn't help but inhale sharply, as my heartbeat quickened...I was actually finally at Cambridge... Cambridge!*

*All along the walls were pictures of the great minds that this prestigious university had churned out, right from Stephen Hawking to J.J.Thompson*

At first, feeling a bit fatigued after a day long travel, I didn't feel upto going into town, which I thought would be the quintessential 'noisy, riddled with overflowing traffic and pollution' town. But I was greatly mistaken. As we cut across the sprawling meadows of King's College, crossed the arched bridge over the river Cam dotted with individual kayaks and with people punting, clusters of students laughing or just quietly reading, I felt suddenly energised and recharged in such an atmosphere. What I loved the most about Cambridge and perhaps what I could never get enough of was the architecture. As we wound our way towards the town, through the tiny cobbled lanes, I looked around me in amazement at the towering church spires, the mammoth concrete spread of the various colleges, aggrandized with Gothic carvings, the palatial structure of the University library, when I was told to my further amazement that we had reached the town centre.

There were quaint little shops in the recesses of the surrounding architectural splendour, and delightful bookshops with little cafes, where you could spend the entire day, whisked away from reality, lost in the clutches of absorbing books. Apart from the ubiquitous Marks and Spencers and Tescos, there were many designer stores as well, like Laura Ashley and Hidesign, and lines of little self-owned shops which sold everything from music to aromatic soaps and creams made locally, to khadi clothes and bedcovers and junk jewellery, lending an incomparable vitality to the town.

We headed back quickly, after Becca bought a few clothes. I was still suffering from price-conversion shocks, which thankfully wore off after a day, as I realised that I wouldn't be able to buy or enjoy anything if I kept doing quick mental calculations into rupees. We made it just in time for dinner, which was in Gonville and Caius College. The dining halls

were huge domed rooms with the bleak sunlight filtering through stained glass windows, which had the emblems of all the various colleges in Cambridge. All along the walls were pictures of the great minds that this prestigious university had churned out, right from Stephen Hawking to J.J.Thompson.

Dinner was a three-course affair. As starters, we got different kinds of bread and butter, with a soup or a mixed salad. The main meal could be anything from roast duck, to chicken to various kinds of fish. But what everyone looked forward to were the desserts. On all 14 days of my stay there, the desserts were without exception, delicious. From Russian Cheesecake, to raisin biscuit pies to flapjacks with warm berry sauce to crepes with cream, each dessert when placed in front of us did the disappearing act in a few seconds.

Lest everyone think that my stay there was just a visual and culinary delight, I will now begin with my academic experience. The next day before our classes started, we had an introductory lecture, given by Ms. Susan Ormrod. After being given a few guidelines we rushed off to class. I had chosen the following courses:

### **1.) Introducing Psychology: Mind, Mental Processes and Behaviour.**

This was our first class of the day, from 9.00 am till 10.30am.

It was held in the History Faculty and the course director was Mr. John Lawson.

Like the other two courses, this was also a very interactive session. We often had to pair up in small groups and conduct experiments on each other, just to validate the prior

*I believe that...*

established outcome. It focussed on the various ramifications of human behaviour, and how mainstream psychology had evolved over the last few decades. More generally, a number of different perspectives have been developed and their emphasis on a specific set of concerns and how we now recognise perspectives such as social psychology, various aberrations of behaviourism, cognitive psychology, abnormal and developmental psychology were studied. Together with these approaches we explored a multitude of issues such as relationships, persuasion, psychobiological processes, sensation and perception, consciousness, learning, memory, intelligence, motivation, psychological disorders, therapy, social cognition and social influence. This course used these different perspectives as a framework within which to examine the main topic areas within psychology, and was designed to assume little or no prior knowledge in the subject whatsoever.

## 2.) Love Among Ruins-Literature and Psychoanalysis

This was held in the Faculty of Divinity, from 11am – 12.30pm. The course director was a very erudite professor, Trudi Tate, who brought alive each text studied with a great deal of zeal and clever insight into the subtext of the apparent, surface meaning.

This course looked at the way in which we interpret written texts, focussing primarily on literary works from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries along with two Freud case histories. The authors discussed included Tennyson, Robert and Elizabeth Browning, D H Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and Tim o' Brien.

The second half of the lecture would always entail some group activity be it in terms of drawing logical conclusions to what the text implied, or play-acting certain parts of the text.

The authors I enjoyed most were Alfred Tennyson and Katherine Mansfield. A group of us enjoyed the poem, 'Maud' by Tennyson so much that we actually set up a small informal discussion group, which would congregate every evening at Harvey Gardens, and put a section of the 30 odd page poem under a critical lens. Everyone would then give their views on what they thought it meant.

Katherine Mansfield's short stories revealed an amazing amount of insight into the female psyche, which the boys in our class found initially intriguing but later tired of, as their attention spans contracted after a point, trying in vain to understand the vast, often contradictory expanse of the way women behaved!

## 3.) The Philosophy of Zen Buddhism

This was our only evening lecture, from 4.00pm – 5.30 pm held in Newnham College. The course director was a very spiritually inclined, approachable and generally affable professor, by the name of James Giles.

He had actually travelled extensively in Japan and China, trying to trace the course that Buddhism took and understand why it underwent the transformations it did.

One big mistake that the slightly learned make is that they are often overconfident of their limited knowledge and therefore arrive at too presumptuous conclusions. Yes, the villain of the piece here is me, as I thought that I already knew a lot about Buddhism, being a regular BSG member myself in India. Since the choices in the third category were most limited, with the other options being, "How to Maintain an English Garden," and Britain's Economic Policy During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, none of which I found particularly interesting,

*Lest everyone  
think that my  
stay there was  
just a visual  
and culinary  
delight, I will  
now begin  
with my  
academic  
experience*

*The most intriguing questions were thrown up, like, “What is the self?” And that ‘there is no constant entity called the self, because the self is reborn every minute.’*

I decided to opt for Zen Buddhism. But it was this course that singularly transformed my whole outlook to life, opened up new vistas in me, which I never even knew existed and made me revamp my whole reason for existence into something joyful and unending. I got much much more than I had bargained for from this course.

A close examination of Zen Buddhist thought will show it is based upon a clear philosophical orientation to the nature of reality and the human condition. The course started with a brief account of how Buddhist tradition arose in India as a reaction to Vedic and Upanishadic doctrines concerning the permanence of the self or atma and moksh, and its final liberation in the return to God or brahma. The doctrine of sunyata propagated by the Mahayana school of Buddhism-the Madhyamika and Yogachara schools, and the chain of dependent origination were studied closely.

The most intriguing questions were thrown up, like, “What is the self?” And that ‘there is no constant entity called the self, because the self is reborn every minute.’ So usually, in disintegrating relationships when people say, “ You are not yourself anymore,” the truth, though when voiced at that delicate moment might be met with violence, is that there never was a self, there never was a “you”. Because if you are you, and if you changes, which happens as a result of the imprint that everyday circumstances and stimuli leave on you, then you are no longer you. So the whole idea of the self is looked at from a radically different angle.

Many Zen philosophers were studied, including, Lao Tzu, (we read a few translated verses of the “Tao Te Ching”), Dogen, Hakuin and Bankei.

The main method of propagating enlightenment is routed through different techniques of meditation. One of them is to train the mind to achieve a state of being beyond thinking and non-thinking or Hishiryō. Another is to ponder on baffling questions, called Koans, like how to raise a pagoda out of a teacup, or what is the sound of one hand clapping. The idea is to initiate and trigger off intense introspective spirals, pushing ahead your own inner boundaries, which ultimately leads to enlightenment.

This was actually the best course that anyone with an inquisitive mind could hope for, as a space was created where we could pose all those profound questions on life, that our parents had never been able to answer satisfactorily, to Mr. James Giles. It’s not as if we all came away enlightened, but he certainly showed us a path, and that the answer lay inert in all of us.

For example, one gentleman asked him how the whole idea of warfare gelled with the whole Buddhist ethos.

Mr. Giles replied that morality becomes a convention which sometimes puts blinkers on the lateral thought process in human beings, disabling them from rising above the trap of socially established concepts of right and wrong. Maybe, the situation was such that if the Buddhists didn’t enter into warfare, the suffering that would have ensued as a result of the lack of fighting would have been far greater. Buddhism was a very practical approach to life, but it offered no direct answers. You had to struggle within yourself to discover the truth.

Nothing was going to be spoon-fed to you, because if it were, you wouldn’t attach any value to it.

*I believe that...*

I could talk about what knowledge I gained from the course for the rest of this report, but I must adopt the middle path and exercise some restraint on my enthusiasm.

Between the literature class and the Zen Buddhism class, a few of us would generally grab a sandwich or two from the Buttery, which was the local bakery. The afternoon would be spent either lying sprawled out on the lawns of Lady Mitchell Ground, or in your room reading up a bit for the next day's scheduled text. But it was most often the former, because I had thankfully already read up all the prescribed books.

There were a host of options to choose what you wanted to occupy yourself with in the evenings: concerts for the musically inclined, lectures for the academically inclined, plays for those who were thespians at heart and pubs for all.

I attended a few very well conducted, engaging evening lectures, which were on a very diverse range of topics, ranging from, "Undressing Mr.Darcy" to "Was Hamlet Fat" to the "History of the Aztecs". As the days passed, I became addicted to punting and so you'd very rarely find me frequenting any more lectures in Lady Mitchell Hall. I have to say that people from all age groups attended this summer school, and the ones who attended the evening lectures were very rarely below the age of 25.Perhaps a purely defensive sentence on my behalf, necessitated by guilt, but one I thought I'd include nonetheless.

After going for our last class for the day, which finished at 5.30pm, we usually hung out with our Zen Buddhism teacher, just for a brainstorming session on profound yet baffling questions, which he answered with great ease, thus reflecting

his in-depth knowledge of the subject and hence life. After walking back to Harvey Court and dropping our books, we'd rush off to dinner and then meet our friends who were staying at Selwyn college (which had a television in the common room where we watched the opening ceremony of the Olympics), or Newnham College, which had a pub where people played pool, the guitar or the fool, or congregate in Harvey Gardens, in "our spot". This place reserved exclusively by us, for a few of us, was around a small feeble tree with just a few leaves dangling on it. We'd usually sit around and sing songs. By the time our stay was over, there were very few leaves left on it!

We also went on a locally conducted ghost tour, which frightened the daylights out of us, as it took us to all the spots in various colleges and churches and restaurants that were supposedly haunted. On another evening, we walked down to the local movie theatre and saw, "Fahrenheit 9/11" which sparked off a lot of anti-Bush sentiments in us, but triggered off a lot of counterarguments from the American students, but all was taken sportingly.

On the one weekend that I spent in Cambridge, I worked on my paper that I was being evaluated on. Many students went on weekend excursions, but I chose not too. There was enough to see in the university itself. A Filipino friend, who was staying in a suite, called us over on Sunday. He made the most delicious and healthy vegetarian food I've ever had. We spent a nice afternoon chatting and went punting in the evening. I almost capsized the boat and so in the general interest of everyone was asked to stick to rowing!

On the whole, I have to say that I have never had more fun

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in my life. The days flew by, and before I knew it, I was back in Delhi, making this report. Right from the wonderful friends I made from different parts of the world, to the spectacular insights I got, into the subjects that I'd chosen, reflecting the sound pedagogical practices of Cambridge, to the amount I learnt about myself ...it has been an amazing

odyssey of personal growth and enrichment.

I thank India Habitat Centre and Equus Red Cell Agency for having made it possible, and wish all the future contestants of this prestigious competition good luck!

*I believe that...*

— *Amrita Singh*  
*Delhi University, Delhi*

I learnt in school that India is a country where people of different religions and cultures co-exist within a parliamentary democratic framework. I perceived India as a school, constantly acquiring, assimilating and imparting knowledge, and reinventing itself. Now I understand that the set-up of the country and the essence of these big words springs from its people.

Throughout its history, India has been subjected to influxes of people and what we are today is a result of the amalgamation of cultures and ideals that we've inherited over centuries. This has brought about diversity in our nation and hence we strive to adhere to the ideal of Unity in Diversity. However, we are far from realizing this ideal because of our lack of order and organization.

It is important to inculcate order and organization in every sphere of our lives to achieve the goal of a unified people. In this effect I propose an action plan.

At the very basic level, there is a need to infuse orderly organization of the individual self. Begin with simple physical aspects like keeping yourself clean and hygienic, systematize your living space and your lifestyle and move on to organize

your surroundings. For example, make that effort to find a bin. Obey traffic rules. Stop for a red light and the person behind you is compelled to do so too. Do simple things that require a little commitment and you will see small but significant changes. Set an example. Each individual should try to do something, anything, no matter how small it is. After all, every little drop makes the ocean. After this initiation of the individual self, it becomes proper to demand a similar sense of orderliness from those in authority. Insist them to take charge, prioritize and gather an insight into the issues that affect the general population. Help them to help us find solutions.

My action plan and my vision will be incomplete without the attainment of an essential component-mental order. It is vital for the mentality and the attitude of the people to be made free of prejudice, complacency and deliberate inactivity, and to encourage in them respect and responsibility for their rights and duties. This has to come from within. There has to be a willingness to accept changes and incorporate suitable changes. Understand that for the culmination and success of ideas people have to come together, propagate their ideologies, culture themselves and culture others to attain the plausible aim of unified existence. Even within a political framework,

*Each individual should try to do something, anything, no matter how small it is. After all, every little drop makes the ocean*



*Diversity is  
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organization has to be on the basis of rights, duties, responsibilities and service. The mind has to be conditioned to rid oneself of narrow-mindedness, emotional disconcert and motives of self-interest. Most importantly, we have to organize ourselves as people, as individuals of an entity called India and not on religious, economic, political, moral, or gender grounds. Youth is freeing itself from the shackles of corrupt, contained and antagonistic existence. As the future of the

country they are our biggest strength and propagators of a unified order in the country. Hence, need to be well supported and aided.

Diversity is our mainstay, accept it, in fact encourage it. Diversity makes us unique. Order and Organization are steps towards realization of my vision of a unified people of India to make this country different, confident and competent.

*I believe that...*

— *Bilal Ahmad Khan*  
*Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi*

**T**he vision of a prosperous India without poverty, an India strong in trade and commerce, an India strong in many field of science and technology, an India with innovative industry and with health and education for all has remained just partially realized”, say APJ Abdul Kalam and YS Rajan in the preface of their book INDIA 2020, A vision for the new Millennium.

Very true there are many out there who go to bed with just one meal a day. We encounter small traders running from pillar to post to make small profits hence neither enabling India to be strong in International business. How can India be strong in science and technology when most of our able engineers rush to the west to make good money and have a decent standard of life deprived in our own country? Thus making the western industry innovative than India. Many have also been deprived of the right of basic health care and education.

For a country to progress three things are indispensable: a highly developed and organized banking system, a quality education system and an unbiased and genuine media. Banks are de rigeur for any economy to develop. They are a prerequisite for the control, accumulation and direction of

capital. Via banks capital should be made available for our hardworking farmers at low interest rates to develop our existing agriculture system. As Thirukkural remarked, “ If the farmers slacken even the ascetics state will fail”. Hence agriculture must be the prime concern in order to provide food for our growing population. If capital is made available simultaneously with proper education to provide information of the new technologies used in agriculture to our farmers then they can be successful in increasing the crop yield. Thus giving a boost to a related industry: the agro-food processing, which will create a lot of employment and provide healthy food products for our population. Capital can also be canalized towards our aspiring entrepreneurs.

Someone has once voiced that education is the best defense of a country. Having a quality education system shouldn't mean the art of encouraging our students to memorize thick books and pass examinations to be awarded by the rectangular card called a degree or the art of sending small children to school loaded with heavy bags, thus creating unfunctional literates who are unable to prepare a C.V to search a job for themselves or are unconfident about themselves to handle the odds and ends of life. Our education system should be in such a way that we enable our students to think creatively, to instill

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quality  
education  
system and an  
unbiased and  
genuine media*

*Any citizen  
from any  
quarter must  
cultivate a  
vision for a  
developed  
India and  
work on it  
with full  
optimism*

an enterprising ability in them etc. Our school and university syllabi should include entrepreneur's development programs in order to transform the youth of India into wealth and job creators to help tackle the growing unemployment rate. In a nutshell our educational system should develop good individuals instead of individuals crammed with facts, which they usually forget after a while. Education of women should be of key importance because when you are educating a man you are educating an individual but when you are educating a woman you are educating a family. Primary education should be our concern too as it is presently in a bad shape in India. The proper development of child in his early stages in life is very crucial hence the need of an excellent primary education.

Media is an essential element in nation building as it shapes

peoples mind which intern helps develop public opinion. The media should encourage the youth for nation development. It can help a great deal by broadcasting or publishing the small achievements by the people across the country. This will surely ignite other minds to achieve something greater for the nation.

To conclude, it is now upon each one of us to choose our respective paths or projects to put on track India's journey to a prosperous future. Any citizen from any quarter must cultivate a vision for a developed India and work on it with full optimism. His deed shouldn't be very big or shouldn't sacrifice his entire time, it could be as small as helping a blind man cross the road or help a girl child read and write by just spending few minutes once a week or it could be any thing you think of.....

*I believe that...*

— Chitra S. Desai  
St. Xaviers College, Mumbai

**W**e all know that the statistics: 'Young India' is the current mantra. Over 55% of the country is supposed to be under 35 years of age. This is really an exciting number. But if you are a regular reader of newspaper most probably you won't get excited with this number but little scary. If you are updated with the rate with which the involvement of youngsters in antinational and antisocial activities is increasing you will immediately agree with me. And the most striking thing is that most of them are educated, I should say highly educated. Then what is the factor, which causes them to behave like an animal? Why these people who are supposed to save society are spoiling it? Answer is simple. They are highly educated but they are valueless, having no moral principles, having no concern about welfare of nation, having no faith on country and not knowing the word 'Social Responsibility. From the present education system we are getting 'Sakshar nagrik (citizen)' but not 'sanskrit nagrik'. I firmly believe what we need today is not just education but social education based on moral values.

Some of us will say that today we have programmes like Foundation Course, National Service Scheme, Social Involvement Programme, Human Rights Course on school and college level. Yes, we do have these programmes but we all

know how seriously teachers, professors and then students are involved in these programmes? 99% college students do NSS for getting 10 grace marks in University exam, 99% students participate in SIP for getting one credit for Honours. Students attend FC or HR lectures physically and not mentally. They are least bothered to know what is happening in their own town and state, forget about the nation. And it's obvious that these people are going to occupy different positions in the society including politicians, beaucocratic officers, policemen, government servants, doctors, journalist, builders and so on. They are going to make 'future India'. But if they have the mental set-up like this one can we expect India to change her ugly face in future. So, the question remains the same. What can we do to change this situation? What can we do change this mental set-up?

I believe that situation can be certainly changed if we concentrate on young, tender minds of the age group 5-10. This is the right time to make these minds sensitive. At the time when they are studying alphabets, basic calculations and basic science, let them know something about their Bharatmata, languages spoken in India, geographic regions in India from Himalaya to Hindu Ocean. Expand their mind-horizons at this very first step. Here I must mention a nice

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programme started by Yuvak Biradary, India 'Ek Sur Ek Taal' in which young people like us go to different parts of country, enter the primary schools and teach those kids songs from different Indian languages. We make them to sing these songs and explain their meanings to them. When a boy from Kerala sings a song by Gurudev Tagore in Bengali the thing which we call as National Integrity automatically enters his mind. Today we desperately need such programmes conducted on a larger scale. Don't close doors of their minds by mere theoretical knowledge. Take them to streets, to slums, to crackers factories and let them see how kids of their own age are suffering, living a life which they can't even imagine. Encourage them to think that what they can do for these unfortunates, so that when they will grow up and be in a position to help such people, they will certainly do.

At the age of 11-19 when they are in their crucial teens, let us give their way of thinking a right direction. Get them out from the illusionary world of films, cricket, net and TV serials. Make them to interact with the society in which they live.

Discuss the issue like suicides of farmers in many parts of India, malnutrition of children in tribal regions, degradation of status of women in society openly with them. Make them to feel intensity of these problems. I am sure that with such sensitive mind a future politician will never dare to take bribe from any farmer and a future police officer will never dare to ignore complaint by a victim of rape. Here I must mention a unique programme started by S.N.D.T., University in association with NGOs in Bombay – 'awareness programme about senior citizens' for college students.

In present education system, we treat such programmes as 'extra-curricular' which indirectly means less or not important. Let us change the present miserable face of country.

Let us do this actively. Active and positive involvement of responsible authorities viz. Government, NGOs, Schools and college in such nation-wide programmes can certainly lead us to better India, I BELIEVE.

*I believe that...*

— Geet Simmeron  
*Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, Delhi*

Our freedom movement led by Gandhiji showed an entirely new path and established a completely different picture wherein an ancient civilization was transformed into a modern nation state. Our founding fathers had envisioned India to reach the pinnacle of glory but the progress it made didn't measure up to its manifest needs. As a result enormous development changes continue to confront our country.

One of the greatest challenges in front of India is to banish poverty which still grips more than one fourth of its population. 260 million Indians go to sleep hungry every night. More than half of population of India is illiterate which is the real handicap in the progress of our country and has led to population explosion which in turn leads to the burning problem of unemployment. A lack of job creation may find a manifestation in crime and stall reforms.

The law and order situation is almost collapsing in many cities and the irony is that police energies are concentrated on protecting VIPs. There is not a day when we don't read reports of elderly couples being murdered, children being kidnapped and dowry deaths. To add to this, the courts have a dismal record of disposing of cases. This is proved by the 2.7 crore

cases which are awaiting verdicts as on date.

As far as the administrative level is concerned, our bureaucracy fails to achieve even the basic standards of performance, responsiveness and efficiency. With automatic promotions, fixed tenures and assured salary hikes, our babus are not answerable to any one. In addition, corruption has entrenched itself to the grass root level. In the international commercial community, we have come to be adjudged as one of the most corrupt societies in the developing world.

The duality of contemporary India is such that if as a society we have taken three steps forward with the likes of Indira Gandhi and Kiran Bedi, we have also taken two steps backward in that women are seen as sex symbols and raped in broad daylight. Women subjugation and disempowerment is rooted in the very fabric of Indian society.

What to talk about the reservation gimmick wherein admissions, jobs and promotions in the public sector are often dictated by caste and tribe reservations.

I believe, a number of reforms need to be undertaken to cure these deformities and to make a difference to the INDIA THIS

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IS as we have a long way to go and a lot to accomplish. To make India shine in real terms, a collective effort on the part of nation and a change in the mindset of people is required.

Firstly, investment should be made in our greatest resource – human capital. Better nutrition, healthcare and specially, education should be the priority. The entire education system needs to be overhauled in the sense that primary education should be made free and compulsory. Value based education should be imparted. Child labour should be abolished. The young population is a treasure provided they get not only proper education but also jobs. Policy makers ought to realise that education and jobs are not an option but imperative. Education and skills profile should be tailored to suit the needs of emerging demand. Productive employment in all sectors of the economy should be promoted.

The knee jerk reaction to curb population explosion should be to advocate harsh family planning measures. As economists like Simon Kuznets and Amartya Sen have argued, labour can be transformed into human capital through social sector investment. The Kerala experience indicates that an improvement in education and health services brings down birth rates. The proposal that those contesting for public offices and government jobs should not have more than two children is a welcome step.

The way out of the mess of law delays is to reform judiciary. Cases must be disposed of fast, with recourse to appeal, which should also happen quickly. India must create fast track courts that handle criminal cases where politicians are accused. Out of court settlements should be encouraged. At the administrative level, performance based promotion should be enforced.

Another pivotal sphere which needs considerable attention is the equality and welfare of women not only in word but also deed. Laws should be redefined to make their misrepresentation in court impossible, anti abuse squads should be mobilised on streets, special courts should be created to deal with gender crime, punishment should be severe and serve as deterrent and death penalty should be given to rapists.

As far as the reservation quotient is concerned, India should be made a meritocracy not quota crazy. All reservations on the basis of caste and religion should be banned. Only the economically deprived sections should benefit from affirmative action. There too, quotas should be restricted to only one generation.

Coming to politics, it has the advantage of being the only pillar which is directly accountable to citizens but the irony is that, to an extent, the root of all problems lies with politics. The youth consider politics as a dirty mire. As more than half of the population consists of youth, they can identify with the nations problems in a better manner. I believe that they should realise that rather than just jibing at the system they should rise to the occasion by participating in politics to put an end to the problems that they are currently facing. An overhauling of the political system will root out not only corruption but many other problems as well.

A vibrant India is marching ahead. It should not be a journey without destination. Mukesh Ambani has rightly remarked “Someone described India is a land of billion problems. I believe India is a land of billion opportunities.” So only if we dare to dream big, we can make a difference to the India this is and make India a 21<sup>st</sup> century miracle.

*I believe that...*

— *Hannah Rohini Joseph*  
*St. Xaviers College, Kolkata*

**W**hen contemplating the content of this essay, a lot of information went racing through my mind. Economics, politics, sociology, and even occasionally, psychology. I was in a dilemma as to which area of human life I would concentrate on, in explaining how the India of today could be infinitely bettered.

### **And then it hit me.**

*None* of the above mentioned matters one bit. The success of a nation can neither be measured in terms of Gross Domestic Income or the percentage of people who can afford to holiday abroad. Its is clear from the economics of capitalism that one nation can be rich *only* at the expense of another being poor, so it is fruitless in presenting a market theory in which all will benefit.

So what can I, an almost insignificant student of St. Xavier's offer to a nation of extreme ethnic diversity, gender conflict and caste and class discrepancy?

### **I have belief**

*That* is my offer. I still believe in something. I still believe that Armageddon has not approached, and I refuse to be a fatalist. I refuse to believe those who give up and decide that

India is beyond saving. I believe that a *greater morality* will change the India of today. Morality is such a dangerous word to use nowadays. It is too closely associated with religious zeal and didactic sermons. Who has place for morality in this fast paced world of 'man eat man'?

*Don't* think of morality as being a code of prudish ethics that quash every impulse of freedom. What India and the rest of the world needs is a *new* morality. A morality, where it is not seen fit to propagate outrageous class divisions. A morality, where young widows are not forced to live the rest of their lives in emptiness and shame. *A morality, where every life is given full respect.*

We, highly *civilized*, highly intelligent, highly cultured human beings seek opportunity in adversity. In the face of opposition, we fight individualistically and claim the spoils selfishly. We will go to great lengths to create our own space, but only if we encroach on someone else's. *Where is the civilization in war and terror?* What is the point of a neat little brick house with a well kept garden in front, when the only ideas being fostered in that house are those of hate and revenge? These houses have been built *all over* our country and have influenced our political and economic systems; but

*What India and the rest of the world needs is a new morality. A morality, where it is not seen fit to propagate outrageous class divisions. A morality, where every life is given full respect*



*Of course we need economic and social policy. But how will this come about without a humanist policy?*

even worse they have taken over our educational systems - the breeding grounds for today's youth.

There is *no* point in blaming history for the present situation. Let's blame the facade of civilization. Let's *not* worry about building Mumbai's next sky scraper. Let's focus on the laborer who will never have the opportunity to even dream of working in it. *Let's talk about the morality of basic humanity.* Look to why girl children are still killed off. Look to why there is the necessity of the quota system in our public institutions. Look to why our farmers are killing themselves. Look to why more rich Indians are dying of anorexia and why more poor Indians are dying of starvation.

Look beyond the ivory tower. *Brainwash* love and respect in your schools if you have to - it's better than brainwashing prejudice! *Of course* we need economic and social policy. But

how will this come about without a *humanist policy*? And how is this to be achieved?

Place every single rich, privileged, bigoted, conceited and righteous Indian in a brothel, or a slum-take away his shoes, his home, his bread and his water, and I *guarantee* that within a year, the new morality will automatically pervade the minds of every Indian citizen, and that, *I fear, would make a difference to the India this is today.*

*I believe that...*

— *Ishita Kaul*  
*St. Stephens College, Delhi*

**I**t is self evident that literacy simplifies the task of becoming educated; it is not a substitute for education. If a person has the ability to read and write, he is literate. If one can use computers and telephone, one is functionally literate but not educated. An educated person is one who analyses happenings in terms of the effects that they have on the nation, rather than how it will affect them. They see changes at least as much as an opportunity to pursue current objectives more effectively or new objectives rather than as a threat to past achievements. The perception that these people have of a nation is not self-oriented, it encompasses long term changes and accordingly permits more diverse solutions and effective solutions. Education utilizes human capacity. The task of educational institutions is to stimulate human potential, i.e., latent capacity, and cause that capacity to be realized. The investments required are both private and public. Individually it is possible to allocate time and effort to the process. Governments, businesses and industries can and must invest in resources, through which education is acquired. Indeed, investment in education can lead India out of its current predicament.

A centralised education system will aid India's holistic development. All the heads of different boards of education in

this country e.g. CBSE, ICSE, HSC etc, should come together and study the trends of scores in different subjects achieved in class 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> throughout the country. The members should pick out the strongest subjects of each board on the basis of the marks obtained by the students in the last five years. Judging by these marks I propose a uniform Board examination that extracts the best syllabi from all the existing boards. Accordingly, all the texts books that have been used should be consolidated into one integrated educational course. Consequently, all the texts should be translated into various state languages for the vernacular medium schools. The State governments may choose two people from each state who have excellent command of English and the language of the state to undertake this task. While private schools are reputed to hire suitably qualified teachers, the government schools struggle with teachers who have minimum qualifications. I believe that the qualifications for a teacher should include education till class ten and one year of a basic teaching course from NCERT through correspondence. They should also be well acquainted with child psychology and should have good knowledge of Hindi.

There is also a need for multiplicity of schools and the schools need to be within close proximity of the students' and

*An educated person is one who analyses happenings in terms of the effects that they have on the nation, rather than how it will affect them*

*Human capital is infinite - each individual mind has unlimited potential and the potential to recreate is never lost*

teachers' homes. From every village five parents would act as representatives and take on the responsibilities of distributing the stationary and books among the students and sending progress reports periodically to the state government. Emphasis should also be laid on sports and extra- curricular activities and children who excel at these should be encouraged to participate at interschool level. The government should provide scholarships for exceptional students. The government should assign the responsibility of sensitizing the local community for education of girls, adult literacy and against child labour. In the evenings there would classes held for the adults of the community. Interaction among different schools is essential to ensure uniform exposure. For instance, private school students must interact with government schools students through a voluntary teaching programme wherein students from private schools teach younger children in government schools on a weekly basis. From class eighth onwards a class that discusses political, social, economic and ethical issues should be introduced. The purpose of which is to

give rise to global awareness. In class eleven vocational training, such as manual labour should be made available. This will help remove the stigma attached to manual labour and generate respect for it.

This education system is an investment in human capital, and it provides a cumulative return, as it pays a perpetual dividend into the future. Manufacturing plants and buildings become ineffectual and have to be destroyed, only to be built at a greater expanse for modern technologies demand new structures. The human mind bypasses these inefficiencies, and has built in adaptability, flexibility, and resilience. All it needs is the will to re-create. Human capital is infinite - each individual mind has unlimited potential and the potential to recreate is never lost. I know of no other kind of capital which can be infinitely expanded without doing damage to the surrounding resources. This education system will provide the human capital needed to wipe out economic, social and political issues that hamper India's growth.

*I believe that...*

— *Kaberi Chowdhury*  
*St. Stephens College, Delhi*

**I believe in equality.**

**A** vision for a multifaceted country like India is flawed without a founding notion of equal opportunity for all. India is characterized chiefly by diversity and in this milieu lie a plethora of minorities, each with its own tale of anguish and oppression. While viewing this term, it is imperative to redefine 'minority' so as to include every community that is, in what ever measure and manner, neglected today. Apart from the oppressed backward classes, the scheduled castes and tribes, women and religious communities also qualify as minorities because they are thought of as undeserving of the same treatment as others. This is an assault on the so-called secular unity and equality of India.

Given that India is a democracy and that the government is responsible for its people, emphasis must be laid on electing the right people. Thus far, political parties have proved to have far too many affiliations such as the BJP, the RSS, the VHP or the Bajrang Dal. Lately, a growing number of India's better-off Hindus have begun to see threats through the prism of religious sectarianism as a pathologically hostile Islam out to destroy the peaceful lives of meek and passive Hindus. These baseless beliefs have manifested itself in the form of the

Godhra massacre which is a prime instance of intolerance that can only be attributed to the failure of the Indian government to respond suitably to ethical differences. The wave of terror in Kashmir and other occurrences such as the audacious December 13 attack on Parliament have only contributed further to the perception of the Government being incompetent. There is an urgent national need to depend on a government that will lead us to a prosperous future.

I propose that the current Government pass a bill in the Parliament in favour of Committee for the Empowerment of Minorities (C.E.M), a tribunal under the Judiciary (which is independent of the Executive and the Legislature), that would oversee the campaigns of the competing parties in the elections (at both the union and state levels) so as to ensure that the ethical sentiments of various religious communities are not offended. At the same time, the committee would make sure that the propaganda does not include any religious overtones that would affect the sensibilities of any specific communities into voting for that party. Taking into the account the variety of faiths present in the nation today, safeguarding the ethical rights of each community acquires overriding importance. The tribunal would also oversee implementation of the schemes and programmes of the party

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(or coalition) at power throughout its tenure. In view of the inability of the Election Commission to handle both the smooth functioning of the electoral process as well as ensuring a religious overtone free election, the tribunal would prove to be greatly effective.

The Union Budget would allocate a sufficient sum for the implementation of the agenda of the tribunal. The members of the C.E.M. would be individuals from a variety of professions without any political affiliations selected by the Judiciary (at the centre the judges of Supreme Court and at the state level the judges of the High Courts). Select NGOs working in collaboration with the tribunal would be able to form an integrated network percolating to the grass root level to ensure that no prejudice is encouraged on a sympathetic basis, be it gender, caste, creed or religion. The other significant role of the C.E.M. would be to educate the people as to a woman's worth, beyond her child bearing function. Programmes held at village *panchayats* to remove pre-conceived and wrong notions would prove effective in reducing the inherent bias about the

woman's capability and viability as a member of the family and the community. The NGOs would also function as a means of teaching the importance of education to the masses while preventing child labour, crime, prostitution and begging that are resorted to in abysmal financial conditions. The C.E.M. would work with the Economic Survey of India to find out not just figures but who the people living below the poverty line actually are and as a social security measure, allocate a small sum of money that provides for their basic requirements and providing them ration at greatly subsidised rates. This difference between this and the existing system is that the tribunal serves as a check, preventing disparity and supporting the programmes of the government so that they reach every Indian.

The main intention if the C.E.M. is not to alter the existing structure of the government but to merely include a supervisory body with certain special powers that will deal with economic, social and political issues in the country in a manner that keeps the vision of equality in mind at all times.

*I believe that...*

— *Kanishk Saxena*  
*Hindu College, Delhi*

“**W**e the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic Republic and to secure to all the citizens –

Justice: social, economic and political;

Liberty of thought, expression, faith, belief and worship;

Equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all;

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation;

In our Constituent Assembly this 26<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.”

Before envisaging a larger than life “Transform India” vision, I considered it my duty to project this shattered dream of our forefathers-the Preamble to our Constitution - a dream which has been molested down the decades and has

become a sarcasm to the present pitiable state of our motherland.

Fifty-seven years after getting a hard-earned independence, we find ourselves fettered in the vicious circle of corruption, poverty, illiteracy and a teeming population - a trap we have set ourselves into by enjoying our freedom without any responsibility. We look to the government for everything and have little interest in helping ourselves. Moreover, we encourage shoddy work and corruption. Why blame the system? The problems as well as the solutions lie within us.

Two important factors which are missing in Indians today are self-respect and the ability to take on challenges. Indian intellect is the best in the world. But to us, our human resource is more of a liability than an asset. Many of us have started another “Quit India Movement” and are eager to leave for foreign shores as early as possible. How will the country ever progress if its people have no interest in improving things? We have faith in God, but we have long forgotten that God has faith in us too.

The only light I can see at the end of the tunnel is a change in the mind-set of the Indian. But how can

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*Internship projects would be an integral part of the Gurukul model of education, wherein the disciples would be required to render their services towards the various problems engulfing our nation*

we brain-wash the Indian who spits on the road, who bribes the cop for breaking the traffic signal, who mocks at democracy by voting his caste? How can such a mission be accomplished?

The youth of any nation is its primary strength. But our society has become so corrupt that instead of imbibing in our youth the values which have been the essence of our culture since time immemorial, it portrays to the youth that the fallacies of our system are its true essence. Consequently, the youth become an inseparable element of the “ignore and enjoy” culture.

To change the existing scenario, a change in our education system is required. An education system which filters ethics and values from social evils and renders them to the pupils is the need of the hour. The Gurukul system of education needs to be resurrected. In order to isolate a young mind from social evils, we must isolate him from the society for some period, during which the shishya will be strengthened mentally as well as morally to distinguish right from wrong and use his strength to stick to the right amidst all adversities.

Similar to the ancient Gurukul pattern, educational institutions ought to be established on the following lines:

- Residential educational institutions should be set up in large campuses away from the hubbub of city-life, where students from various strata of society study, eat, play and grow together as equals.
- Teenage is the most crucial period of one's life. The

environment in which a person spends his adolescence plays a vital role in the building of his character. The principles and ethics instilled in a person during this phase of his life become the guiding light for his future. The Gurukuls would render education to disciples from the age of twelve to the completion of their professional education.

- No fees would be charged from the students during the period of their stay in the Gurukuls. The disciples would be liable to pay their fees once they have completed their education and have become earning members of the society. The amount of fees to be paid by an alumnus would be proportional to his income.
- Apart from the curriculum taught today in schools and colleges, special emphasis would be laid on imbibing moral values in the shishyas. Lessons on spirituality would be imparted and Yoga and meditation would be taught to them to make them mentally and physically strong human beings.
- The rift between the haves and the have-nots in the Indian society is so wide that most of the economically sound citizens are absolutely unaware of the problems faced by their weaker counterparts on the other side of the windshield glass of their air-conditioned cars.

Internship projects would be an integral part of the Gurukul model of education, wherein the disciples would be required to render their services towards the various problems engulfing our nation, such as poverty, hunger,

natural calamities, etc. Students would spend some time in rural areas to identify themselves with the real face of India; they would be required to serve in relief camps, teach the illiterate and ignorant people about health, sanitation and population control, and other such projects would be assigned to them so that they may analyze the hornet's nest very carefully and be inspired to uplift the nation from such conundrums. The experience gained by the students by undertaking such internships would be invaluable to them later in their lives when they would be required to stand tall against the gusts of social evils.

Corruption in the human mind is borne primarily by our selfishness, which is an inseparable element of human nature. The Gurukul model of education will try to exploit the selfishness of the disciples towards

constructive ends by making them realize that their long-term personal gains will be materialized only when they make their environment suitable enough for their growth; that things would really change for the better if they give primary importance to the quality of work they do.

If such a model of education be implemented, then a breed of individuals would be born having the caliber and zeal to take the nation to unimagined heights of glory. Intelligent. Insightful. Inspired. Bold. Uncompromising. Courageous. Confident. Fresh. Radical. Consistent. Warm. Human. Powered by intellect and driven by values would be the new face of Youth India, who will definitely be able to live in an India our fathers dreamt of!

*I believe that...*

*Corruption in the human mind is borne primarily by our selfishness, which is an inseparable element of human nature*



*Our development policies are framed in favour of urbanization, resulting in the neglect of rural areas, where the majority of the people struggle to survive*

India – A nation where the first civilization began, a nation that propounded the theory of zero and decimal. A nation of sages and Sufis who showed the marvelous path of peace and harmony to mankind. We are the proud inheritants of the country, which is blessed with the ‘greatness of ancient wisdom’.

It had been the centre of attraction to foreigners for centuries to gain a peace of mind and find happiness within.

Though we are the richest country in terms of spiritual wealth but materially poor.

We are still at the bottom of the developmental ladder, compared to other nations like China and Korea, which at one point of time, had the same level of per-capita income, as that of India but now have gone far ahead leaving India behind.

Why do we continue to be a poor country? Why can't we become a prosperous country along with spiritual progress?

At present the enemies are not the British who became the cause of total backwardness in the country leaving it in a shackled state.

— Pradeep Kumar  
*Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi*

This time enemies are those within us. The root causes for this reality need to be addressed.

The major drawback which hampers the national growth is rural backwardness. Our development policies are framed in favour of urbanization, resulting in the neglect of rural areas, where the majority of the people struggle to survive.

The government should effectively implement its integrated rural development programmes, which can reduce mass poverty. This will reduce the migration of villagers to metropolitan cities. This process of migration puts a financial burden on the national exchequer and already scarce resources of cities.

Good infrastructural facilities with basic amenities provided to rural populace, can bring down the unbalanced regional development. Policies should be effectively formulated to enable the national economic surplus to trickle down to the grass root level.

Collective efforts of government personnel and our highly talented youth, who will put our nation on fast track, should be made encouraged and extended to bring e-choupal in

remote villages at macro level.

Our corrupt politicians and bureaucrats are spreading seeds of corruption & injustice to common man. They are annihilating our country socially and economically.

“the most corrupt person is today’s most powerful leader”. It is because the process of democracy is openly violated, that criminals can easily contest elections and win!

India needs a committed bureaucracy and an effective spell of good leadership for a longtime, which can take nation to the new heights of glory.

It should be made mandatory in our constitution that one must possess good educational qualification with no prior criminal record to contest election. The corrupt government administrators and politicians should be prevented to occupy any office of authority, apart from taking them to the court of Law.

Religion fanaticism is promoted all over the nation by our

politicians. This has sharply fragmented the society along ethnic and religious lines. The politicians should relook at their mode of election propaganda to promote communal harmony.

The behaviour of our representatives in Parliamentary meetings is utterly appalling and highly embarrassing. Instead of resembling a scene from a zoo, with everyone talking at the same time and everything going haywire. Their code of conduct needs to be formalized. Erring politician should be suspended from that particular meeting.

India has everything to become a developed nation by year 2020 – man power, capital, mineral and natural resources. But the only problematic area lies in the lack of optimal utilization of the resources.

If the minds of the youth and government personnel of this country become ignited with the dream of achieving broad based prosperity and glory in India, then our country is sure of find its destiny of reaching the top of the developmental ladder.

*I believe that...*

*India has everything to become a developed nation by year 2020 – man power, capital, mineral and natural resources*

Whatever the group of learned men considered crucial for the social, economic and political progress of our country, they set forward in a constitution that regarded every scenario on their agenda

“An accused is innocent till proven guilty in a recognized court of law”. Each word of this statement is mocked in the same court of law for which it was framed approximately 54 years ago.

When our constitution was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950; Dr. B. R. Ambedkar drafted it, foreseeing an India it would become 50 years later. After two hundred years of slavery, the freedom came as a beautiful dawn following a night filled with the anguish of a tormenting tempest that had finally receded. Whatever the group of learned men considered crucial for the social, economic and political progress of our country, they set forward in a constitution that regarded every scenario on their agenda. They knew that law and order was an important factor required for the progress of any democratic nation. But now the present politicians believe that the constitution and its annexations, involving the law and order proforma, is not equipped to handle today's ever-changing world. As a result, amendments have been introduced to improvise every law to suit the needs of the people. Now one faces a situation in which people do not abide by the law, but it's the law which is conveniently manoeuvred to meet the demands of the public; as of it's nothing more than a commodity bought by the person who can pay the highest price!

— Priyanka Guha Roy  
Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi

The typical mentality of the people belonging to our judicial system is what in French called '*Parti pris*'. When they read the commandment that was written to give just and equal opportunities to all and to make certain that an innocent shall emerge out untainted and the guilty could be punished accordingly; they instead think of only how could they outwit the law and the person standing against them. They infact accomplish what in Latin is called – '*Reductio ad absurdum*'.

All the accused people, according to their lawyers, are innocent; regardless of the fact whether they have committed a crime or not. Obviously, proving them guilty is entirely another matter, as it's the lawyers' wits on stake. The word 'Justice' is honoured mostly in the breach. Outside it takes a completely new dimension. For there are men, who like to take the power of law into their own hands, which is in itself a very strong stimulant, one that numbs their senses to everything else. These people like most Greeks, are confused between the words '*Thekaeossini*' and '*Ekthekissis*', which respectively mean justice and vengeance. Because for Greeks, both the words are synonymous. No wonder organized crime has taken such gigantic leaps, when fuelled by such strong ideologies. And our lawyers do anything possible to serve the same people

by expediently twisting the law, so that eventually, justice ends up serving the guilty.

In the courtroom, neither the prosecuting attorney nor the defence counsel seeks justice; as the name of the game is to win. If some one from the corporate world or a powerful politician is accused, he will be proved innocent. But if a person has no means of defending himself, will the same lawyers come forward, of their own accord, to defend them? The answer is to be given a certain benefit of doubt, unless the lawyer in question wants to do some charitable work or if the case concerned has certain high-profile prominence and media coverage involved. And the law court is to be reached only after all the preparations have been made. Witnesses are bought and sold; influential clients select the best attorney out of so many available in the market. They are expensive, but know how to attain justice in favour of their clients, either by hook or by crook. Whenever the situation becomes too difficult to comprehend, lawyers give a flimsy excuse and apply for a new date. The decision hence passed in midst of such chaos, is what in Latin called – ‘*Prima facie*’. After this the accused gets acquitted, the lawyer declares another victory, and as always, **Justice triumphs**.

The most eternal fixture in the courtroom is the statue of the Lady of Justice, but unfortunately for Us, i.e., ‘**We, the people of India**’, and conveniently for the lawyers, she is blindfolded. According to certain amendments in our constitution, audio-visual evidence, and documents are not eligible and authentic enough, as they could be duplicated. They are challenged and ripped apart during cross-examination. Fair enough, when an honest witness can be dismissed on the grounds of hear-say evidence and denied from testifying, then inert objects simply don’t stand a chance.

There are cases where witnesses give false testimony, not caring about the punishments they might receive on grounds of perjury. As they are well aware of the fact that whichever side they stood for, shall take care of them, and the lawyers shall think up of something to rescue them from whatever risks they might face. Is this why all the cases are fought in front of the blindfolded lady, as all she can do is hear? She is made to hear only the manipulated version of what actually takes place. And on the basis of all this, she gives her judgement, which isn’t based on hard evidence, but is catalyzed by what she hears. This decision may not necessarily be final as they are challenged repeatedly from the lower to the apex court. But only clients who are powerful and rich enough to afford a series of reappeals in search of the so-called Truth do this. Why do we then scream ‘*SATYAMEVA JAYATE*’, just so that every passerby could hear it or so that it would have some moral standing in life as well? Is that the reason why Mr. Tarun Tejpal, the editor of *Tehelka*, went straight to the media and aired his discovery instead of going to the court and filing a lawsuit? Maybe it was because he already knew he would be defeated and end up losing not only the evidence he had gathered but also the series of reappeals. He was probably harassed afterwards, but he fulfilled his responsibility by showing everything he found to the public and let them draw their own conclusions.

There are many flaws in our judiciary system, which are not acknowledged by everyone. For example, the parole system in case of life imprisonment. Since most law-abiding citizens have no contact with that, it isn’t exactly a priority with the state legislature. But somewhere between the judicial system, the penal system and the parole system, two ‘consecutive’ life terms become ‘concurrent’ sentences. They actually run side by side; accounting for twelve hours for each

*I believe that...*

*But somewhere between the judicial system, the penal system and the parole system, two ‘consecutive’ life terms become ‘concurrent’ sentences*

*Another fact that makes the picture look more grim is the time taken by each case. If an innocent person is charged with crime and hasn't yet had a hearing, then all he can do is resort to waiting interminably*

day. If a person is supposed to serve two consecutive sentences he is actually imprisoned for the sentence having the maximum penalty and the shorter term is neglected. This may arouse sympathy and goodwill in some, but in reality it's much more appalling than it seems. Because for many anti-social elements, the parole system is a marvelous labyrinth of contradictory laws that allows them to resume their deadly activities after only a brief intermission. As 14 years, the term permissible for maximum imprisonment is not equivalent to life imprisonment atleast literally, if not technically.

Another fact that makes the picture look more grim is the time taken by each case. If an innocent person is charged with crime and hasn't yet had a hearing, then all he can do is resort to waiting interminably. Then, by the time he is found innocent, he's already dead. Looking at the statistics the picture cannot be more transparent. The high number of cases and the low number of judges do not give equal opportunity to all the people for seeking justice. The long time period between the filing of a lawsuit and the final decision may not be just for the common man, but it's actually a boon for politicians, who continue appearing in the parliament and fighting on all trivial issues, from history books to the number of hours a street light should be kept switched on! This they do quite comfortably even when they are facing severe charges and are out on bail, because according to our constitution, the MP's cannot be prosecuted or put behind bars when parliament is in session without the speaker's permission.

Not only does it take time for a hearing to commence, but in certain cases, there has been delay in enforcing the decision passed by the court. Such was the condition in Dhananjay's case, when he was hanged nearly twelve years after he committed the rape and murdered an innocent teenager. He

should have been hanged as was appropriate, but why the delay? Why were the grounds still open for so many reappeals even after Supreme court's decision? Now if a judge can issue an arrest warrant for the President of the country when bribed suitably and the general public can hit lawyers by being fed up of their double-standards and money mindedness, then it's high-time for us to stop hiding from the fact that the judicial system of our country of India is now on the brinks of severe deterioration and incompetency. Cases like Ayodhya riots have reached Supreme court for justice and still haven't been sorted out, even by a panel of five judges. This raises questions about either the intentions of the jury for forestalling the decisions or the maladroitness of the judges for not reaching a verdict for a case where millions had been slaughtered on the altar of political strategies and communal anarchy.

This lime lights another fact that is quite controversial. That is, why the Chief- Justice is not subjected to law effects? Being the most law-abiding citizen, he too should be punished when proved wrong as any other common man. There shouldn't be any perceptible contrast in laws between judges of any court and the Chief- Justice of India.

Now if a common man thinks that the judgements passed behind closed doors of a courtroom hardly effect his daily life, he's wrong. Logically contemplating as to what is liable for such drastic changes that resulted in the degradation of our constitution and judicial system, any man can see that it's the lawyers, who first learn how to manipulate the law in the court room and later use the same incisive thinking and tactics inside the parliament. Speaking on the basis of empirical knowledge, these lawyers are the people who get corrupt politicians off the tenterhooks, so that they continue exploiting the country and it's resources for their own selfish

motives. And later, these lawyers reach the parliament and sit besides the same politicians who were at some point of time their clients, and were acquitted owing to them.

Law has infact become a stepping-stone for entering politics. If this isn't true, then why aren't there many medical doctors or technical engineers standing in the elections? Is it because they are not dedicated enough to serve the country or they think it's futile pursuing covetous and power-dominated careers? It is high-time we realize that it is more important for the people associated with the judicial system to focus on what they were trained for, i.e., to protect the rights of all innocent

civilians of our country, honestly and sincerely, by setting their own paradigms, instead of resorting to bribery and corruption. They should leave the political strategies for learned and committed men who really care about the improvement and progress of our country, instead of searching for the loopholes and manipulating the constitution every now and then.

At last, one should always remember that the judicial system is one of the four pillars on which a democracy stands. A weak base can make the whole structure collapse. And a strong base acts as a foundation on which tall skyscrapers can be made to stand forever.

*I believe that...*

*Why aren't there many medical doctors or technical engineers standing in the elections?*

*How do we expect corruption and wrongful use of public funds to cease and poverty eradication and development programs to take off when not even 10% of the money spent on nation building is used productively?*

**T**he problems facing India are endless. Bad politics, corruption, poverty, babudom, population, communal conflicts, terrorism all are very very closely related. Each leads to every other. A cause and effect relationship, that goes round and round.

However, it is this circular nature of crises in India that can be used to our advantage in problem solving.

The idea is to begin reforming from any point on the circle and keep going forward. This will surely break the vicious circle of crises.

There are two points of attack that I suggest. First, the Judiciary and second the System of Higher College Level Education.

**Allow me to elaborate.**

The Judiciary in India has failed. It appears that only the Supreme Court is delivering any useful justice. Rest all courts are just juggling files. Thousands upon thousands of cases are pending all over the country. Every law has a loophole. All big criminals roam free like mini kings. Some are members of the Parliament too.

— *Raghav Mathur*  
*Ramjas College, Delhi*

How do we expect corruption and wrongful use of public funds to cease and poverty eradication and development programs to take off when not even 10% of the money spent on nation building is used productively? And no one has the power to appeal, because they know that our rotten courts will take if not less, at least 10 years to press charges and punish the guilty even with glaring evidences. No one takes the risk of a long and dangerous battle against these, present day “Ravanas”. Money has become more powerful than the law.

**So I suggest the following.**

- The judiciary must work round the clock (24 X 7) in day and night shifts without any holidays in a mission mode to wind up all the pending cases within the next five years. This is a very important step we must take.
- We must not have cases dragging from the Tehsil level to the District Courts to the High Court’s lower and upper benches and then to Supreme Court’s lower and upper benches. The number of levels of appeal should be decreased to maximum two and decision there should be final.
- For the same, the subjects that the Supreme Court and High Court decide upon must be mutually exclusive

*I believe that...*

- The process should be fast so that the petitioner is guaranteed a decision maximum within one month of filing the case.
- The law needs to be updated urgently and loopholes plugged.

This will automatically push the nation into top gear and everything will fall in place because the Judiciary not only plays a judgmental role but a corrective, advisory and reformative role too.

Inherent in the above plan is my firm belief that all judges, lawyers, civil servants and citizens are not corrupt and some do really wish to bring about a positive change.

The second point of attack upon this vicious circle of crises is the system of higher college level education. This institution has failed to provide job-oriented education and has failed to include modern research into academics. The university curriculum is not academically motivating. We are still reading almost what our fathers read, even while the world has gone places.

Colleges have become places of “ oratorical academics” without scope for individual research. We have become professional data/ text memorizers. An M.A. / M. Sc Degree gets us peanuts.

Such training only makes the future citizens complacent and lackadaisical.

- So I suggest that instead of three years of graduation and two years of post graduation we must have a four-year professional degree program for all courses. (Physics, Chemistry, Economics, History etc.), after which the student become a

professional and useful physicist, historian, economist and so on.

- There should also be a greater flexibility in choosing our subject combination.
- A series of Indian Institute of Arts (IIA) should be created on the lines of the IITs and the IIMs for initiating this process and imparting quality education.
- Instead of year-end annual exams, there must be a continuous process of evaluation so that there is incentive to study hard and learn more, continuously.
- Reservation in education should be done away with. Merit based admissions are the call of the hour. Now, reservations will widen the very gap they were supposed to bridge.
- Those who can must pay for higher education. There should be a differential fee system. The rich should pay more and the poor must pay less. Only when the quality higher education comes at a price will students take it seriously.
- All university politics must be banned. Student politics is nonsensical and a waste of everything.

Conclusion: - A change in the Judiciary is a top down approach. Reforming the Higher Education is a bottom up method. Together they have the capacity to make the nation powerful. The crux is that some day, some government will have to take bold decisions, risking their non-popularity. Then all will fall into place. To expect a silent quick positive reform in today's age will be naivety.

*This institution has failed to provide job-oriented education and has failed to include modern research into academics*



— राहुल वर्मा  
किरोडिमल कॉलेज, दिल्ली

असंभव कुछ भी  
नहीं। आवश्यकता  
है ऐसे दर्शन की जो  
वर्तमान व्यवस्था  
का कायाकल्प तो  
करे पर आर्थिक,  
सामाजिक और  
राजनैतिक समता  
का सपना जो हमें  
विरासत में मिला है  
उसे बिखरने न दें।

“जो है, उससे बेहतर चाहिए”  
इस समाज को बदलने के लिए एक “मेहतर” चाहिए।  
मुक्तिबोध की इन पंक्तियों को सरलता से देखो तो “जो भी करना है हमें  
करना है। अब धरती पर उतरता फरिश्ता नहीं कोई।”

वर्तमान भारत को अगर कैनवस पर उतारा जाए तो चित्र कलात्मकता का  
अनुपम उदाहरण होगा। पीले रंग की आंतकी आग में झुलसता कश्मीर।  
ज्वालामुखी के लावे का रंग, जिसने अयोध्या से भारत की आँखे नम कर  
दी और राम को फिर से बनवास भेज दिया। या लाल रंग जो गोधरा में  
बहा, भूखे पेट आंसूओं के, लाल फीताशही का, काला रंग भ्रष्टाचार का  
जिसमें सता के सिपहसालार लिप्त है, धूमिल रंग की अलगाववाद की  
आँधी जो पूर्वोत्तर में बह रही है, भूरे रंग का प्रदूषण, नीला रंग सन् 84  
का, हरा, भगवा...और वो चीखे आन्ध्र से, जिनकी न कोई जाति है, न रंग,  
न भेद, बस महसूस की जा सकती है उनकी वेदना, अनकी विवशता।  
सामाजिक अंतर्विरोधों के द्वन्द से पनपे विचार, विवेक यह दर्शाते है कि  
वर्ग, लिंग और जाति पर आधारित यह सामाजिक संरचना ही गरीबी,  
निरक्षरता और भ्रष्टाचार के स्रोत है।

असंभव कुछ भी नहीं। आवश्यकता है ऐसे दर्शन की जो वर्तमान व्यवस्था  
का कायाकल्प तो करे पर आर्थिक, सामाजिक और राजनैतिक समता का  
सपना जो हमें विरासत में मिला है उसे बिखरने न दें।

आवश्यकता है इच्छा शक्ति की, शुरूआत की, उनसे जुड़ी कुछ तिथियों

की, गतिविधियों की, जो वर्तमान व्यवस्था में हस्तक्षेप करती हुई भविष्य  
का नया रूप रचने को सक्रिय हों।

इसलिए मेरी कल्पना में गुणवत्ता बनाम गुणात्मकता की शिक्षाई बहस को  
आगे बढ़ा वर्तमान शिक्षा व्यवस्था में समुचित बदलाव लाकर आज के  
भारत को बदल सकते हैं। शिक्षा का उद्देश्य मात्र अजीविका और  
साक्षरता दर वृद्धि पर न केन्द्रित हो अपितु चेतना, विवेक के साथ-साथ  
चरित्र निर्माण भी हो। शिक्षा जो समता मूलक समाज की स्थापना की नांव  
हो जो हमें उच्च तकनीकी क्षेत्रों में 'सस्ते श्रमिक' के बजाय ज्ञान की  
महाशक्ति बनाए।

इसलिए मैं संविधान के 93वें संशोधन (6-14 वर्ष तक अनिवार्य एवं  
मुफ्त शिक्षा व्यवस्था) की अवधि आगे बढ़ा कक्षा 12 तक करना चाहूँगा।  
निजी शिक्षण संस्थानों को बन्द किया जाय जहाँ एकलव्य का कोई स्थान  
नहीं है। मैं ऐसे सरकारी विद्यालयों की युद्धस्तर पर स्थापना चाहता हूँ।  
जहाँ एकरूपता हो। जहाँ क्षेत्र के आलीशान बंगलों के प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्तियों  
से लेकर झुग्गी के बच्चे साथ पढ़ेंगे।

1. मेरिट सर्वांगीण विकास पर आधारित हो और खेलकूद का आधारभूत  
ढांचा तैयार किया जाय।

2. कक्षा 10 में एक अनिवार्य प्रतिभा आकलन परीक्षा हो जो छात्र की  
रुचि चिह्नित कर सही दिशा में प्रोत्साहित करें।

3. सप्ताह में दो घंटों का क्षेत्र कार्य हो। जैसे छात्र यातायात पुलिस का कार्यभार देखें जिससे नियमों की गंभीरता समझे। सफाई और पेड़ लगाने का कार्य ताकि पर्यावरण की महत्ता समझे।

4. एन.सी.सी. पर आधारित दो वर्ष की सैनिक शिक्षा हो जो अनुशासन और देश प्रेम की भावना जागृत करे।

5. लड़कियों को कक्षा प्रमुख तथा अन्य उतरदायित्व दिया जाय ताकि उनमें शुरू से ही नेतृत्व क्षमता का विकास हो।

6. छात्रों को निष्काम कर्मयोग, एकता, सेवा भाव और अपने संस्कृति पर गर्व करने की शिक्षा हो।

समान सुविधा के शिक्षण संस्थानों की स्थापना के बाद हम आरक्षण व्यवस्था को समाप्त करने की स्थिति में आ जायेंगे। स्नातक स्तर पर प्रवेश प्रक्रिया मेरिट पर आधारित होगी और शिक्षा हेतु ऋण आसानी से उपलब्ध होंगे।

युवा हमारी पूँजी हैं, ऊर्जा स्रोत हैं। उन्हें चिंतन और उद्यम की सीख दी जाय। इस संसाधन को उत्पादक बल में परिवर्तित किया जाए। मनुष्य का का अनुवांशिक गुण होता है, 'बेहतर के लिए प्रयासरत' और 'स्वार्थ'। राष्ट्र और व्यक्ति एक दूसरे के पूरक हैं। इन्हीं गुणों को भुनाया जाय तो वो सहजता से समझ सकता है कि राष्ट्र के विकास में ही उसका हित है।

परास्नातक स्तर पर ही प्रत्येक विश्व विद्यालय में प्रशासनिक और राजनीति शिक्षा के पाठ्यक्रम हो। रोजगार प्रदत्त विषयों की वृद्धि हो। विचार निवेश (Entrepreneurship) शिक्षा की व्यवस्था हो। प्रशासनिक पदों पर यहीं से छात्रों की तैनाती हो। राजनीति शिक्षा के छात्र आम चुनावों में उम्मीदवारी योग्य होंगे। राजनैतिक दावपेच में माहिर छात्रों को जब सत्ता का उतरदायित्व मिलेगा तो हम प्रगति की उम्मीद कर सकते हैं। शिक्षित समाज में जागरूकता की उम्मीद की जा सकती है। जो भ्रष्टाचार पर नजर रखे। चुनाव और न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में साथ-साथ सुधार

करना होगा। राजनीति में पुनः नवजागरण (Renaissance) की आवश्यकता है। पारदर्शिता पैमाने पर हम विश्व में भ्रष्टाचार के मामले में 83वें स्थान पर हैं। हमें भ्रष्टाचार के इस सदानुक्रम (Heirachy) के स्तरीय व्यवस्था को तोड़ना होगा। सभी को शोषक और शोषित के क्रम से उबरना होगा। इस क्षेत्र में भावनात्मक गुणांक (EQ) की चिंगारी से एक जनक्रान्ति आवश्यक है।

शासन के सभी अंगों की हर वर्ष समीक्षा हो। भारत विकसित तब तक नहीं होगा तब तक गाँवों को जोड़ा नहीं जाता और कृषि क्षेत्र पर समुचित ध्यान नहीं दिया जाता। युद्धस्तर पर प्राथमिक उपचार केन्द्रों की व्यवस्था की जाए।

आधारभूत ढांचा तैयार करने में हमें "सफेद हाथी" से बचना होगा। और यह व्यवस्था 'प्रतिभा पलायन' रोकने में मददगार सिद्ध होगी। लघु एवं कुटीर उद्योगों को बढ़ावा दिया जाय। अर्थव्यवस्था को निजी क्षेत्रों और विदेशी निवेश के लिए सुचारू बनाया जाय।

सारी समस्या चक्रीय है। इसलिए आज का युवा 'सिगमुन्ड फ्रेऊड' के इस सिद्धान्त को सत्य मान बैठा है कि इस व्यवस्था में हम मात्र मूकदर्शक बने रह सकते हैं। इन दो अरब आँखों के सपने को एक दिशा देनी होगी। सशक्त और संगठित राष्ट्र के लिए हमें वो हीरा बनाना होगा जिसे रोशनी भी पार न पा सके। तब हम पुनः 'जगद्गुरू' बनेंगे, लगेगा फिर फैलने आलोक विश्व में।

मैं अकेला इस कल्पना के साथ चल रहा हूँ और शायद 'दुष्यन्त कुमार' की यह पंक्तियाँ कारवां बना जाय।

"आज यह दीवार परदों की तरह हिलने लगी,  
शर्त लेकिन थी कि ये बुनियाद हिलनी चाहिए।  
हर सड़क पर, हर गली में, हर नगर, हर गांव में,  
हाथ लहराते हुए, हर लाश चलनी चाहिए।  
मेरे सीने में नहीं, तो तेरे सीने में कहीं,  
हो कहीं भी आग, लेकिन आग जलनी चाहिए।"

युवा हमारी पूँजी  
हैं, ऊर्जा स्रोत हैं।  
उन्हें चिंतन और  
उद्यम की सीख दी  
जाय। इस संसाधन  
को उत्पादक बल  
में परिवर्तित किया  
जाए। मनुष्य का  
का अनुवांशिक  
गुण होता है,  
'बेहतर के लिए  
प्रयासरत' और  
'स्वार्थ'।

*That's right; you and I are collectively responsible for the plight of each one around us and our surroundings. Pointing fingers at a problem is as good as being part of it*

**B**y the time you finish reading this essay, one girl would probably be sold to prostitution. Another may succumb to an easily controllable water-borne disease. A soldier would either die or kill due to a needless war. A boy will start alcohol and drug abuse. We need change. And this change needs to come from YOU. That's right; you and I are collectively responsible for the plight of each one around us and our surroundings. Pointing fingers at a problem is as good as being part of it. Our indifference needs to transform into concern and action. It is because of this **I believe that a leadership culture would make a difference to India that is truly sustainable.** Leadership is not just an important tool for social change, it is the essence of change. Developing such a culture is the primary step towards a better India.

We all feel strongly about many issues that require change – be it a local problem like the condition of roads in our neighbourhood or problems of national concern, like the health situation in India. However, it is only a leader amongst us who will do something about it. Each of us pangs to make a difference, to give back to society, to make our lives and blessings count. The leader amongst us channels this pang into action. Rippan Kapur, founder of 'Child Relief and You' (CRY®) sets a classic example of leadership and initiative. He

— *Ronald J. Abraham*  
*St. Stephens College, Delhi*

was an ordinary Indian concerned about the plight of working children in Calcutta. Instead of just witnessing the injustice, he and his friends decided to *do* something about it. After starting with Rs. 10 and a bunch of bright ideas, CRY®'s altruistic web has now reached far and wide.

The state of affairs amongst Kashmiri Refugees indicates clearly the importance of leadership. Many politicians come and go and promise steps for their permanent housing, but nothing materialises. The Kashmiri Refugees are in desperate need for a leader. They have enough elite Kashmiris who support them from outside and put up their demands in forums, but nobody to fight for them. An example closer to home is the treatment of garbage in our neighbourhoods. This is something all of us are concerned about. But who amongst us has done anything but complain about this?

Leadership may sound like an abstract concept, but when it comes to change, there is nothing more real. The word with the capital 'C' is the word, '*Can*'. *We can* make a difference. *We can* create change. If one of us takes the initiative and leads the way, people *will* follow. A real leader knows that he/she is not an insignificant drop in the ocean; and with the right leadership, he/she will have a whole team to bank on. A

leader will have a vision about the cause he/she is fighting for. There will be a contagious passion to achieve every goal. A real leader's sincerity shines through and convinces people to follow. I did not choose words like 'vision', 'passion', and 'sincerity' arbitrarily; they are all imperative in making a leader.

Leaders can be of many kinds. Kiran Bedi (Senior IPS officer) shows leadership *within* the realms of her profession. Her work in Tihar Jail and elsewhere is legendary and has won her international acclaim and awards. She ensured that many criminals came out of Tihar Jail as human beings and not repeat-offenders, something not many have achieved. Anil Aggarwal, on the other hand, showed leadership in *dedicating* his life for the cause that was closest to him, the environment.

He founded the Centre of Science and Environment (CSE), the deeds of which have manifested itself in the ban of plastics in Delhi, shifting of polluting industries, CNG buses and many other areas.

When I talk about leadership, I am not punching in thin air. I have actively been part of a youth movement on leadership (the only one of its kind in Asia) and am also one of the founding members of the Leadership Cell in St. Stephen's College. Presently I am heading both the movement and the Cell. I am privileged in being able to carry out my dream and passion to build leaders, to make the youth of today realise that *they* can be initiators of change. Before I conclude, do you remember the soldier and the kids I mentioned at the beginning of this essay? They are still looking for help....

*I believe that...*

*When I talk about leadership, I am not punching in thin air. I have actively been part of a youth movement on leadership*

*Statistics reveal that there are around 20 million cases pending in the trial courts and 3 million cases in High Courts*

Peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of justice'. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we see justice tied to peace - perhaps more than ever - but increasingly we see justice tied to matters of economic and social development too. Economic and social development is not just about the balance of payments or building a road or increasing tax collection. More and more it is about the rule of law. The rule of law promotes economic growth and reduces poverty by providing opportunity, empowerment and security through laws and institutions. To accomplish this mission, we must ensure that the rule of law prevails : where the Government is bound by the law, every person in society is treated equally under the law, the human dignity of each individual is recognized and justice is accessible to all.

A landlord waiting for 25 years to get his tenant evicted from his house to meet the financial need of his daughter's wedding, a widow waiting for 20 years to get back her late husband's property usurped by his brother is typical of thousands of civil and criminal cases pending in Indian courts today. Statistics reveal that there are around 20 million cases pending in the trial courts and 3 million cases in High Courts. While judicial luminaries share the view that 'Justice delayed is justice denied', they plead helplessness when up against

— *Rupali Bandhopadhy*  
*St. Stephens College, Delhi*

inadequate infrastructure, misuse of the provision for appeal and lack of pre-trial investigation that could cut down the time taken for a case. In this kind of scenario, what is the solution? Self - help? Require the parties to travel and seek justice from the nearest State-Court or should they expect the government to deliver its commitment to carrying out a comprehensive programme of judicial reform?

Reforms must take into account the country's cultural, political, social and economic environment. In an effort to create an effective judiciary, there is a need to establish judicial councils as a means to protect judicial independence. Law Tribunals and Appellate Tribunals like NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) can be formed for specific purposes which in turn would reduce the load at the centre. Fast track courts like Lok Adalats would also go a long way in dealing with the problem. Where judicial independence is weak and corruption is endemic, one way to promote judicial independence is a trend of moving 'Budget Management' to the judiciaries.

Budget allocation for judicial sector was only 0.078% of the Rs. 8 trillion Tenth Plan (2002-07) budget. Instead of spending on guns and military equipment, it would be a more

conscious decision to allocate more resources for the judicial sector.

Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms like Arbitration, Conciliation and Mediation which are out of court settlements must be strengthened and brought into practise. This would serve the interests of both the parties and would reduce the time taken for justice delivery thus preventing the enormous backlog of cases.

Legal awareness must be spread in society so that individuals become aware of their rights and the correct procedures and channels to access justice. One way of doing this could be to introduce a compulsory law education programme at Intermediate or High School levels in schools. This would target the students who would be the legally aware future citizens of the country.

Frequent adjournments and piecemeal recording of evidence and presentation of arguments should be discouraged by High Courts through administrative and judicial orders which would enable the subordinate judiciary to act firmly.

New legislation, judicial councils, subsidized legal services, Alternative Dispute Resolution, citizen education programmes on legal matters, training judges, improving court management, court fee waivers and information technology would definitely bring about a substantial improvement in the existing system.

Improving, facilitating and expanding individual and collective access to law and justice would support economic and social development. Judicial reforms would give the poor the opportunity to assert their individual and property rights. Improved access to justice would empower the poor to enforce those rights. Increasing accessibility to courts would lessen and overcome the economic, psychological, informational and physical barriers faced by women, indigenous population and other individuals who need its services.

In this new world of law, we are all discoverers like Columbus as we come across profound and creative applications for the law. There is plenty that lies beyond. Lets exemplify the true spirit of being an Indian and make a difference to the India that is today.

*I believe that...*

*Legal awareness must be spread in society so that individuals become aware of their rights and the correct procedures and channels to access justice*

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And this  
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believe*

“India is my country; and all Indians are my brothers and sisters. I love my country and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it. To my country and my people I pledge my devotion. In their well being and prosperity alone lies my happiness.”

This is the pledge that we used to say daily during our school days. Most of us still do remember the wordings, but how many of us have realized its true meaning?

Being the daughter of an Army Officer has given me many opportunities to explore the four corners of my country. Be it Kashmir or Kanyakumari-I have seen it all. India is truly a palimpsest where every crumbling wall has a story to tell. It is a great land whose strength lies in its diversity.

Or does it? After 57 years of our independence, our very strengths are steadily perpetuating into weaknesses-weaknesses strong enough to tear into shreds all the good work of our ancestors. Are we really united? The contentious issues of mandal, mandir and masjid do not portend a positive answer to that.

Nothing is permanent except change. But we Indians are

— *Smita Das*  
*Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi*

in a time-warp; we still face the same problems that we did in the immediate aftermath of independence. Poverty, illiteracy, reservations, religious bigotry... the list just goes on. We are so obsessed with cult personalities, hero worship & becoming a 'developed' country that we don't have time to face the reality. And this reality is really hard to believe.

One in every two families still lives by the light of a candle. 90% of the 17 million homes in Bihar have no electricity. Over 60% of Indian households do not have tap water; only one in three have piped water. 25 million children are born in India every year- that makes it one child every 1.26 seconds. Even if every couple decided to stop at two children our population will overtake china's in 10 years. China has 7% of the world's land, India has 2.4%.

Nowadays we tend to complain about the glut in the number of medical aspirants. But the fact is that India just has 48 doctors for every 1,00,000 people. Government hospitals attend to just a quarter of all medical complaints. Clearly India is no place to be sick or poor, or both.

We say that a child is the father of a man. Then isn't it our duty to ensure a proper education for our future generation?

*I believe that...*

Why is it that one out of every four children does not go to school? Only 31% of children complete their education up to class 10th.

It is said that justice delayed is justice denied. There are about 2.7 crore cases in India awaiting verdicts. There are only 10.5 judges for every million people. Contrast this with our oversized bureaucracy-1.9 crore government employees making it one for every 50 citizens! This in turn has given way to endless red tapism. From birth to death, from ration cards to passports life is a labyrinth for an average Indian.

We turn our roads into spittoons, use walls as public lavatories & leave garbage out on the street. We also have the dubious distinction of being known as the country that likes to ensure that girls are never born. The sharp decline in the sex ratio from 945 to 927 is a devastating indictment of our society. From the rich to the poor, from the upper castes to the scheduled tribes, no one wants a girl anymore. We rank 55 in the corruption index and 129 on the development index-need I say more?

Problems galore. But where is the solution? Do we wait for a mahatma again to come and rescue us again? No. the remedies for all these malaises are surprisingly simple. Small drops make the ocean, the reason being there is complete cohesion among the drops. It is 'We-the People' who can make India better. We just need to take small steps. We still have the freedom to do so,if not the faith.

### **The Remedies-**

Start from the North-East. Whenever we think of India, the N-E region rarely comes to mind. People there feel alienated- both geographically and culturally. We should focus

on bringing them to the national mainstream. They should also feel that they 'belong' to India. The media can help in this cause. Why is it always that the news coverage about the North-East is always relegated to page 3?

Specialization of states. The centre instead of beating about the bush should strive to develop each state according to its inherent strength. Instead of vying with each other for packages, each state should focus on its 'Core Competency'. For instance, Punjab is rich in agricultural resources, so it can focus solely on agriculture & can further 'diversify' to production of pulses and other crops. Inter state trading should be encouraged. Surely Ricardo's law of Comparative Advantage can work within the boundaries of a nation too.

To tackle the power crisis, sunlight & wind power should be tapped. New private sector projects in backward areas should be given incentives. Villagers should be given grants to set up solar pumps and windmill farms. State electricity boards will have to reduce pilferage and transmission losses that stand at a staggering 45%.

"If we use water like the poor use ghee,then nobody will face scarcity of water in India"- Rajendra Singh, water activist.

Price water higher; it will be used sparingly then. Encourage cities to invest in water recycling plants.

Enforce family planning. Start from the top. Forbid people with more than two children to contest elections. Give incentives in government and corporate sector to those with small families. Promote contraceptive use. Discourage early marriage.

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*Petty crimes, insurgencies and social unrest-they all have their genesis in depravation. If people are happy and satisfied, why would they resort to crimes then?*

Ban provocative religious processions that inflame passions. In the name of God, remove unauthorized religious shrines from the middle of the road. Why should traffic suffer just because faith requires a public display?

Improve 'Education Penetration'. Instead of levying a tax or cess, ensure full and proper utilization of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan funds.

Ensure time limit for cases. Make a separate jury system for small cases & encourage out of court settlement.

Put a 10 year ban on recruitment to the IAS. Fine incumbent officers who fail to deliver. Implement the K.P. Greethakrishnan Committee report on downsizing.

Make the MP's public development fund public for the Public. Force MPs to declare how much money is used. Ensure accountability. Go beyond the right to information. Let people know about government spending.

Make spitting and dumping garbage on the roads a criminal offence. In Goa under a 1989 Act, one can be fined Rs. 5,000 for spitting in a public place. Such existing laws need to be expanded.

Introduce a national I-card system to proclaim a citizen's identity- an all purpose card that carries personal details, including health and financial matters. Voter IDs should be converted into multiutility cards and made mandatory.

End the paper chase. Multiplicity of forms and permission act as speed breakers. Uniform laws for things ranging from registration of vehicles to purchase of property would help. So would automation.

Plant a sapling everyone. Create biodiversity regions in urban jungles. Moisture levels in the soil are falling & water table is receding. Soon it will be too late.

A special mention of the Kashmir problem now. 57 years and four wars- much water has flown over the bridge. Why not unite India and Pakistan? Cynics will ask in derision "why" and I will reply "why not". Both our countries are bound together by a glorious past. We fought for independence side by side. The two nation theory no longer holds now. India has more Muslims than Pakistan now. Muslims are no longer a minority in India- they are the second largest majority. If the Berlin wall can fall then why not India and Pakistan be one again? This is the only way to end five decades of hostility & bloodshed. Improbable problems call for improbable solutions.

So this is my vision for a strong, vibrant, liberal & progressive India- secured both from within and without. These simple steps once initiated would ensure gradual prosperity and peace. Petty crimes, insurgencies and social unrest-they all have their genesis in depravation. If people are happy and satisfied, why would they resort to crimes then? We should stop being besotted with western technologies and put our house in order first. It is both our duty to uplift the nation & our right to ensure a better living for ourselves. A billion strong nation deserves better.

"Errors like straw on the surface they flow.  
But those who want pearls must dive below".

It is I who can make India better. It is we who can make India better. It is each and every one of us who can make India better. We just need to begin.

*I believe that...*

— *Sudeshna Singh*  
*St. Stephens College, Delhi*

I believe that the people of India would make a difference to the India that is today. I say this because the most powerful asset of any nation is its people and with their efforts, it can achieve anything it hopes to. In motivating the citizens of India to realize their latent potential lies the key to its future development. Even the founding fathers of our nation realized this and wrote the preamble to our constitution beginning with: “We the people of India...”

The first step towards the realization of the dream of the “developed” India is for its citizens to believe that their dream is not utopian. Mahatma Gandhi had said, “*Men often become what they believe themselves to be*”. The citizens of other developed nations consciously believed over centuries that they would like to live a good life in a prosperous nation and they worked towards the realization of their vision. Reality aligned itself with their thoughts. We too must possess such a vision and work towards it with efforts that will be expressions of the spirit of love and tolerance that Indians are renowned to possess.

Over seven hundred million people in India are below the age of thirty-five and it is this young population that will fashion India’s future. The realization and responsibility

towards the nation should be inculcated in us from our childhood, primarily through education. With proper education, the youth of India will nurture a sense of self-respect and they will serve as vanguards of the renaissance that will turn India into a superpower rather than a developing nation providing cost-effective technical and manual labor to other nations. Education will create a large base of intelligent people who are an invaluable resource for any nation.

With education, hard work and commitment, a spiritual strength to persevere through odds is required. Spiritual wisdom has been our strength since Ancient times. Therefore it becomes imperative to not preclude spiritual development even as we embark on the mission for technical advancement.

What Indians need today is a vision for an India greater than ever and for that vision to materialize, we need visionaries who will work to mobilize the people in mission driven programs for the common good. With the formulation of the vision, visionaries will emerge from every field.

India today is self sufficient in agriculture and has made tremendous progress in industrial development since Independence but even then it has always been termed as a

*With proper education, the youth of India will nurture a sense of self-respect and they will serve as vanguards of the renaissance that will turn India into a superpower*

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“developing” nation. Despite being a nuclear power we do not have any clout in the world arena. How can we achieve the tag of a “developed” nation? We need to mobilize knowledge to create better health and educational opportunities, which are the essential markers of development. This can be done only with the co-operation of the citizens of India.

The greatest threat to national unity is religious fragmentation. As citizens of a nation known for tolerance, we must refrain from communal tensions. Harmony and peace are essential for the overall development for the nation.

It has also been observed that we’ve come to view ourselves as a nation lacking pride in its achievements. We possess no faith in a secure future and draw no inspiration from India’s glorious past. Such an attitude can only yield frustration. Without faith in one’s potential, it becomes difficult to dream. We must realize that it is this past that has enabled the present to expect a future of peace and prosperity. No single flower can make an entire garland and therefore a collective effort is required to achieve the mission of a developed India.

Indians are unique from the rest of the world since they possess a wonderful fusion of belief and knowledge and have the ability to achieve and be the best in the world. However, this latent potential remains to be tapped as our mindset has become trapped with an attitude of limited achievement. Dr. C. V. Raman had rightly said, “*We need a spirit of victory, a spirit that will carry us to our rightful place under the sun, a spirit which can recognize that we, as inheritors of a proud*

*civilization, are entitled to our rightful place under the sun, a spirit which can recognize that we, as inheritors of a proud civilization, are entitled to our rightful place in the planet. If that indomitable spirit we to arise, nothing can hold us from achieving our rightful destiny”.*

My vision is to see India literate and poverty-free and governed by honest leaders. I see India not as a nation of sky scrapers but rather as a network of the urban and the rural. In this India, the rural deprived areas will be empowered by facilities like medicines, education and e-commerce. This India will be the leader in the field of biosciences and biotechnology. The leaders of this great nation will work with a vision and faith born of the realization that national interests are far greater than individual or political interests.

Such an India can be realized if the people of India, right down to the individual, behave responsible towards the nation. We must perceive ourselves as the citizens of a developed nation and not a developing nation. Let’s begin to trust in our abilities to make a difference because we are a great civilization and we must trust in its wisdom. Connect to the soil of our motherland and see the vision of a developed nation materialize. Finally, I would like to conclude with a prayer that Rabindranath Tagore made to the Almighty for India:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
Where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments...  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake”.

*I believe that...*

— Swati Chawla  
Gargi College, Delhi

Open up. The two words that sum up my vision for India. This essay talks about how it can be achieved at various levels. I present the 'what needs to be done' at different levels, followed by the 'how it can be done'.

At the national level, I believe we need to be more accepting and tolerant of outside influences. Our policy towards the Tibetan cause and our support to the Tibetan Government-in-exile is the best example I can quote. We should follow the same approach in dealing with other countries, be it the war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, or immediate neighbours like Nepal and Sri Lanka. We also need to be more receptive towards change. The state and the citizens (although I do not regard them as exclusive entities) need to engage with each other on a more regular basis and at multiple platforms. The media today is a potent agent of this dialogue and should continue to be so. The state also needs to engage more with separatist groups. Making the politicians and bureaucracy more accountable is another step in this direction.

At the level of society, we need to question, debate and rethink some inherited traditions. Two examples of this are the laws against prostitution and homosexuality. I advocate

a complete abolition of all forms of censorship and cultural policing as the starting point to initiate this process. The recent controversies about text-books bring another aspect to light. We need to have a secular, all encompassing education.

As an economy, we need to open up and encourage competition. Easing import-export restrictions and reducing state intervention in economic matters is my vision for a healthier economy. How can this be done? Do away with the existing remains of the License Permit Quota Raj and abolish the strenuous system of licenses needed for everything from starting a school to owning a rickshaw. We should not resist the advent of MNCs (and everything they stand for). I look forward to a free market where healthy competition ensures better products and services, and an increased level of efficiency and accountability. The state needs to make a phased-out exit from the ownership of services like health and education. State subsidies have not produced the desired results and the funds allocated in the budget for the same are often misused. The alternative to this can be health and education vouchers, where the services are not subsidized, and hence the citizen's choice is not limited to a few schools and hospitals. The competition

*I look forward to a free market where healthy competition ensures better products and services, and an increased level of efficiency and accountability*

among service providers would make these services affordable and efficient.

Lastly and most importantly at the level of our own selves, we need to question and engage ourselves in a constant rethinking of everything we take for granted. This would also

bring the onus back on us, and not on the larger structures that we are a part of. It would make us responsible for everything we do, and with responsibility would come a sense of duty towards ourselves and towards India. Clichéd as it may sound, I believe that every individual can make a difference, and my vision can transform India.

— तुलिका  
वसंत महिला महाविद्यालय, वाराणसी

मेरा विश्वास है कि अगर भारत की संपूर्ण व्यवस्था में व्याप्त विसंगतियां जोकि सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक, व्यापारिक क्षेत्र में है उनका समूल नाश कर दिया जाय तो निश्चय ही एक परिवर्तित, परिष्कृत 'भारत' विश्व अंबर से अनोखी आभा बिखरेगा।

कहा गया है-

हम कौन थे क्या हो गए और क्या होंगे अभी,  
मिल बैठ कर विचारें ये, समस्याएं सभी।

जी हां, संघर्षकालीन भारत के गहराते राष्ट्रीय संकटों के परिप्रेक्ष्य में यह ज्वलंत प्रश्न है कि वे क्षेत्र कौन से हैं जिनके पतन और पराभाव के विषदंत हमारे अस्तित्व को भ्रियमाण बना रहे हैं।

तथ्यपरक बिंदु यह है कि किसी भी राष्ट्र, समाज को बिगाड़ने या संवारने में कोई एकल कारक उतरदासी नहीं होता। कई कारक, कई पहलु, कई रास्तों, मोड़ों, कालचक्रों से गुजरते हुए अपना प्रभाव स्पष्ट करते हैं और बदलाव की जरूरत तब महसूस होती है जब यह प्रभाव हमारे हितविरोधी, परिस्थितियों के प्रतिकूल, हमारे मूल अस्तित्व पर कुठाराघात करते हैं।

ज्ञातव्य है कि भारत एक विशाल, बहुभाषी, विविधतापूर्ण राष्ट्र है, अनेकानेक आक्रमणों और विघटनकारी काल में हमारी मौलिकता अक्षुण्ण रही। विद्वानों की इस जन्मभूमि में पूर्व स्थापित प्रतिमान आज न जाने कहा

लुप्त हो गए हैं। यहाँ प्रेम, आदर और त्याग का स्थान द्वेष, क्लेश और स्वार्थ ने ले लिया है। धर्म सांप्रदायिकता का शिकार है, दर्शन मौलिकता के आगे शिथिल है, साहित्य विपणन की भाषा बोलता है, कला अश्लीलता से रंगी है, विज्ञान ध्वंस का पर्याय है और देवी नारी की आधी आबादी अशिक्षित, मानसिक, शारिरिक बलात्कार की पीड़ा सहने को विवश है।

राजनीतिक द्वार खोलें तो भारत दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा लोकतंत्र है। आजादी की अर्द्धशताब्दी से आगे निकलने के बावजूद हमारी मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं की खिड़कियां बंद हैं। लोकतंत्र की डोर थामे नेता अपराधिक मामलों से भी घिरे हैं, खोखले वादे जैसे घर-घर बिजली, सड़क, पानी, हिन्दी को राष्ट्र भाषा का प्रश्न या लघु कुटीर उद्योगों की स्थापना के बिना सिर पैर के वादे करते हैं। सत्ता में बने रहना या सत्ता को हर संभव पाना ही इनका उद्देश्य होता है। जनता के सुख चैन की इन्हें कोई सुध नहीं। जिसकी लाठी उसकी भैंस जैसी स्थिति है। गिने चुने ईमानदार नेताओं की हैसियत नक्कारखाने में तूती की आवाज बन कर रह गई है।

आर्थिक कपाट खोलने पर 'हर शख्स बिकाऊ है दाम लगाइये' वाली स्थिति है। रूपये का अवमूल्यन, लाइसेन्स पद्धति को समसप्त करना, सार्वजनिक उद्योगों का निजीकरण, विदेशी पूंजी को बढ़ाना आदि शर्तें भारत को आर्थिक खोखलेपन का तोहफा दे रही हैं। बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों स्वदेशी उद्योगों पर कुठाराघात कर रही हैं साथ ही बेरोजगारी भी बढ़ रही

तथ्यपरक बिंदु यह  
है कि किसी भी  
राष्ट्र, समाज को  
बिगाड़ने या संवारने  
में कोई एकल  
कारक उतरदासी  
नहीं होता। कई  
कारक, कई पहलु,  
कई रास्तों, मोड़ों,  
कालचक्रों से  
गुजरते हुए...

उपायों की ओर  
मुड़ें तो हमें उस  
मार्ग को अपनाना  
चाहिए जो  
प्रतियोगिता की  
ओर नहीं सहयोग  
की ओर, अनबन  
की ओर नहीं  
सामंजस्य की ओर,  
भोगवाद की ओर  
नही संयम की ओर  
ले जाता हो।

है। भारत ऋण जाल में फंस रहा है।

कण-कण में भगवान की तरह चारों ओर भ्रष्टाचार फैल रहा है जो कि एक सामाजिक विसंगति है। तुलसी के हरि अनंत हरि कथा अनंता की तरह भ्रष्टाचार की कथाओं की भी कोई सीमा नहीं है। ट्रांसपेंसी इंटरनेशनल के अनुसार 99 भ्रष्टाचार देशों में भारत 73वें स्थान पर है। आज़ादी के बाद से पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं का सही कार्यान्वयन भ्रष्टाचार के कारण ही नहीं हो पा रहा है। जीवन के हर स्तर से ऊपर से नीचे तक सब भ्रष्टाचार में कैद हो अपनी डफलियों पर बेसुरा रागअलाप रहे हैं। यह भारत का चरित्र बनता जा रहा है।

विश्व में फैली आतंकवादी हवा भारत से कैसे दूर रह सकती है? आदमी के जीने तक का अधिकार खत्म हो गया है। राजनीतिक समर्थन व विदेशी ताकतों के सहयोग से 'बहुजन हिताय' भारत में आतंकवाद ज़ोरों पर है। निरीह जनता हाशिये पर है और ऐसा खौफज़दा समाज राष्ट्र के विकास में अपनी भागीदारी नहीं दर्ज करा सकता।

जीवन के हर स्तर पर आवश्यक शिक्षा सभी के लिये न होकर समाज के वर्ग विभाजन में कार्य कर रही है। एक ओर सर्व शिक्षा अभियान की बात है और दूसरी ओर उच्च शिक्षण संस्थाएं निजीकरण के भेंट चढ़ रही हैं। इससे एक शिक्षित वर्ग व दूसरा अशिक्षित वर्ग की खाई समाज में बनेगी जो असंतुलित विकास को बढ़ावा देगी।

मानवीय व नैतिक मूल्य विहीन राष्ट्र कभी उन्नति नहीं कर सकता। पाश्चात्य धुनों पर थिरकता समाज मानवीय मूल्यों से परे 'स्व' तक केन्द्रित व घन लिप्सा, दिखावे में लीन है। आदमी-आदमी को काटने को आतुर है। इनकी अनुपस्थिति से ही धर्म का प्रारूप अलगाववाद, संप्रदस्यवाद, क्षेत्रियतावाद के अंगारे के रूप में भारत में धधक रहे हैं। अतीत का पाकिस्तान अभी तक नासूर बना है किंतु आज इतिहास पढ़ना और समझाना पिछड़ेपन की निशानी है। पड़ोसी राज्य आपस में कभी नदी, भाषा आदि मसलों पर संघर्ष करते हैं और राजनीतिक दल इन्हें हवा देने का काम करते हैं।

बढ़ती जनसंख्या हमारे लिए गहरा प्रश्न है प भारत में प्रस्तुत समस्याओं का प्रत्यक्ष या परोक्ष कारण भी। जिस जनसंख्या को उद्योग व श्रमसहयोगी होना चाहिए वह गुमराह, बेरोज़गार या गरीबी की ओट में हैं।

वर्तमान भारत पर एकबारगी नज़र डालें तो- सर्वत्र झूठ का बोलबाला है, सच का मुंह काला है, हवाला, पशुचारा घोटाला है, लुटेरों का राज्य है जहाँ दया रोती है, हवा सिसकती है इन्सानियत तड़पती है, हैवानियत पनपती है, धन के धमार में जहां कर्तव्य को हार्म आती है, अन्याय की आदालतों में जहां न्याय लजाती है वहां भला राष्ट्र कैसे हो सकता है?

उपायों की ओर मुड़ें तो हमें उस मार्ग को अपनाना चाहिए जो प्रतियोगिता की ओर नहीं सहयोग की ओर, अनबन की ओर नहीं सामंजस्य की ओर, भोगवाद की ओर नही संयम की ओर ले जाता हो। मानव इस भूमंडल पर सर्वाधिक बुद्धिमान प्राणी है। यदि मनुष्य समाज में विसंगतियां पांव पसारती हैं तो उसे मनुष्य उसे अपने विवेक से रोक सकता है। ज़रूरत हृदय परिवर्तन की है। नैतिक शिक्षा पर बल देना होगा मैं कर्मकांड की नहीं पर उस विचारों की बात कर रही हूँ जो हमें शिष्ट और सभ्य बनाते हैं।

ऐसी राजनीतिक, आर्थिक नीतियों के कार्यान्वयन की ज़रूरत है जो ज़्यादा से ज़्यादा लोगों के साथ हो। समतामूलक समाज की स्थापना कर सकें। मानव विकास रिपोर्ट 2004 के अनुसार भारत विश्व में 127 स्थान पर है क्योंकि यहां अर्थशास्त्र का वह सिद्धांत लागू नहीं होता कि अगर संपन्नता आएगी तो सब तक पहुँचेगी। किसी भी सरकारी नीति के लाभ उच्च कूलीन छोटे वर्ग को प्राप्त होता है, निम्न तबका यथा स्थिति बना रहता है। संरचनात्मक ढांचे को ध्यान में रख कर उद्योगों, तकनीकों को अपनाया होगा। विकसित राष्ट्रों के माडल हम हुबहु नहीं उतार सकते। नकारात्मक पहलुओं को तिलांजलि देकर विकास प्रेरक योजनाओं की ज़रूरत है। विश्व बैंक को संकट मोचन न मानकर अपने कौम की ज़रूरत के हिसाब से नीतियों के गठन व उनके व्यवहारिक प्रयोग की ज़रूरत है। इस संघर्ष में एक उपयुक्त जनसंख्या नीति के कार्यान्वयन की भी ज़रूरत है जिससे भारत में फैले असंतोष, हताशा,

बेरोजगारी, गरीबी के खात्मे में सहयोग मिलेगा।

यहां महत्वपूर्ण यह है कि एक साथ और एक दिन किसी व्यवस्था को कायापलट कर सुधर नहीं किए जा सकते। कुछ न कुछ तो सही राह से भटक भी जाते हैं, इन्हें रोशनी दिखाने का कार्य समाज को करना होगा, नेताओं को अपना आदर्श प्रस्तुत करना होगा। बुद्धिजीवियों और सृजनकर्ताओं को अपनी क्षमता का प्रयोग सही दिशा में करना होगा। ऐसे में समाज युवाओं और विद्यार्थियों को आशा का अवलंबन मानता है-

सृजनकुंड में अपने श्रम की थोड़ी हवा दें,  
नवनिर्माणों से भारत के यश को ओर बढ़ाएं,

हे युवा उठ आज दिखाएं तुझे बुला रहीं,  
मिला हाथ में हाथ विषमताओं से देश छुड़ाएं।

इतिहास साक्षी है कि सफल क्रांति, आंदोलन के अग्रणी पुरोधा प्रवर्तक युवा रहे हैं अतः इन्हें अपने ज्ञान कौशल, चिंतनशक्ति, मेधा के बल से भारत की बदरंग तस्वीर पर खुशहाली, शांति, सहयोग, संयम, चहुंमुखी विकास का रंग भर भारत की नई तस्वीर प्रस्तुत करना है।

अतः यह नई तस्वीर सभी राजनीतिक, धार्मिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक, न्यायिक, व्यापारिक, सांस्कृतिक विसंगतियों को अचेतन कर आज के भारत को बदल सकता है।

*I believe that...*

कुछ न कुछ तो  
सही राह से भटक  
भी जाते हैं, इन्हें  
रोशनी दिखाने का  
कार्य समाज को  
करना होगा, नेताओं  
को अपना आदर्श  
प्रस्तुत करना होगा



*Fifty-seven years ago, we made a transition. In the history of the modern world, that is not a very long time. In these years, we have devoted ourselves, some more than others, to making ourselves generally more comfortable*

It's a rainy night; I'm sitting outside a friend's farmhouse just outside of New Delhi. The sound of music carries through the thick monsoon air to my ears as I stare into the darkness of the middle distance. This is the kind of party that attracts members of the press just beginning their careers. Flashbulbs will capture most of this evening and plaster it in newspapers for everybody to see tomorrow morning. I have been here for a long time now.

But that just isn't me. I pull out my telephone and within twenty minutes, I see the headlamps of a 1997 Mercedes "S" class limousine. This is the car that I grew up dying to buy. The model is eighteen years dated but the dark grey carriage is all elegance to my eyes as it pulls into the gates.

A handsome couple walks out laughing, with their hands linked. This is where I say good-bye.

The crescent moon stares at me through gaps in the clouds that roll excitedly across the sky. The wind speaks in a hushed voice to the leaves that herald spring in the tree lined avenue of the estate.

My eyes stare out of the glass window; I see a place of

unparalleled beauty and I find myself asking, ' where will I find this place?'

On the drive back home, the moon is left far behind and in the pitch dark of the cabin my eyes close and I find myself looking into the future, yet again...

Fifty-seven years ago, we made a transition. In the history of the modern world, that is not a very long time. In these years, we have devoted ourselves, some more than others, to making ourselves generally more comfortable. Patterns of civilization have made us take from the outside world and to give in return that which is beneficial to humanity's progress.

There is something, yet, that we often find ourselves lacking. Our development as a country has been sure, if steady. Economically, we find ourselves moving towards betterment, in our embrace of democracy, we are thriving. Collectively, we may whine incessantly about the lackadaisical attitude of everybody else who we must share our country with, we may hold the politicians in very poor regard, we may complain about the lack of foresight displayed ever so often by urban planners and about a plethora of such social ills, but it

— Vaarunya Bhalla  
Amity Business School, Delhi

isn't often enough that we try and examine the underlying causes of these issues.

The question, therefore, isn't 'has India progressed?' but rather 'has India progressed to the best of its' potential?'

Doubtless, India has progressed, and is obviously on the path to a stage of globally acknowledged economic and social development.

It is my firm belief that there are steps we can take to improve what is not completely right about our country.

How do we address the twin problems of illiteracy and poverty that breed dissatisfaction and violence among a very large section of our population?

The answer lies not in only trying to work on the existing population but to reduce the strain on the limited resources of the nation by controlling population growth effectively.

Imposition of heavier taxation on families with more than one child:

This is a very severe step. I believe that in order to initiate great degrees of change, we must be prepared to take up some difficult measures.

The justification for this particular step is that the growth of population is geometric. As opposed to this, the growth of resources is arithmetic. (Ref. Malthus)

The restriction on the birth of children in households across the country will enable the state to provide highly

subsidised education to them effectively. It is obvious to see the advantages for an educated individual, however the true challenge is enforcing this in the economically weaker and uneducated pockets of the population.

We must be prepared to fight for the right to provide services of value to the developed countries. They must be held to their promises of globalisation and must not only adhere to those measures which suit their own interests (Ref. Globalisation and it's discontents- Joseph Stieglitz)

As in the United States, we must try and get individuals with a high net worth to 'adopt' certain pockets of road or small areas in the cities and towns. They would use their wealth to improve the quality of these areas by maintaining cleanliness, etc. They would be recognized and praised for such acts of philanthropy.

To weed out any social evil, we must concentrate on providing moral education free from partially ignorant dictates of religion. We are a secular republic. We cannot allow communalism to divide our strength.

Also, there must be some form of incentive provided to those individuals who dare to think beyond conventional degree programs and opt for vocation-oriented training.

Education focusing on character building, moral righteousness, and values will be our salvation.

Providing such education of the highest quality can be fairly left to the state as well as to the private sector given that the population is not a humongous burden on the resources that exist.

*I believe that...*

*The question, therefore, isn't 'has India progressed?' but rather 'has India progressed to the best of its' potential?'. Doubtless, India has progressed, and is obviously on the path to a stage of globally acknowledged economic and social development*

Peace with the neighbouring countries is of utmost importance. If we are to effectively take on the rest of the developed world, we must enter strategic alliance with our subcontinent's countries.

Press must be given a free hand and be made to take newer

initiatives towards exposing weaknesses of social architecture such as violence and corruption.

All this, and a complete change in the way we collectively view our social responsibility, I believe, will make a difference to the India this is...

*I believe that...*

— Varna Sri Raman  
Gargi College, Delhi

I have been asked to perform a Herculean task: Articulate a vision for India. I call it a Herculean task not because my vision lacks in depth, viability or its non-resemblance to plan of action, but, because I have to do what far more qualified minds have been unable to do for fifty odd years! I intend to tackle the task in ways—which at first sight may sound utopian albeit outrageous—but are ultimately are more grounded in reality (because they do not depend on man's altruistic nature) than any other. India has two problems— a regressive economy and an oppressed ecology.

After five decades of development, India ranks 124 in the Human Development Index in a list of 173. Three hundred and fifty million people live below what I call the destitution line, half of whom don't live beyond the age of 40. Thirty percent of the world's illiterates are Indian, we have 10 judges for every million people and one doctor for every 2,400 Indians.

Contrast this with the fact that the government is sitting on a cash reserve of 3.5 lakh crores. It has a forex reserve of 84 billion dollars locked in America earning an interest of 1.5 per cent. It has grain reserves of 50 million tonnes rotting unused in warehouses. Numbers may be dreary but they tell

unambiguous tales and it's time we listened to them.

India today, is the result of disastrous planning and blind vision. From thirty-three percent forest cover, India is down to barely four percent today—poor economic planning has fueled ecological disaster as well. The capital city is a good example to learn lessons from. Delhi imports 95% of its power from as far as Bhutan, less than 1% of its water comes from its own ground-water resources, 72% of Delhi's population has no access to basic civic amenities, there is no food security and the city's sole sewage treatment plant rusts in disuse while a forty-two kilometer long river-turned sewer courses through its veins.

Delhi uses 600 million gallons of water a day, eighty percent of it returns to the Yamuna in the form of untreated sewage.

Where to from here? ? A new possibility: Imagine for a moment a world where cities have become peaceful and serene because cars and buses are whisper quiet, vehicles exhaust only water vapour, and parks and greenways have replaced unneeded urban freeways. Living standards for all people have dramatically improved, particularly for the poor.

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Involuntary unemployment no longer exists, and income taxes have been largely eliminated. Houses, even low-income housing units, can pay part of their mortgage costs by the energy they produce; there are few if any active landfills; forest cover is increasing, dams are being dismantled, nuclear disarmament took place ages ago, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are decreasing for the first time in two-hundred years; and effluent water leaving factories is cleaner than the water coming into them.

Among these technological changes, there are important social changes. The frayed social nets of India have been repaired and all communities live in harmony. A progressive and active union movement has taken the lead to work with business, environmentalists, and the government to create a truly just society.

Is this utopia? I venture to disagree. One of our top priorities ought to be to reduce the widening gap in income between the rich and the poor and ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth. Next India should look towards revenue mobilisation measures which would bring in additional revenue over the next five years, to be spent on education, health care and in promoting rural entrepreneurship, worked out in carefully detailed plans. On the theoretical front, India needs to stop regarding its vast human resource base as a problem! As long human beings have the capacity to trade they can create wealth. Wealth=economic prosperity=every other kind prosperity! SO population is NOT a problem. India needs roads and infrastructure; it needs better planning and some faith in the ingenuity of Indians. A dose of empiricism is in order.

There is one environmental vision, and only one, that is

compatible with all other human values. Only a vision that recognizes and responds to universal human traits will be successful in the long run. Only a vision that accounts for the reality of individual self-interest can be applied in the real world. Only a vision that sees value in human diversity as well as ecological diversity can capture the entrepreneurial potential of the human race. That vision is free-market environmentalism. India needs to recognise this and vigorously adopt and assimilate the virtues of natural capitalism.

India has long been known as a nation where private homes and backyards are beautiful but politically managed parks and streets are a mess. For some the answer is to raise taxes to better support the “cash starved” public sector. For others the answer will be found in stringent regulations covering every aspect of modern society. A better approach would be to discover what makes homes and backyards beautiful and apply the lessons to problem areas. Rather than bureaucratize, we should privatize our efforts to protect social and ecological systems. Behind every resource should stand a private steward, a private owner, willing and legally enabled to protect that resource.

Income (according to the Hicksian definition) is the maximum amount that can be consumed in a period while keeping your initial capital unchanged- hence sustainability is built into the very definition of income, the most important facet of economics as far as the consumer goes. Strange then that markets are the largest centre of unsustainable activity! Ensuring that markets fulfill their promise also requires us to remember their true purpose. They allocate scarce resources efficiently over the short term. That is a critical task, but the continuity of human existence depends on more than just

success in the short term, and efficiently allocating resources does not embrace everything people want or need to do.

For all their power and vitality, markets are only tools. They make a good servant but a bad master and a worse religion. They can be used to accomplish many important tasks, but they can't do everything, and it's a dangerous delusion to begin to believe that they can—especially when they threaten to replace ethics and politics. Economic fundamentalism is that theology which treats living things as dead, nature as a nuisance, several billion years' design as immaterial, experience as casually discardable, and the future as worthless. At a 10% real discount rate, nothing is worth much for long, and nobody should have children!

The same theology treats values such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as they could be bought, sold and banked at interest. Neoclassical economic is concerned only with efficiency, not with equity, anthropocentrism not egalitarianism, it fosters an attitude that treats social justice as a frill, fairness as passé, and the risks of creating a permanent underclass as a market opportunity for security guards and gated “communities”. Its obsession with satisfying nonmaterial needs by material means reveals the basic differences, even contradictions, between the creation of wealth, the accumulation of money, and the improvement of human beings.

Economic efficiency is an admirable means only so long as one remembers it is not an end in itself. Markets are meant to be efficient, not sufficient; aggressively competitive not fair. Markets were never meant to achieve community or integrity, beauty or justice, sustainability or sacredness—and, by themselves, they don't. To fulfill the wider purpose of being

human, civilizations have invented politics, ethics, and religion. Only they can reveal worthy goals for the tools of the economic process.

India needs to therefore embark on careful journey embracing the market and yet play observer! Let us start with economics; let's evaluate what governs the functioning of Homo Eonomus. Why do markets function so wonderfully? Simply because financial capital is the most prudently stewarded of all forms of capital. What if all other forms of capital were to be stewarded this way? What if human capital, in the form of labour and intelligence, culture and organisation, were valued much more than mere IPR laws account for? What if manufactured capital, including infrastructure, machines, tools and factories were actually taken care of? What if natural capital made up of resources, living systems and ecosystem services were actually valued in terms of finance?

To all those who respond to misuse, abuse, or misdirection of market forces with a retreat from ‘capitalism’ to heavy handed government regulation I have three suggestions: The first is to employ command and control measures (implement ‘Extended Product Responsibility’ (EPR), tax unsustainable products, subsidise environment friendly products, use the concept of tradable pollution permits and enforce laws), the second is to take heed to Herman Daly's (Former Economist with the World Bank) advise with regard to economic reform which when summarised states that manufacturing ought to be taxed rather than products, natural capital ought to be priced and most vitally stop subsidising industries who depend on natural capital for raw materials because ultimately you are subsidising deforestation. The third is alternate economics,

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which includes measures such as greening the GDP, Natural Resource Accounting etc.

Markets are extremely good at what they do- in fact they are so successful that they are often the vehicle for runaway, indiscriminate growth- especially growth that degrades natural capital. The answer, however is not to simply discard market economics, nor reject its valid and important principles or its powerful mechanisms. I suggest we vigorously employ markets for their proper use— as a tool to solve problems we face, while better understanding markets' boundaries and limitations.

Markets demand a degree of responsible citizenship to keep them functioning despite those who would benefit more from having them work improperly. The success when they do work

well is worth the effort. Their ingenuity, rapid feedback, and their diverse, dispersed, resourceful and highly motivated agents give markets unrivalled effectiveness. This is opportunity not a threat; markets can be brilliantly utilised by steering their immense forces into more creative and constructive directions. What is required is diligence to understand when and where markets are dysfunctional or misapplied, and to choose the correct targeted actions to help them operate better while retaining their vigour and vitality.

This vision of India engaged in creative privatization may be radical, but it offers great promise of lasting success in dealing with the ever-changing circumstances of human interaction with the natural and social world. Furthermore it respects the most precious unit of society, the individual and his wish for true liberty.







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