



Voices

of the

Young

belief

ambition

perspective

Voices of the Young

Towards Habitat Young Visionary Award 2006



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 Jury

Semi-Finals

Mr. Raj Chengappa
Managing Editor
India Today

Ms. Abha Adams
Director
The Shri Ram School

Ms. Gowri Ishwaran
Principal
Sanskriti School

Dr. A. Shankra Reddy
Principal
Sri Venkateswara College

Mr. Om Thanvi
Chief Editor
Jan Satta

Finals

Hon'ble Justice S. K. Kaul
Judge
Delhi High Court

Mr. Vinod Dua
Political Analyst and Media Person

Mr. Sandeep Dikshit
Member of Parliament

Ms. Renu Sood Karnad
Executive Director
HDFC Ltd.

Ms. Pinky Anand
Advocate
Supreme Court of India

Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan
Researcher and Political Analyst

Themes for 2006

Contemporary India—Flourishing or Floundering

समाकालीन भारत उत्थान की ओर या पतन की ओर

Moral Policing by State: Limits of Reasons

नैतिकता का सरकारी पाठ – क्या हो सीमारेखा?

Right to Do or Do it Right

ईमानदारी या समझदारी

We Have Not Inherited the Earth from Our Fathers; We are Borrowing It from Our Children

यह धरती केवल हमारी जागीर तो नहीं भावी पीढ़ी की अमानत है यह

Foreword

The search for a young visionary was a path-breaking initiative taken by India Habitat Centre three years ago. In our quest to enlarge the space for discourse on issues of concern we acutely felt the noticeable lack of the 'youth' and 'young' dimensions. It seemed that quite literally the young had to earn their spurs and grey hair before their perspectives could be taken into account with any degree of seriousness. In a country where an increasingly dominant section comprised the young we wanted to create a platform where the 'young' shared their thoughts on the kind of environment they would like to strive for and articulate a value system which reflected their 'longings' and 'belongings'.

It is very heartening to know that our efforts to give the Habitat Young Visionary Award an 'All-India' dimension is being received with enthusiasm. This has encouraged us to stay with the effort and reinforce our commitment to the cause by enlarging the participant base. We have positioned the award as a fellowship for a fully funded summer programme at the Cambridge University. This we thought would be the most appropriate bridge to cross into wider horizons and condition a young mind to factor in global trends for the choices (s)he will make personally and her/his environment.

No doubt the contest for this award instituted by India Habitat Centre is in its infancy, but we are hoping that it soon achieves holistically its intent to serve as a reflection of contemplative originality and intrinsic cogency rather than for its declaiming skills. We have tried to assign themes to help the participants to focus their beliefs and weave their thoughts around them; and we have also tried absence of a structured theme. We found that between the two approaches, assigning a theme worked to get a better response.

Ideally, since the award is for cogency of thought and belief in the framework the speaker creates, we would want the participants to proceed from a given context of the country's environment and then outline his vision for change. Perhaps we would graduate to this in a year or so.

93 young students from all over India have contested for the award this year. This is very encouraging. More importantly it is serving to strengthen a platform 'of' and 'for' young voices to a point that the views expressed every year will be listened to and given the due credence that the stakeholders of tomorrow truly deserve.

*Raj Liberhan
Director
India Habitat Centre*

Contemporary India—Flourishing or Floundering

—Kakul Gautam
Lady Sri Ram College for Women, Delhi

So once upon a time there was a land...a land of myriad contradictions, of paradoxes and parallels. A land of myths and realities. Realities harder to believe than those myths. A land, which lived and died with every breath it took.

Some say that India truly began after it gained independence, others opine that India *is* its history, its glorious struggle for freedom. I contest that India is, its today. Its here and now. Its present. And herein lies the greatest cause for concern. The cause to stand up and take action, or stand up and run (depending on who you are). India today, is a schizophrenic state - simultaneously flourishing and floundering. Which half of the glass you have, depends on who you are and what your name is (or is not).

My views on the State, on India as it stands today, could well be bracketed as 'anti-nationalistic' and shoved aside. But if being 'anti nationalistic' is worse than being 'anti humanity' then that's a risk I'd have to take. Nationalism, then. What exactly is it meant to be? What are its intended effects? Is Nationalism India's energy drink, something which temporarily boosts the citizen's sugar levels, so the nation goes into over drive, and then comes crashing down? Maybe nationalism is like that new corporate job, the one that

promises you a paid family vacation to Egypt every year. Knowing fully well that since you'll be working every waking hour, you won't have the energy to take a trip to the chemist, leave alone have a functional family who would want to accompany you. Nationalism is the New Drug. The Drug, which proclaims to cure every disease; only because it keeps you hallucinated.

India tries to use this label to sell all kinds of products to us, from justifying wars and nuclear bombs, to asking us to be accomplices in State made follies—all for the divine cause of Nationalism. Or was it Jingoism? I forget. The similarities are sometimes confusing. The state proclaims that the country and the economy are doing great, Thank you for asking. How? Well, the GDP says so, and heaven knows that GDP does not lie. So what if farmers are committing suicides, or if 70% of Indians live in rural areas? So what if 'The Time' says that "A quarter of the world's truly destitute—300 million people each subsisting on less than \$1 a day—live in India". So what? We told you that the GDP does not lie. And shame on you if you disagree, how can you be so anti-nationalistic?

This nationalism— at whose altar millions are being sacrificed—is often fuelled by defining 'The Other'. Indian

Nationalism is the New Drug. The Drug, which proclaims to cure every disease; only because it keeps you hallucinated.

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Nationalism will run for 500 km if you throw stones at Pakistanis. You are good for another 1000km if you throw a few punches at those 'damned Goras' for leaving your country as it is today. Then puff out your chest and say that it was us, who gave Milan the lycra *churidar*; announce to the world that Swastik is ours. Those who dare to whisper that we gave the world non-violence. Don't. Hang your head in shame, but don't say it...at least, not out loud.

Nationalism, is then an easy concept to define— become an accomplice of all state policies and if anyone dare dissent, run them over and say you did it for nationalism and for the sovereignty of the Indian State.

Let us then talk about the Indian State. Who or what is it? How come it likes a certain kind of people and not the other? It is simple, if you happen to be below the poverty line, (or even within shouting distance of it) then The State is not on your side. It will tell you that it is, even as it systemically tries to reduce you to a statistic, but that is only because the state does not wish to be cruel to you. The state however calls you by name if you're an Ambani or a Mittal because then you are doing the state proud. It's not the fault of the state, it just has too many children; some are convenient, some aren't. However in this Land of Karma, you make your fortune, the State in no circumstances must be blamed.

The Indian State started out by promising above all, dignity in the quotidian sphere of life. Now if you were in Gujarat in 2002 and if you belonged to the weaker section of the 'wrong' community then you might have been subject to violence, to civil rioting where the State played Big Daddy to it all. If later you try to prove it, then they call you anti-nationalistic. The state might be benevolent enough to admit a certain

knowledge of the events that occurred, but it legitamizes the killing of hundreds as a 'reaction'. And no, the state shall answer no more questions.

The state changes a little, every 5 years, a few names change, but the core concepts remain the same—profit. The state will often sell out its own people and their ideologies under the rubric of 'strategic partnership', as with the IAEA vote, where they betrayed our own non-aligned position. The State however always acts in the interest of its children. And what do children know anyway? Watch closely, listen intently, and you will see how the vocabulary used by the state to define its motives, is floundering. The state is not such a smooth operator anymore. Or maybe, the children grew up.

There are many concepts in India, which have failed, because there has been no evolution in these concepts. We failed to revamp our paradigms, to look at old ideas through new glasses. Case in point—the AFSPA. After independence, the country needed integration. Assimilation was seen equal to Integration. A draconian law—the AFSPA was enacted in 1958 to counter the NAGA insurgent movement. 1958—we didn't question it because of the euphoria of independence, the good intentions of the state were taken for granted. Forty seven years later and the only time we bother to talk about it, is when the people there protest naked, or the insurgents kill some army men. There is then something inherently flawed in a state that lets its citizens die. Where your caste, class and predominantly your reach in the world, determines the amount of attention you get.

We have been battling reservation politics for ages. Why then are the same castes still marginalized? Why are the Dalits and the Adivasis shoved aside once the ballot count is done?

Dalits continue to be antagonized. To be killed. To be massacred. To be looked down upon. Adivasis continue to be mere numbers, the first to be displaced in the new development game. The state says, 'its out of our hands. We gave you reservation didn't we?' So then maybe it is in someone else's hands? Or maybe the state is a schizophrenic state? Maybe if you're unfavourably placed in terms of caste and class then the state will give you subsidies and thats all. After all, everyone makes their own destinies. But if you happen to be a Tata or a Birla, then the state will help you get richer. Everyone likes to back the winning horse. So the state then draws up policies, which help you, because you are the golden egg laying goose. The 'babudom' reigns and industrialists get to have a say in environmental laws. And when the poor ones make some noise, the state hands them a subsidy, a policy or sometimes a promise. This is Cooption Of Dissent. Read: New State Strategy.

Now, when things like rape happen, the state sends its representatives to educate people. Then police officers give sound bytes like 'if you dress provocatively, you have it

coming'. It is the age-old state tactic- change the behaviour of the victim, than of the abuser. Less complex that way.

State Hypocrisy. It's the new product on the market. You don't have to pay for it, if you are poor you get it free, compliments of the state. The state will talk of the interests of the public sector even as it opens the gate to mass manufactured products, which break the backbone of our indigenous industries. State hypocrisy is not easy to comprehend. The state will jargonize its actions, 'intellectualize' them. Whole ranges of crimes are committed under the excuse, ' We must globalize. It's the need of the day.' Thousands are left unemployed and poverty ridden. But they can always go home and tell their starving children, 'you see, we had to globalize. It was the need of the day.'

However while the Indian State flounders, many other things persist. What flourishes is the poor man's dogged faith in the system. What flourish are our everyday, nameless, countless heroes. What flourishes is that flagrant will to keep fighting. What flourishes is the human spirit. Amen.

Everyone likes to back the winning horse. So the state then draws up policies, which help you, because you are the golden egg laying goose.

*I defy anyone
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“A vibrant democracy, a large reservoir of skilled manpower, a self confident middle class at the cutting edge of new technology, a nuclear power and above all a huge and acknowledged potential” is what we can say five decades after India’s independence. The country faces an unacceptable performance – potential gap. This is the particular reason which restricts India to gain its position as an *Economic Super Power*.

India remains a large country with a small economy. It makes up 16% of the world’s population but its global GNP share is only 1.5 percent and its contribution to world trade is only 0.7%.

The realization has dawned that India cannot remain cocooned in some mythical self sufficiency, that it is now a part of global economy. This implies that India cannot judge itself only by Indian standards. Today, it is India’s moment of opportunity. The challenge is to convert hope into reality.

India Now and Before

India has a 5000 year old civilization with 325 spoken languages and 1652 dialects. It has 18 official languages with a 3.28 million sq. km in area sustaining a population of 1.3

—*Parikshit Chopra*
Amity Business School, Noida

billion people. Our GDP is at \$576 billion growing at 8% annually. India has a parliamentary form of government. It can boast of being the world’s largest democracy with the world’s 4th largest economy. It is the largest English speaking nation in the world. It has the 3rd largest standing army force, over 1.5 million strong and 2nd largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world.

In India today we have a lady, born a catholic (Sonia Gandhi) stepping aside so a Sikh (Dr Man Mohan Singh) sworn in by a Muslim President (Dr. Abdul Kalam) to lead a nation that is 82% Hindu. I defy anyone to cite another country with such diversity and tolerance to its political leadership.

The Indian economy in the Pre–British period consisted of isolated and self sustaining villages on the one hand, and towns which were the seats of administration, pilgrimage, commerce & handicrafts, on the other. The first era of Indian planning began with the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 which contemplated a mixed economy, reserving a sphere for the private sector and another for public sector, and then in 1956 with the new classification of various industries. But it was the Industrial Policy of 1991 which actually paved the way

for rapid growth, to unshackle the Indian industrial economy from bureaucratic control and liberalization of the Indian economy.

India's Achievements

Fifteen years ago, few of us had heard of Information Technology. Today, exports from this industry are worth \$12 billion — that is, over Rs 50,000 crores a year. That figure is 20 per cent of our total exports. McKinsey believes India's revenues from IT industry will fetch \$87 billion by 2008.

Infosys had not even been born 25 years ago. Wipro was a company selling vegetable oil. Indeed, other than the "Tata" in Tata Consultancy Services, there is scarcely a name in the IT industry that was known then.

And what's the average age in the industry? Just 26 and a half! These 26/27-year-olds have changed the world's perception of India. It's not just a country of snake-charmers; it's a country against which protectionist walls have to be erected. Of course, we can also charm snakes.

The facts speak for themselves:

- 15 of the world's major Automobile makers are obtaining components from Indian companies. This business fetched India \$1.5 billion in 2004 and will fetch \$15 billion by 2007.
- World renowned TQM expert Yasutoshi Washio predicts that Indian manufacturing quality will overtake that of Japan by 2013.
- 9 out of 10 diamond stones sold in the world pass through India.
- Garment exports are expected to increase to current levels of \$6 billion to \$25 billion by 2010.

- The foreign exchange reserves are at a whopping \$137 billion.
- Mobile phones are growing at about 1.5 million subscribers every month.
- Wal-Mart sources \$1 billion worth of goods from India-half its apparel and expects it to grow to \$10 billion in the next couple of years. GAP sources about \$600 million and Tommy Hilfiger about \$100 million worth of apparel.
- India has prepaid \$3 billion owed to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank and is providing aid to 11 countries, writing off their debt and loaning the Indian Monetary Fund \$300 million dollars.
- GE with \$80 million invested in India employs 16000 staff, 1600 R&D staff who are qualified in PhD's and masters degree.
- Staff at the Intel's office has gone up from 10 employees to 1200 in four years and is expected to touch 2500 by the end of 2006.
- It is estimated that there are 1,50,000 IT professionals in Bangalore as compared to the 1,20,000 in the Silicon Valley.
- The domestic BPO sector is projected to increase sales from \$4 billion in 2004 to \$65 billion in 2010 (McKinsey).
- 100 of the fortune 500 companies are now present in India compared to 33 in China.

The Way To Go

We have many challenges; nearly 260 million people who are below the poverty line have to join the mainstream of a good life. Hundred percent literacy, health for all, multiple agricultural and industrial productivity and a lifestyle with a value system have to emerge.

Hundred percent literacy, health for all, multiple agricultural and industrial productivity and a lifestyle with a value system have to emerge.

The nation needs young leaders who can command the change for transformation of India into a developed nation and economy embedded in a knowledge society.

- **The Knowledge Economy:** In the 21st century a new society is emerging where knowledge is the primary production resource rather than capital or labour. People's lives can be enriched by IT driven technology and human life can be further extended with the use of Nano Technology. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said, *"It is the knowledge society that will transform India into a developed nation"*.
- **Bio Technologic India:** India can reap huge incentives in the field of Bio Technology. India is rich in herbs, germplasm and micro organisms. Industrially developed countries are importing this bio – resources in raw forms, adding value to them and then exporting them back to other developing countries including India. Out of the global herbal products market of \$61bn, India has a share of not even \$100mn. Hence there is a tremendous opportunity for a high market share.
- **The Human Development Index:** A Human Development Index works on three points:
 - High Life Expectancy
 - Literacy Rate
 - Standard of Living

Economic growth contributes most to poverty reduction when it expands the employment, productivity, wages and proper channelization of public resources.

The nations strength resides predominantly in its natural and human resources which we must leverage. Human resources particularly with a large young population, is the unique core strength of India. The nation needs young leaders who can command the change for transformation of India into

a developed nation and economy embedded in a knowledge society.

- **Infrastructure Development:** The line between infrastructure and development is not a once for all affair. It is a continuous process; and progress in development has to be preceded, accompanied, and followed by progress in infrastructure, if we are to fulfill our declared objectives of self accelerating process of economic development.

Polices in Action for Development

- **Policy for small scale industries:** Reservation of items of manufacture exclusively for the small scale sector forms an important focus of the industrial policy as a measure of protecting this sector. Since 1999, industrial undertakings with an investment of upto Rupees One crore are within the small scale and ancillary sector. A differential investment limit has been adopted since 2001 for 41 reserved items where the investment limit upto Rupees Five crores is prescribed for qualifying as a small scale unit. 749 items are reserved for manufacture in the small scale sector. All undertakings other than the small scale industrial undertakings engaged in items reserved for manufacture in the small scale sector are required to obtain an industrial license.
- **Policy of foreign direct investment:** Promotion of foreign direct investment forms an integral part of India's economic policies. The role of foreign direct investment in accelerating economic growth is by way of infusion of capital, technology and modern management practices. The department has put in place a liberal and transparent foreign investment regime where most

activities are opened to foreign investments.

- **Disinvestment:** The process of disinvestment means selling off partially or wholly the assets of state owned undertakings to the private sector. Obviously, the private sector comes to influence or fully control the management and production decisions of the firms concerned.

At the commencement of the First Plan India had only 4 public sector enterprises with an asset of Rs 290 million. In spite of disinvestment, the PSEs had in 2000-01 assets worth Rs 2741140 million. They have over the years made significant contributions in lignite, coal, crude oil, zinc, aluminum, finished steel, heavy electricals, etc. In 2000-01 as many as 122 enterprises made a profit with top ten accounting for 70 per cent or Rs 196040 million. PSEs in petroleum, power and communications contributed 60 per cent of the total profit. Even after we adjust for the losses, the post-tax profit of all the PSEs is low and ways and methods can be

found to bring improvement after a thorough investigation into the factors responsible for the losses.

Conclusion

Fifteen years from now I don't see India floundering, but as a country with a high standard of living, providing world class services and perhaps membership in G-8. With the reforms process that are under way, 8-9 per cent growth rate will surely kick start the domestic markets.

India is ready to do everything that is required, to work as many miles as may be required, to make the vision of being a superpower a reality.

India will become a power driving a great international financial and economic institution. It will be great powers in the full sense of the word, shaping global politics. That, in a sense, is the opportunity in hand and also the challenge. The rest of the world looks at us with interest, with concern, but the decision is in our hands.

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कुछ लोग
लगातार समृद्धि
के द्वीप बनते जा
रहे हैं और वह भी
कहीं न कहीं आम
जनता की कीमत
पर...

“समझाए उनको कौन, नहीं भारत वैसा, दिल्ली के दर्पण में जैसा वह लगता है। भारत धूलों से भरा आसुओं से गीला, भारत अब भी आकुल विपत्ति के घेरे में”

दिनकर की यह पंक्तियां इस सच को सहजता से उजागर कर जाती हैं कि सम्पन्नताएं चकाचौंध, सजावट-बनावट तथा तेज रफ्तार चलने वाली दिल्ली की तस्वीर भारत के अन्य भागों से अलग है उनके रफ्तार में और विकास के पथ पर साथ कदम ताल करने की संभावनाओं में।

अगर थोड़ी ही दूरी पर सम्पन्नता विपन्नता में और चकाचौंध प्रकाश घुप अंधेरे में बदल जाता है तो इस प्रश्न का उठना लाजिमी है कि उत्थान कैसा, पतन कैसा। विकास का पैमाना क्या है? समाज कैसे विकास की मांग कर रहा है। विकास का मापदंड अगर ऊंची ईमारतें, सड़कों पर तेज रफ्तार गाड़ियां, शेयर बाजार का छलांगे लगाना, शापिंग माल संस्कृति का पनपना या हमारे मध्य वर्ग की खरी क्षमता का बढ़ना, जिसने अपनी जिन्दगी किशतों में जीनी सीख ली है और इसी कारणवश देश की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार बढ़ना है तो इसका हथ्र हम 2004 के आम चुनावों और आंध्र प्रदेश के विधान सभा चुनावों में देख चुके हैं।

इस बात से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता कि विगत पचास वर्षों में भारत ने अनेक क्षेत्रों में ऐसी उपलब्धियां और ऊचाईयां लुई हैं जो राष्ट्र के गौरव गाथा का बखान करती है। परन्तु जब राज्य इस बात पर इतराता है

—राहुल वर्मा
किरोड़ीमल महाविद्यालय, दिल्ली

कि गरीबी रेखा के नीचे (BPL) में रहने वालों की संख्या 39% से 26% हो गई है तो आश्चर्य होता है क्योंकि अगर आप उस 26% का हिस्सा है तो विकास का अर्थ ही बेमानी नजर आने लगता है। शायद टेलीफोन, गैस कनेक्शन के लिए लगने वाली कतारों का खत्म हो जाना उत्थान हो, परन्तु महात्मा गांधी ने जिस कतार के आखिरी व्यक्ति की बात की थी वह आज भी प्रतीक्षा सूची में खड़ा है।

कुछ लोग लगातार समृद्धि के द्वीप बनते जा रहे हैं और वह भी कहीं न कहीं आम जनता की कीमत पर जिसे अपनी आवाज भी सही जगह पहुंचानी नहीं आती। यह परिस्थिति खतरे का संकेत है। **शायद जीवन की सुविधाओं का बंटवारा ठीक नहीं।**

26 मार्च 2005 के इकनामिक टाईम्स (ET) की यह खबर “The bottom 400 Million is a disappointment and a social responsibility and while it harbours value, it is a difficult market to tap” उस संकेत के भयावह रूप को दिखाती है कि हमारा कल्याणकारी राज्य अपनी गरीब जनता से शर्मिंदा है क्योंकि वह बाजार के उपभोक्ता बनने की श्रेणी में नहीं।

शायद उत्थान-पतन के इस धुंध को कुछ उदाहरण ही साफ कर सके। भारत विगत कुछ वर्षों से विश्व पटल पर स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र “बेहतर और सस्ते इलाज” के लिए प्रसिद्धि पा रहा है परन्तु हमारे यहां अपने उन 400

लाख लोगों के लिए कोई ईलाज नहीं क्योंकि दवा या तो खाने से पहले या बाद में ली जाती है। एक ओर जहां राज्य द्वारा स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं का खर्च विश्व में सबसे कम है वहीं निजी देखभाल के लिए हमारे यहां सबसे ज्यादा खर्च होती है। पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश में बच्चे जापानी बीमारी से मर रहे थे और राज्य सरकार केन्द्र से राहत सामग्रियों को लेकर राजनीति कर रही होती है। भारत UN के स्वास्थ्य संकेतक सूची में 175 में से 171 वें स्थान पर है।

हरित क्रांति के बाद हम इस बात पर इतरा रहे हैं कि हमारा अनाज का उत्पादन बढ़ा है तो हमें इस बात को जानकर दुख होना चाहिए कि अनाज हमारे गोदामों में पड़े-पड़े सड़ता है फिर भी लोग भूख से मर रहे हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र के खाद्य एवं कृषि संगठन के “खाद्य असुरक्षा पर विश्व स्थिति रिपोर्ट 2003” (State of Food insecurity in world report 2003) के अनुसार विश्व के 19 देशों में भुखमरी से जूझ रहे लोगों की संख्या में जहां 800 लाख की कमी आई है, वहीं भारत में इस संख्या में 190 लाख का इजाफा हुआ है।

प्रतिभागों की इस देश में कमी नहीं है और इसका लोहा सारा विश्व मानता है। परन्तु शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में हम आज भी 4% GDP (सकल घरेलू उत्पाद) से कम खर्च कर रहे हैं।

इंदिरा गांधी ने 1981 में रोम में एक समारोह में कहा था कि एक मिसाइल (Intercontinental Ballistic) के खर्च में 65000 प्राइमरी स्कूल खोले जा सकते हैं। फिर भी हम बच्चों की शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य के ऊपर रक्षा खर्चों को प्राथमिकता दे रहे हैं। 53% बच्चे 12वीं कक्षा पहुंचते-पहुंचते शिक्षा छोड़ देते हैं परन्तु हमारा 1000 करोड़ का Edusat उपग्रह अंतरिक्ष में है।

जब यहां के समाचार चैनल लक्ष्मी मित्तल की बेटी की शादी के खर्च का विश्लेषण कर रही थी तो अन्नतपुर (आन्ध्र प्रदेश) और वायानाड (केरल) में किसान पिता इसलिए आत्महत्या कर रहे थे कि वह शादी का खर्च नहीं उठा सकते और बेटियां इसलिए क्योंकि वह अपने को पिता की मौत का

जिम्मेदार मानती थी। विकास का एक और उदाहरण देखिए एक तरफ वजन घटाने वाली दवा के नुकसान (Side effects) को लेकर लोग क्लीनिक दौड़ रहे थे तो दूसरी ओर वो लोग कतार में थे जो ये चाहते थे कि उनका वजन और न घटे क्योंकि वो 1991 में औसतन 510 ग्राम दैनिक दाल और खाद्यान्न खाते थे परन्तु 97 में उन्हें मात्र 461 ग्राम मिल रही थी।

मर्सिडीज जैसी गाड़ी खरीदने के लिए बैंक 6 प्रतिशत ब्याज के हिसाब से ऋण दे रहे हैं वहीं किसानों से ट्रैक्टर के लिए दुगना ब्याज वसूला जाता है। औद्योगिक क्षेत्र ही शायद सारे उत्थान की दशा दिशा तय कर रहे हैं। पर यह कैसा विकास कि कर्मचारियों की छंटनी की जा रही है और विरोध प्रदर्शन पर पुलिस बर्बरता पूर्वक लाठियां चलाती है। प्रश्न यह नहीं है कि तकनीक के इस युग में मानव श्रम घट रहा है; प्रश्न यह है कि छोटे गए कर्मचारियों के लिए वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था क्यों नहीं की गई और प्रधानमंत्री का निवेशकों को दिया गया आश्वासन कि “निवेशकों को एक घटना से हत्सोहित नहीं होना चाहिए”। यह संकेत साफ था कि राज्य की नजर में निवेशक ज्यादा महत्वपूर्ण हैं। आलम यह है कि तमिलनाडु में 276 अस्पतालों पर 1413 पुलिस स्टेशन हैं।

आजाद भारत में अधिकारों की जब बात की जाती है तो ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि आजादी तीन थके हुए रंगों का नाम है।

1. सती प्रथा पर अंकुश लगा तो आपसी प्रेम करने वालों को या सरेआम फांसी का फरमान जारी किया जाता है या फिर तेजाब।
2. एक दलित महिला जब लोकतंत्र में आस्था रखते हुए वोट देने जाती है तो उसे गांव में पीटते हुए नंगा घुमाया जाता है और फिर सामूहिक बलात्कार।
3. जनसंख्या तरक्की कर रही है तो फिर पुरुष और महिला का अनुपात क्यों कम होता जा रहा है। 81 के आंकड़े में जो पुरुष महिला अनुपात 962:1000 का था आज वह 927:1000 रह गया है।

53% बच्चे 12वीं कक्षा पहुंचते-पहुंचते शिक्षा छोड़ देते हैं परन्तु हमारा 1000 करोड़ का Edusat उपग्रह अंतरिक्ष में है।

शिक्षा जिसका
उद्देश्य मात्र
आजीविका और
साक्षरता वृद्धि दर
पर केन्द्रित न हो
अपितु चेतना और
विवेक का निर्माण
हो।

4. औरंगाबाद जिले में एक विधवा मां को अपना मृत बच्चा घर में इसलिए दफन करना पड़ता है कि पंचायत ने उसे “समाज निकाला” घोषित कर दिया है।

5. हम एक धर्म निरपेक्ष राष्ट्र हैं परन्तु दंगों को भड़काने के दिशा निर्देश सरकारी दफ्तरों से निकलते हैं और अभी होने वाले बिहार चुनावों में एक धर्म निरपेक्ष दल अपने प्रत्याशियों की जाति आधारित सूची जारी करती है।

आंकड़ों तथा घटनाओं का सिलसिला शायद चलता रहे और हर एक नये मुद्दे के उठते ही विवश और आहत जनता अपने नीति निर्माताओं को प्रश्न के कटघरे में खड़ा करना चाहे और दिनकर की यह पंक्तियां शायद परिस्थिति का वर्णन करती है और अधर में लटके उनके भविष्य की झलक दिखाती है।

“रेशमी कलम से भाग्य लेख लिखने वालों तुम भी अभाव से ग्रस्त हो रोये हो? बीमार किसी बच्चे की दवा जुटाने में तुम भी घर भर क्या पेट बांधकर सोये हो।”

शायद अनेक क्षेत्रों की उपलब्धियों को नजरअंदाज करने से निराशावादी की श्रेणी मिले। सटीक उदाहरण कि ऐसे लोग। “गिलास आधा खाली है” कहते हैं, परन्तु यह जानना आवश्यक है कि गिलास भरने के लिए, गिलास आधा खाली क्यों है। हाशिये पर जिंदगी जी रहे लोगों की मजबूरियों को जानने की, उनके निवारण के प्रयास करने की।

समस्याओं की कतार में समाधान ढूँढना होगा।

सामाजिक अंतर्विरोधों के द्वन्द से पनपे विचार और विवेक यह दर्शाते हैं कि वर्ग, लिंग और जाति पर आधारित यह सामाजिक संरचना ही गरीबी, भ्रष्टाचार और निरक्षरता के मुख्य स्रोत हैं।

असंभव कुछ भी नहीं। आवश्यकता है ऐसे दर्शन की जो वर्तमान

व्यवस्था का काया कल्प तो करे परन्तु आर्थिक, राजनैतिक और सामाजिक समता का सपना जो हमें विरासत में मिला था उसे बिखेर न दे। आवश्यकता है इच्छाशक्ति की, एक शुरूआत की, उससे जुड़ी कुछ तिथियों की, गतिविधियों की, जो वर्तमान व्यवस्था में हस्तक्षेप करते हुए भविष्य का नया रूप रचने में सक्रिय हो।

इसलिए मेरी कल्पना में गुणवत्ता बनाम गुणात्मकता की शिक्षाई बहस को आगे बढ़ा आज की शिक्षा व्यवस्था में समुचित बदलाव लाकर आज के भारत को बदल सकते हैं। शिक्षा जिसका उद्देश्य मात्र आजीविका और साक्षरता वृद्धि दर पर केन्द्रित न हो अपितु चेतना और विवेक का निर्माण हो। शिक्षा जो समता मूलक समाज की स्थापना की नींव 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 चाहूंगा। ऐसे निजी शिक्षण संस्थाओं पर रोक लगाई जाए जहां पर एकलव्य का कोई स्थान नहीं। नवोदय विद्यालयों का दायरा बढ़ाकर उनकी युद्धस्तर पर स्थापना की जाए।

जहां एक रूपता हो, जहां क्षेत्र के आलीशान बंगलों से लेकर झुग्गियों के बच्चे साथ पढ़ेंगे।

1. मेरिट सर्वांगीण विकास पर आधारित होगी। खेलकूद का भी आधारभूत ढांचा तैयार किया जाए।

2. कक्षा 10 में एक अनिवार्य प्रतिभा आकलन परीक्षा हो जो छात्रों की रुचि चिन्हित कर सही दिशा में प्रोत्साहित करे।

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

1. शिक्षा जो प्रतियोगात्मक के साथ-साथ सहयोगात्मक भी हो जो मात्र शास्त्री भवन की वातानुकूलित कमरों की फाइलों में बंद होकर न रह जाये।
2. राजनैतिक दलों को इस बात पर सहमत किया जाए कि शिक्षा के केन्द्र और पाठ्यक्रम उनके स्वार्थों और Propaganda का अखाड़ा न बने।
3. शिक्षा जो अधिकारों के प्रति सचेत और दायित्वों के प्रति जागरूक भी बनाए।
4. शिक्षा जो “श्रम को सम्मान” दे और “कर्म ही पूजा” का मूलमंत्र सिखाए।
5. UNESCO की विश्व शिक्षा रिपोर्ट 2000 के अनुसार केवल 6.9% भारतीय उच्च शिक्षा ग्रहण कर रहे हैं। शिक्षा का यह कुलीन वर्गीय चेहरा हमारे (Welfare state) कल्याणकारी राज्य के दावे पर चोट करता है।
6. विश्वविद्यालय मात्र डिग्रियां बांटने की मशीन न बनने पाये। पारम्परिक विषयों को व्यावसायिक विषयों में कम न आंका जाए। पारम्परिक विश्वविद्यालय बिना कार्य संस्कृति और व्यावसायिक विद्यालय बिना सामाजिक सामंजस्य के कार्य कर रहे हैं।
7. 64 की शिक्षा नीति के अनुसार हमें सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (GDP) का 6% हिस्सा शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में प्रयोग करना चाहिए परन्तु हम आज भी 4% के आंकड़े को भी न छू पाये।

इसलिए -

1. शिक्षा प्राप्त करना,
2. काम करने के अधिकार को मौलिक अधिकारों की सूची में डाला जाये। इन सब नियमों को जब हम कसौटी पर कसेंगे तब यह एक जनक्रान्ति (Human Revolution) होगी।

और फिर

1. प्राथमिकताओं के अधिकार पर क्रियान्वयन होगा।
2. नागरिक अधिक जागरूक बनेंगे।
3. व्यवस्था की पुनःसंरचना होगी।

युवा हमारी पूंजी है, ऊर्जा स्रोत है। उन्हें चिंतन और उद्यम की सीख दी जाये। इस संसाधन को उत्पादक बल में परिवर्तित किया जाए जो राष्ट्र निर्माता हो, “बलि का बकरा” ढूंढने के बजाये जिम्मेवारी अपने कांधों पर लें।

भारत तब तक विकसित नहीं होगा जब तक गांवों को जोड़ा नहीं जाता। कृषि व्यवस्था पर समुचित ध्यान नहीं दिया जाता।

सारी समस्या चक्रीय है। अतः आज का युवा “सिगमुन्ड फ्राउड” के सिद्धान्त को सत्य मान बैठा है कि एक स्थिति के बाद आप किसी व्यवस्था में मात्र मूकदर्शक बने रह सकते हैं। इन दो अरब आंखों के सपने को दिशा देनी होगी। सशक्त और संगठित राष्ट्र के लिए हमें वो हीरा बनना होगा जिसे रोशनी भी पार न कर सके।

इस संसाधन को
उत्पादक बल में
परिवर्तित किया
जाए जो राष्ट्र
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कांधों पर लें।

...that the country once thought to be just a place for the 'snake charmers' is making its presence felt in the land of 'elephants'.

Contemporary India with a scientist President and an economist Prime Minister is very successfully treading the fast track of development. Starting from an utterly ruined and exploited country under the rule of the haughty Britishers who sponged away the India wealth, the story of India's success is one of the proverbial rise from 'rags to riches'.

India's development within a short span of time, to the level of a country which on its own conducted nuclear test, joining the elite club of nuclear powers, and now becoming a rightful contender for getting a permanent seat in UN Security Council, speaks volumes about India's success.

Statistics and facts bear a testimony to this, that the country once thought to be just a place for the 'snake charmers' is making its presence felt in the land of 'elephants'. In fact, India is flourishing in the real sense, catching the imagination of the world and thus causing blinking of the eyes of westerners who are awestruck at the sudden metamorphosis of this sleeping giant.

When Kanwal Sibal, a retired foreign secretary says, "there is little doubt that India became a major player in

—Syed Tahseen Raza
Mohsinul Mulk Hall, Aligarh

the international checker board. It forced the world to engage with India on an entirely new basis," there is no exaggeration in it. The truth of this statement is vindicated by the Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Juan Yew, who says, "China and India will shake the world..., and in terms of global corporate presence and representation, India is ahead of China."

India has arrived on the world market with a bang – five lakh engineers, 2.5 lakh doctors and 75 lakh graduates.

Goldman Sach's BRIC report sees India as the third largest economy in the world by 2050. Another report says that by 2020 only, India will be the fourth largest economy.

All is going well for India now – an improved investment climate, high economic growth, a young population (70% population below 34 years of age) and above all positive attitude of people. India is now among one of the best performing economies of the world in terms of annual growth rate of Gross Domestic Product.

Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman Aditya Birla Group says, "we have emerged stronger, fitter and a leader in many ways.

I believe we are at an inflection point, past consolidation into a phase of growth not just incremental but accelerated”.

The fact that our foreign exchange reserve crossed 1 \$ billion, reflects the growing confidence of investors in India. The companies of India netted over Rs. 70000 crore in exports when the global economy was seething in 2002-03. There are 16 companies whose exports net over Rs. 1000 crore, 15 companies export goods worth Rs. 500 crore and 150 compnaies which earn over Rs.100 crore in foreign exchange. The FORBE'S list has included 18 Indian companies under its list.

Noting these positive developments, the **US National Intelligence Council** in its report has predicted that *India will become global player in the 21st century*. For the first time India has entered the ranks of the world's tenth largest economies.

The **World Bank** has described India as an **Asian Giant** and its report mentions - 'This country rose form 12th to 10th in dollar term between 2002-04, its G.D.P. overtaking Korea and Mexico.'

The economy of India has **grown by more than 7% in the past two years.**

Apart from economic advancement, the performance of India in political sphere is also praiseworthy. The present Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh has successfully come from two foreign trips. In France the Prime Minister very competently *'leveraged India's new economic clout into advancing the vital strategic objective of breaking the restrictive Nuclear Suppliers Groups.*

In US, he very intelligently coaxed President Bush to work for giving legal status to India in the nuclear powers club, in return of giving, “voluntary” right of inspection of only the civilian nuclear facilities to the international atomic watchdog I.A.E.A.

Those who allege India to have become a party to the US unilateralism in view of India's voting in Iran's case, alongside U.S., must remember that India remained on its principle and didn't join US on its war against Iraq inspite of enormous US pressure. It out-rightly rejected this proposal. This bears ample proof that India has its independent foreign policy. It has matured politically and has now become very realistic in its approach. It takes decision according to whichever way suits best for the national interest. Now there is no place for misplaced idealism or shibboleth of third worldism.

Showing utmost political maturity, India shoved aside decades of sloth and signed major agreement with China, a country earlier thought of as a backstabber and talk with it was a big no.

Our country has now refused to be trapped hopelessly in the remains of a bad yesterday, proving once again that this is a nation hardened by history, that it suffers only to renew itself the other day and that it keeps pace with the changing needs so as to be in consonance with the ever changing time. Talks with Pakistan, restoration of the Muzaffarabad bus service, the historic exchange of prisoners etc are the cases in point.

Another important factor which radiates the flourishing of India is its successful and smooth functioning of democracy. Right from its start, it allowed Universal Adult Franchise, a

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Problems do occur but have resulted in stronger identities and a larger Indian consciousness. Nativism is now giving place to Indianism.

unique achievement in itself. Many scholars at that time predicted that a country as poor, illiterate and diverse as India, could not survive on Universal Adult Franchise but succeeding years proved them wrong.

These days the general election in India is the largest organized human event in history so much so that Indian Election experts are invited by America.

In spite of being not very affluent, the wisdom of Indian electorate has been proven time and again. "The Economist" of London has very rightly made an apt comment regarding Indian electorate that, "*the Indians have more political wisdom per thousand calories than any other people*".

Prof Lani Gunier of Havard Law school says, "*The best barometer to measure the health of a society is to look at the condition of its minorities who are like the coal minor's canary... the first to notice toxic gases in coal mines.*" Seeing with this perspective also, Indians electorate's performance is quite good. They discarded the NDA under whose aegis Gujarat cauldron of 2002 took place, not with landing the hooplah of India shining. Communal forces have been out-rightly discarded and secularism is on its hold. At present the sovereign head of India is a Muslim and the Prime Minister is a Sikh both from minority community.

Social conditions are also developing fast. The number of middle class enjoying a good standard of living is growing at a rapid pace. The hope for an egalitarian society is fulfilling its dream as **today we have 13% scheduled caste grade I officers in the I.A.S. climbing from less than 1% in the early 50's.** The Indian diaspora with their commitment and hardwork are also making India proud.

The per capita availability of grain and cloth is greater than before and health care is better. Now even foreigners are coming to India for cheaper medical treatment.

Today India is for more integrated than it was at 1947. Problems do occur but have resulted in stronger identities and a larger Indian consciousness. Nativism is now giving place to Indianism.

Disasters and calamities do not dumbstruck us. We have defiantly faced the havocs of nature like the earthquake or tsunami on national level. The whole country unites as a family in giving succour and solace to the victims.

In the field of education also, India is progressing. *The literacy rate in 2001 reached 64.8% from 52.21% in 1991. This increase of 12.5% during this period is the highest increase in any decade.*

It is also an achievement that the rate of growth in literacy is more in rural areas than in urban areas. *The gap in male - female literacy rate has decreased from 24.84% in 1991 to 21.60 in 2001.*

In higher studies the IIT's, AIIMS and IIM's of India could compete with the best institutions of the world.

Recently Times Higher Education Supplement ranked the IIT's as 3rd in all Technological Universities of the world.

Seeing the enormous talent of Indian students the European Union has announced **100 Erasmus Mundus Scholarship for Indian students** which was previously offered to European students only.

Contemporary India—Flourishing or Floundering

In scientific, technological and bio medical research India has made a mark. The launching of EDUSAT – a satellite purely for educational purposes marks a great lead forward in the area of satellite education. Space technology has also got a boost.

Culturally India is witnessing a great renaissance. Indian music, dance and various performing art have blossomed in the last 50 years. Now these have greater audience and their appeal is becoming universal. Language of India has seen resurgence. Indian writing in English, like that of Arundhati

Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri etc has been acclaimed in the English speaking world.

In the field of sports and entertainment also India is shining. Sania Mirza, Lender Paes, Sachin Tendulkar, Vishwanath Anand and Shekhar Kapoor, Amitabh Bacchan, Aishwarya Rai, Shah Rukh Khan are the bright Indian faces in the world arena.

All the above mentioned points emphatically substantiate the fact that the contemporary India is really flourishing.

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Moral Policing by State: Limits of Reasons

—Aditya Mahajan
St. Stephens College, Delhi

One man's terrorist, is another man's freedom fighter. Why? Since, what is moral for one is immoral for the other. This is the fate of a loose, highly subjective and personal term called morals. The repercussions are made worse when 'we' feel the need for a moral policeman. What's even better: we have a constitutional provision for it.

Morals, per se, aren't good or bad. It's their selective and opportunity-based use that distorts them. Let me remind you that the Society evolved first, then the governments. So today, is the State trying to challenge the intelligentsia of its own source? Had our morals been faulty, the civilizations would have vanished even before the idea of States was conceived. What is the State today: a conglomerate of senior citizens, with greying hair and protruding bellies, with ulterior religious and political affiliations and a point of view which, most certainly, finds an opposition in their own community. People who are unable to tackle the challenges of their own lives, but are more than active in the social circuit as 'preachers', form the State. So, for me, the State is in an abysmal state! My reservations are quite simple. When someone preaches a particular culture/ ideology, then that person should himself have imbibed all those qualities and act on them. In today's times, I fail to identify any such 'messiah' of culture and morals, who has no

ulterior motives, or has pursued his utopian ideals.

Consider the recent shutting down of dance bars in Mumbai. I strongly believe that the reasons were more political, less moral. The moral angle here was that the girls were earning their bread through amoral means. Remedy: instead of the State ensuring that they come out of the pit, by giving them jobs or vocational training, the State shut the bars. Result: most of these bar girls have been caught in prostitution rackets in the National Capital. So, the 'cause' which propelled the government to take this action has quite noticeably backfired in its face.

The question arises: Who will guard the moral fabric of the society? My vision on this issue is three fold. We first need to identify the dichotomy in our own society in making choices, and then we need to closely examine certain problems that have plagued our society for ages and whether they could be solved if we dropped this guise of morals. And finally, I will summarize my vision by giving you an affordable solution. Thus, the main tenets of my arguments would be based on:

- a) The right to do or to do it right
- b) Contemporary India: Flourishing or floundering?

People who are unable to tackle the challenges of their own lives, but are more than active in the social circuit as 'preachers', form the State.

When the society as a whole judges our actions on the basis of morals vs rationality, I have seen that the people who have managed both together have succeeded.

c) We have not inherited the earth from our fathers; we have borrowed it from our children.

It doesn't require a genius to realize that the above mentioned points are the other motions for the contest. Its not that I had any paucity of points, it's just that they followed my rational chain of thought. The common thread that connects all of them is made of morals.

The Right to do or to Do it Right

When people talk about honesty, recollect the cliché: Corruption is a way of life and an honest man is a liability. It's not that I want everyone to be dishonest. It's just that people should take their call. For most people, the above is a choice in favour of one against the other. I however believe that the two can co-exist. In fact, when the society as a whole judges our actions on the basis of morals vs rationality, I have seen that the people who have managed both together have succeeded. The cases in point could be many industrialists, artists and people of critical acclaim, who had allegations of moral compromise against them, but eventually over shadowed these accusations through their hard work, perseverance and much-deserved success.

The moral angle for the 'Casting Couch' has raised many a questions. I certainly believe that it is only your talent that can give you real success. So the people who were not duped, but made an informed choice and accepted it, satisfied both sides of the argument. They were street smart in getting their first break, and were honest to their talent, which they wanted to project, one way or the other. The undeserving was eliminated automatically.

The moral issues pertaining to the on going debate on

'brain-drain' also falls under the same category. The State, and its constituents, believes that it is un-patriotic and highly selfish of the people to leave their country in search of better job opportunities, quality of life, security of future and other such aspirations. My question is simple: are people who live in this country, contribute not a penny, criticize the system and do nothing more than add to its woes, any more patriotic? The people who leave the country are both honest to their talent and rational in their decisions. They know that with their potential, they can do far better, than in a system where work ethics are again a subject of debate. These people, who otherwise would be just another tax payer (or maybe not even that), work abroad, chip in a part of their savings in the form of FDI's and FII's, an integral part of our economy. So the resources that the government spent on them, eventually, turn into a lucrative investment.

Contemporary India: Flourishing and Floundering: Selective Development

My heart fills with pride when I notice the bull-run in the market, a thriving GDP, favorable demographic shift and an optimistic chance of India making it to the coveted Security Council. But then, when I read about farmer suicides, dowry deaths, minor molestation and many other such disturbing events, I wonder whether the dream-budget is more of a dream, less of a budget. Contemporary India is not what the Page 3 reflects; it's still very agrarian, fragmented and illiterate. The country might become a super power in another 20 years, but that's not contemporary. Thus, again, when people, who come from the innumerable stratas of society, adjudicate on the basis of morals, issues that have plagued our society for ages will never find their solutions.

The pseudo-moralists claim that the commodification of human body for sexual gratification is amoral. Ask them what they have done to help the cause, and they look the other way. Issues surrounding legalization of prostitution are favored in the light of rationality; opposed on grounds of morals. When we see a teacher, a doctor, an engineer, why can't we see the prostitute as another professional? Legalizing it will help eliminate the pimp, make it more of a choice than coercion, bring them in main stream society and will help the NGOs to openly give them STD information. We, social stalwarts can visit them in the dark, but refuse to treat them as humans. I fail to understand this hypocrisy.

On the issue of abortion, euthanasia and cloning, the moralists believe that they tantamount to playing God; which is amoral. They don't feel the immense pain the patient is going through, with no propensity of recovery. In most cases, even the families want the doctor to pull the plug. The case of Venkatesh is one such example. As for abortion, it should completely be the mothers' choice, whether she wants the baby or not, after all, the State isn't going to run her family. And, an unwanted child can never have a normal growth. Cloning, which holds astronomical potential, is again put on the back burner because of the same ill reasoning.

Censorship in media is again a 'filter', which is monitored by a panel with 'superior' morals, who feel that the people, who run the second largest democracy in the world, will lose their rationality when they see the visual truth.

We Have Not Inherited the Earth from Our Fore-Fathers; We Have Borrowed It from our Children

I couldn't agree more. I clearly remember that our fore-fathers were apes. I certainly don't want to inherit that aspect of their life. As for my children, I want them to inherit a progressive civilization, not a regressive potpourri of issues. Most of the issues mentioned above could have been conclusively dealt with had we not codified our morals. For tomorrow, we are passing the same ailments to our children, which we should have solved. We, as the custodians of the heritage, have a lot to answer.

The much awaited solution is simple: stop waiting for someone to tell you what is right or wrong. Be your own moral policeman. Gandhiji's talisman shouldn't be forgotten as a page in the NCERT. Trust your instincts, rationality and enact your role in this social globalization. Until we take the responsibility on our shoulders, stop pinning the faults on the government, we can never succeed. Show our conscious first, State later, that we can carry off our attire without looking vulgar. Give other alternatives also a chance. Let us grow in the atmosphere of education, not mere literacy, for even an illiterate can have strength of character, which a graduate might lack. Lets us not misinterpret religion, or get foxed by the 'guardians' of culture. A policeman enforces something we have to involuntarily accept. Let's make the morals a choice, which collude with the holistic picture. The State should suggest, not enforce. The senators with the grey might not always be wrong. I have no greys; but I know I'm right. This is my vision, guided by a proportional set of morals.

Let's make the morals a choice, which collude with the holistic picture. The State should suggest, not enforce.

The state makes use of certain methods to command the obedience of citizens that really is his primary question; why do citizens obey laws of the state?

“...that which concerns principles of right and wrong is a moral.”
- dictionary definition, “moral”

Policing through Morals

One of the first things that are taught to a political science student is that morals are not consistent through space and time and also that they are NOT enforceable by law. Morals in fact are nothing but a set of guidelines or conventions that are accepted by the bulk of the society and their violation would only lead to criticism and not physical or monetary punishment.

Policing; enforcement; regulation is an act of making people conform to a certain principle; mostly laws but in some cases even dogmas, doctrines and morals. Thus, here lies the connection. Policing through morals (moral policing) is a way of regulating the mass to conform to a certain set of morals.

Now, to a true blooded liberal, conformity is not the best thing in society. I, for example, being one, would not be very keen on this idea of conformity for I believe in liberty, individualism and rationality. Every individual is rational and has the right to make her/his own choices. And the state must

respect this liberty possessed by every individual and must maintain minimal interference. So really, for me, what's all this talk about moral policing?

Althusser's View: State Apparatuses

This entire issue of moral policing reminds me a lot of Louis Althusser, who spoke extensively about Coercive/ Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus. According to him, the state makes use of certain methods to command the obedience of citizens that really is his primary question; why do citizens obey laws of the state? He explains the Repressive State Apparatus as a state that can enforce behaviour directly, such as the police, and the criminal justice system and the prison system. Through these “apparatuses” the state has the power to force you “physically” to behave. On the other hand, he describes the Ideological State Apparatus as institutions that generate ideologies, which we as individuals act in accordance with. This is done through schools, religion, the family, legal systems, politics, arts, etc. They inculcate in us ideas and values, which we as individuals inevitably start to, believe (or don't believe).

—Nishtha Kumar
Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi

So when we talk of moral policing, we can't help but refer to Althusser's unique observation of an Ideological State Apparatus. As I read on what Althusser had to say about this concept, I found my self gravely disagreeing with him when he spoke of his Ideological State Apparatus being found in societies governed by capitalism. In my opinion, capitalism does nothing of the sort. It is a mere economic set up. And this set up is based on liberal ideas and in particular the concept of a free market. So ideologically controlling people to conform in a certain way is out of the question.

Perhaps I am going about this in the wrong way; in which case, let me examine what exactly is meant by moral policing; what exactly happens to a country if the state administers moral policing; and what are the reasons for having such a state tool.

My Analysis

Morals are what societies are based on. As the word's literal definition iterates, morals concern right and wrong. They are those unwritten customs and practices and conventions that everyone is expected to follow because the majority does so, or as the Marxists put it, what the minority wants for the majority to follow. This raises the question; who decides what is right and what is wrong?

Isn't every member of society an individual? And as such an individual, does she or does he not possess rationality? Why must he then adopt morals set up by someone else? Of course, these questions would be the perfect queue for the Communitarians to step up and say that humans are all linked together. They would argue that what humans perceive as right and wrong is in the context of their own society and the relationships that are formed within it.

I firmly stand by my belief that individuals must be given the freedom to do what they perceive to be good for them; for they are rational, have the ability to make rational choices and therefore are bound to make them in general. No one should coerce them, directly or indirectly, to follow certain customs, which they have not rationally decided on. But please don't get me wrong. I am not saying that there should be anarchy. Of course, there will be laws in society backed by legal proceedings. And these laws will maintain a state of status quo. Liberty is for all, but it should not come at the cost of chaos that could lead to a disruption of the system and an overall disruption of peace in general.

Moral policing thus entails the state wanting to make people follow a certain set of morals. In a way making sure that no one goes against those morals. This sort of set up brings with it the notion that the individual is the means and the state is the end. For the state is merely working as a moral police to meet its own ends. That appears to be the most logical explanation for having moral policing as a tool. Why not start distributing mind-numbing drugs while we're at it? Surely thoughtless drones that all exist in sync with each other form a far better society. No one thinks on their own, no one acts on their own and no one steps up to question.

We need to realize that a direct objective of moral policing is nothing but restraint. It binds the individual. It prevents one to think out of the box, for the state makes sure that the individual is following certain conventions which it has indirectly set as the norm. And perhaps the state might also subversively work towards imparting punishment through indirect means. And the final stage in such a state would be the complete elimination of the space in which one can revolt by completely taking over the citizens' consciences.

Surely thoughtless drones that all exist in sync with each other form a far better society. No one thinks on their own, no one acts on their own and no one steps up to question.

Morality is important in society, but like all things it should stay within its limits, which need to be well defined when it comes to social dynamics.

Hegemony would be the most probably consequence of moral policing of the state. I am reminded of Gramsci, who talked about different types of Hegemony in his prison notebooks. Hegemony is a situation in which the dominated accept their domination. However, after attaining consent, the ruler tends to exercise power without question. Common examples of the same are found in the existing patriarchal set ups. With moral policing, eventually a citizen will fall to a state where he accepts that the ongoing moral policing of the state is the way society should be structured and that there is no other better option that should be pondered over. The space to rebel the norm is completely annihilated.

I'm Not Convinced

So, if in every way that I look at it, moral policing does not appear to be the "right" option, then why must any state adopt such a concept? The reasons presented thus forth were some. But none too convincing to me as a liberal. One argument stated that people don't always know what is right for them; they tend to make choices which bring only short term gain, while in the long run they prove to be mistakes. Another argument stated that people must be directed to follow certain morals which prove to be best for common good. A third argument stated something similar; morality needs to be regulated so that people's actions conform in such a way as to lead to the progress of the state through unhampered growth.

Each of these arguments seems rather weak for all talk about curtailment of liberty. I might seem to be too stuck on the idea of liberty and rationality, but I must assure you that these two ideas form the basis for a "good" life. Without the

acceptance that an individual possesses both of them, there would be no progress possible in the human race. They are the two stand points in an individual's life.

Moral policing thus entails with it several limits on it reasons. It focuses only on the society as a whole in turn undermining the significance of the individual. Please don't get me wrong. Group welfare is important but not at such a high cost; individual freedom should always remain the primary principle.

Conclusion

Morality is important in society, but like all things it should stay within its limits, which need to be well defined when it comes to social dynamics. There are enough laws in the state which ensure peace and prevent chaos. But they remain within their limits. Using the tool of moral policing tends to work outside the arena of morality and ends up transforming into a mutated concept of the same. And often these states transform into different setups, which are completely devoid of the original meaning for which they were set up, like the Theocratic state, the Militaristic state, Dictatorships, etc. I am not implying that the above mentioned state structures are wrong; I'm merely trying to reiterate the fact that they are types where the amount of individual liberty guaranteed is next to none.

Besides, only in an environment of true freedom, can an individual such as myself, wish to truly express myself through forums such as these.

—*Ruchika Mohanty*
Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi

I read the topic a couple of days ago and it just set me thinking. What is moral policing? Which all aspects of our lives does it translate into? What is its impact in the public sphere? And frankly most importantly does it shadow my personal life?

“An actress in Chennai (who by the way was so popular that there was a temple built in her name) expresses her opinion about pre marital sex and the state steps in.”

“Girls must not wear the colour red to class in one of the well known colleges of Mumbai because it distracts the boys. Girls must not make overt or covert sexual advances at boys even if they are their boyfriends/husbands, because ‘good girls’ do not do so. The boys who sing in public are ‘lafangas’-hooligans”

“The president of a very powerful nation in the west insists that the national HIV prevention policy take the stand that youngsters must wait to get married to have sexual intercourse, instead of popularizing condoms because that’s how a ‘cultured society’ should behave”

“And I- a girl, must not write so openly about ‘sex’ and ‘sexuality’.”

“the faculty in my college wanted to scan the essay before we send it in for some inexplicable reason.”

“I have had to explicitly steer clear of names in all my examples and will continue to do so in the entire essay for fear of upsetting the moral sensibilities of the readers”.

So lets rephrase the questions, which aspect of our lives does moral policing not spill into?

The proponents of the idea of moral policing have arguments in favour of their stand. They enlist on board this bandwagon one of the greatest social and political critics, not really of our times, but great all the same. I heard them talk of the Hobbes theory of social contract. Now I’m not the greatest student of the theory but I do believe the adapted version goes something like this....

We exist in societies and not as individuals because people have certain needs - economic, cultural, physical, psychological, which cannot be fulfilled without a symbiotic arrangement. Thus human beings by mutual consent are living in the society. The society is therefore a loosely held congregation and each person has his individual space as long

We exist in societies and not as individuals because people have certain needs- economic, cultural, physical, psychological...

The argument is against the rules that do not sustain the test of logic and reason- the ones which “are the way they are”.

as his individual space does not encroach upon the rights of another.

Good. Which means that we are allowed to “be” as long as we are not getting into each other’s way. This obviously implies that there will be and has to be a certain amount of curtailment of freedom. For example, I cannot claim the right to run wild and butcher people simply because it is my right to “be”.

My submission is, what gives the state (in which the society divest its power) to tell me which sex to have intercourse with (referring to the Indian Penal Code’s provision to imprison somebody who indulges in intercourse ‘against the laws of nature’) or for the state to set a limit on the type of education that will be considered by it as formal, or the society’s right to inform me of the length of my skirt or the court’s right to judge a woman’s character as moral or immoral, when the question under consideration is the violation of her physical and spiritual space by a person without her consent, the constitution’s right to enforce a law that judges marital rape as a null concept solely because the relationship between the man and the woman is one which is sanctified by the society and the religion.

My argument is not against societal rules; my argument is against the societal rules that are established as unquestionable and absolute. The argument is against the rules that do not sustain the test of logic and reason- the ones which “are the way they are”.

Now coming to the practical translation of my arguments. I will be substantiating my stand by giving a few examples from our own societal set up, which I feel are situations that raise

myriad questions regarding the very concept of morality.

Let me start with an incident which I’m sure is still fresh in the mind of many, the famous case of a ward boy raping one of the nurses in a hospital so brutally that apart from the apparent sexual damage and emotional damage, he ripped one of her eyes out. Now keeping in mind the healthy concept of censoring oneself, I will refrain from giving a more detailed and gory description of the damage. After a two year long legal battle, which I’m sure wasn’t the happiest time of the woman’s life, our excellent young man suggests that he will marry the poor “victim”. How nice! The court passes the suggestion on to the victim with a benevolent smile. Albeit the victim refused, that does not dissolve the court of the absurd moralistic suggestion that it may just not be such a bad idea to live in “holy matrimony” with the perpetrator of this heinous crime. Courts as a rule are expected to steer clear of out of court settlements in criminal trials for fear of coercion but purely because in this case the “chastity” of the woman was in question the court seemed to have made this exception.

Let us move on to examples that are not one off in their nature. Consider the family welfare policy that India has been following for the past many years. Let me start by stating that for the past 7 years the Indian medical fraternity has been well aware that the transmission of HIV/AIDS has started vertically i.e. from the high risk group of truck drivers, sex workers, gay men to the general public. In fact according to the 2002 NACO report 37% of the people living with HIV/AIDS are women of which 1% are sex workers. Obviously most women have contracted HIV from their husbands. the state policy family welfare continued until very recently to promote sterilization as a method of contraception instead of use of condoms. Condoms if popularized would be the best method

for the general public to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, STDs and HIV/AIDS. Yet condoms are something, which have largely been kept under wraps. In fact in the early 1990's when the first state sponsored condom advertisement was released, I'm not sure how many people remember it, but I distinctly remember it being so ambiguous. It was an ad for "nirodh" which I understood 7 years later in class 12 was a condom and understood recently in a "sex education" workshop was a protective method. Before that I never had the courage to ask and the advertisement, frankly two young people walking hand in hand into the sun, doesn't tell the viewer diddlysquat. On the other hand the kamasutra advertisement which I'm sure if I had seen would probably have told me a little earlier exactly what this object which is pretty mush treated as "you know who" is. Had contraception been a concept more widely understood by men and women alike would probably have saved our society from the pandemic we are now faced with. The other element closely linked to the topic of the essay which has hampered the HIV prevention drive in India is the inability of the drive to divorce the movement from moral judgments. "Its ok for a sex worker to have HIV. She deserves it. It is ok for her clients to have HIV, they are immoral men. And what can the poor wife of this immoral man do after all." If the drive only left out the

"immorality" and armed the infected and affected with the power to negotiate their safety.

I understand that the issue isn't as simple as I am making it out to be. But I also understand that it isn't all that complicated. For many years now organizations, individuals have been asking for the establishment of a more gender equitable society. The only way I feel the same can be achieved is by ensuring that all institutions of the society steer clear of moral evaluations. Which means that families, educational institutions, courts, governments and hence individuals base the rules and judgements on basic tenets of humanism instead of the tenets of "good" behaviour.

I feel that now more than any other time in history we need to reevaluate the social fabric and its logical reasoning because now, is the time of change. National boundaries are slowly relaxing, economic freedom is trying to establish itself; closed cultural societies are looking beyond and mixing. Slowly all the myriad colours around us are beginning to mix and all the colours of the palette come together to make white - the colour of equality and peace. If we do not question pre-existing notions that are losing their significance we may just leave behind a lot of victims of our stupidity.

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There has been a partial moral deregulation as rules have been relaxed in certain areas of life. Yet at the same time, new forms of moral policing have been introduced.

Ethics, or moral philosophy, is the study of human actions in respect to their being right or wrong. The actions of individuals and social groups supply the subject matter of ethics. But this loaded term gets more and more complex when it is applied in the society i.e. when we head towards its practical application.

We are not always sure about what moral principle should govern a particular decision because of their interrelated and ambiguous nature.

We may also disagree, as to the very meaning of the principle or the virtue in question. And there are moral conflicts between nations and well-meaning individuals. Moral disagreement can sometimes reach back to the basic question of why we should be moral at all, or why we should respect moral obligation. Hence, comes the question of moral regulation or policing.

The regime of moral regulation that emerged in the early 20th century was incorporated into the welfare state structures that emerged after World War II. It remained largely intact until the 1960s. The past thirty-five years have seen a partial moral deregulation, in the face of changes in capitalist society

—*Yamini Patel*
National Law Institute University, Bhopal

and the emergence of militant lesbian/gay and women's movements. Capitalism, then, both opened up new spaces for the development of sexuality and shut them down with a regime of moral regulation. In the recent past, this regime of moral regulation has undergone important changes. There has been a partial moral deregulation as rules have been relaxed in certain areas of life. Yet at the same time, new forms of moral policing have been introduced.

Moral Policing in India

Moral policing has been on the rise in India. Sections of the civil society have demanded explanations from the government on this latest move, some even organizing rehabilitation measures. The greater challenge however, is to counter the society's stigmatized attitude towards the women. What is horrifying is that these attitudes have fertile breeding grounds in the minds of high profile members of the government who have been democratically elected.

A popular actress who speaks her mind about matters of sexuality is coerced into apologizing, thanks to an orgy of politically backed protests, which include effigy burning and shrill cries for her arrest and banishment from the State for allegedly "denigrating Tamil women." In an engineering

college in Chennai's suburbs, a student is pulled up for wearing a dark shirt in violation of the institution's 'code' that requires male students to wear only light-coloured shirts! The incident happens a couple of months after the Vice-Chancellor of Anna University 'bans' the wearing of jeans, T-shirts, and sleeveless tops in 231 engineering colleges across the State to make students dress "in a way that befits our culture." Something of a trend can be discerned in these disparate happenings. The culture cops of Tamil Nadu are menacing young people's rights, including freedom of expression; and also targeting girls and women in a sanctimonious, sexist way, as several women's organizations have pointed out. The recent ban on dance bars in Maharashtra has sent the country's hospitality industry reeling under a feeling of insecurity while its business is rather ironically witnessing the best of times in recent years. The reason most easily apparent for their concern is the levels' of moral policing being enforced by the state, which industry analysts generally feel is bizarre.

Moral Policing - Not just

The state is not interested in a system of ordered liberty wherein citizens solve their own personal problems on their own initiatives and with their own institutions. This loss of individual and local responsibility is encouraged by a state only too willing to step in to fill this void. It does so with its own laws and institutions, which gain more and more, control of the economy and social institutions. The further loss of a transcendent sense of purpose allows the state to portray itself as the proper organ for justifying every human activity. This enhances the power of the state since no real room is left for a free and responsible citizenry to do anything on its own. Everything becomes politicized, especially those things in the most sensitive area of charity and compassion. The tax power is the measure of compassion. State schools and agencies take

control of the primary functions of the family, whose decay is itself largely the result of "compassionate" state intervention.

The political project becomes one of refashioning man. He is made into a sort of being that will be able to live in this new benevolent state fashioned out of the compassion of the conditioners. It is here that the modern all-caring state comes into direct conflict with human nature or transcendent purpose. The common good becomes its good. It fashions what can be or must be. The redefinition of man gives the state enormous new scope and power. It indeed makes a divine claim.

We question the state's role in defining and controlling the morality of its citizens and its use of punitive religious and municipal laws. Forced and fearful compliance with such laws, results not in a more moral society but a mass of terrified, submissive and hypocritical subjects.

Any law that attempts to regulate a citizen's life to the smallest detail has far-reaching consequences to the point that it becomes unjust and unenforceable.

The vague provisions of such laws leave them wide open to interpretation and abuse by enforcement officers, which can lead to selective prosecution and victimization, usually on those from a marginalized class, gender and/or community. The responsibility of the Government is to uphold and protect the rights of its citizens to justice, equality, freedom and dignity at all times.

Psyche of the Indian People

I think that overall we Indians are brainwashed into thinking that it is alright for the government to control,

The responsibility of the Government is to uphold and protect the rights of its citizens to justice, equality, freedom and dignity at all times.

Now the prevailing philosophy is to remove the state from the economy and allow the market forces to prevail.

having grown up in the benevolent shadow of the paternalistic government of Chacha Nehru and his feudalistic socialism and its oh-so-wonderful command control license permit quota raj. We don't question the intrusion of the government in every aspect of our social and economic lives, in our private and public lives. Not having lived in a truly free society, we even lack the imagination to consider what a free society is like.

The attitude of following a higher authority is very deeply ingrained in us. The parents share a part of blame. Many of them try to control the lives of their adult children, and rarely encourage independent thought and judgement.

Moral Policing - An Alternate Approach

The shout against 'moral policing' rests on this logic.

"If the society were to police, it would be lawless. If the community were to do it, it would be oppressive. If the family were to police, it would be stifling. So allow the law, only the law, to police. That is, allow only the state to police. In other words, allow only the police to police." But the police, the liberals know, enforce only the law, not morals. So the liberals want people unburdened of morals, that is, to be free of morals. They seem keen to raise an amoral people and call them free. But, how free would such free people be? They would be the least free, in fact. They will be the most State-dependent, in substance. Take the Swedish people, adored as the freest and most advanced in human development index, as an example. In the end the Swedish are most state-dependent in fact and consequently the least free in substance. Result, a couple of years ago, the Swedish Government had to enact that the uncared for aged Swedish could appoint a helper to look after them at State's cost. Sweden survives this because its population is just two-thirds of Mumbai's. Can we, a nation

some 120 times bigger, think of such a moral, actually amoral, as most of us see it, model! This kind of liberalism knocks down marriages and families; erodes respect for society.

Families cannot be established or nurtured by law, nor can communities be organized or saved by law.

Society is composed of minorities, each of which considers itself to possess a monopoly of the moral norm. Reconciling their demands and attitudes to each other will inevitably fall into the state orbit of responsibility, as long as they remain the emergency service of first resort.

The conventional wisdom today is that Government should get out of the back of the people. There was a time when we talked about the commanding heights of the economy being controlled by the state. Now the prevailing philosophy is to remove the state from the economy and allow the market forces to prevail. At the same time, there is not enough realization of two things. The first is that, however, much liberal we may become and however closely we may get linked to the global economy, ultimately the Government has to perform the basic task of governance. Governance begins with building and maintaining an orderly society. Also when the family and other such institutions are dead, the state has to step in to fill the void, care for the aged, the infirm, and the unemployed.

The second thing is that without an orderly and peaceful society there will be no economic development. This means there will be no trade either locally or globally. Maintenance of law and order therefore, is a perennial function of any government worth its name and this is directly linked with the policing.

Various other examples similarly can also be quoted. For instance, the Constitution of India legitimizes such moral policing by the state through Article 19 that deals with protection of the right to freedom of speech. Clause 19.2 states that the state may impose “reasonable restrictions” on the right to freedom and expression in the interests of morality - among other things like sovereignty, integrity etc. Further, clause 19.4 empowers the state to limit the right to form associations and unions in the name of morality.

Another major reason justifying the state’s activity is people’s helplessness in stopping by themselves without any help of state, the havoc abusers of law can cause on others. Keeping this view in mind it is reasonable to believe that the State may ban Valentine’s day celebrations deeming it to be amoral.

Another problem is our culture and the way we think about morality. The Indian people tend to blame alcohol (the substance) for the problems it causes, rather than blaming the subtler things which are real reasons which cause problems such as addiction and DUI. So instead of giving the freedom to consume alcohol and providing education about consumption, addiction, DUI etc. we simply ban the

substance. Same goes for “gutka” ban in Maharashtra. Its probably the same reason why we have a censor board (instead of simply a rating system which puts the responsibility on people).

I think the problem is our “perception of problem”. It’s not because we are brainwashed but I think it is deeply ingrained in our culture. So its not surprising that it is reflected in our government!

To conclude it would be logical to say that there are always some who violate what is right, and hence the state is unlikely to wither away, at least until very far-reaching and fundamental changes occur in human nature. However, such limited use of the state, for a handful of miscreants, is not the issue. What we must try to avoid is relying on the state to maintain social order, which can be achieved more humanely and at less cost by the voluntary observance of those values we all hold dear, such as driving without endangering others and paying our share of the communities’ burdens. In short, the more people generally agree with one another about what is to be done and encourage one another to live up to these agreements, the smaller the role that coercive authority will play and the more civil the community.

What we must try to avoid is relying on the state to maintain social order, which can be achieved more humanely and at less cost by the voluntary observance of those values we all hold dear

An act may be immoral but not illegal or what is denoted as immoral in one society could be perfectly moral and legal in another one.

*“I wonder- how they let people like them grow so powerful?”
- Anne Frank*

Like Anne Frank, I started questioning the world and its ways at an early age. However, the topic of ‘morals’ was never the point of contention-thanks to my grandma’s stories. I knew it was bedtime when she quietly whispered into my ears- “And the moral of the story is...” I faced the challenging dilemma regarding its definition only when I grew up to experience the complex world around me. Like many, I grappled. Morals may be strictly defined as the ‘concern with the distinction between good and evil or right and wrong’.

¹ In reality, the definition is far from simple. Many describe morality as ‘a complex of principles based on cultural, religious, and philosophical concepts and beliefs, by which an *individual* determines whether his or her actions are right or wrong.’ Often morals are interchangeably used for ‘ethics’ and Morality is defined as the ‘doctrines governing moral duties, or the duties of men in their social character’. We may not agree on a universal definition of morals and morality but there is a general consensus that morality is situational. Therefore any attempts to codify and regulate

morality by the state has unintended consequences on the economic, social and cultural fabric.

Morality has to be distinguished from ‘legality’. Often, the state uses legal measures to regulate morality. What may be moral for one group of people may not be considered ‘moral’ within another set whereas laws by and large are applied to all the citizens of the nation. Imagine the consequences, if morality were to be standardized across the nation! The two terms are often the heart of a controversy- an act may be immoral but not illegal or what is denoted as immoral in one society could be perfectly moral and legal in another one. However, disparate strands of lives are subject to common oppression by the government when it comes to deciding which film to watch on Fridays, which substances to consume or what to do in their bedrooms. Not only the state intervenes, it punishes for what it thinks is wrong. The definition of what it considers as a “wrong” is inevitably linked to its own political ends.

¹ According to WordNet-a Cognitive Science Laboratory developed by Princeton University available at www.wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

The central question that arises in the midst of this maelstrom is: To what extent can the state get in the way of the lives of the citizens (presumably for their 'welfare') before it becomes oppressive and authoritarian?

Thomas Hobbes opted for a 'politics of divine containment' where the fundamental aim of government was to construct an egalitarian social order, with little tolerance for dissent.²In Hobbes' model of the ideal Commonwealth captured in his *Leviathan* (1641), the sovereign would rule as God's prefect on earth, ensuring that the boundaries of discursive economies, social norms and political activity would not be violated.

³French thinker, Rousseau hoped to justify the citizen's forced membership to the nation-state by emphasizing both the obligations and benefits of civic culture. The challenge that stands before Rousseau (and for that matter, the governments) is to find the means to morally justify such social bondage and submission to the greater will of the community as a whole. The modern state demonstrates a distinct fear of human beings and independent human agency. Almost all governments all over the world show a tendency to over-police the citizenry, panicking that all hell will break loose if there is no social policing at all. The state forgets the basic underpinning that human beings are far more rational, responsible and socially-conscious than they think them to be. The same streak of anti-humanism characterizes the seemingly dissimilar acts of public executions by Taliban, censoring broadcast media and banning jeans in colleges.

² William E. Connolly, 'Hobbes: The Politics of Divine Containment', in *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

³ William E. Connolly, 'Rousseau: Docility through Citizenship', in *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

⁴ Statistics from www.indianngos.com

Stifled Voices

Government clampdown on Dance bars: Politics or morality?

On April 12, 2005 the state government imposed a ban on the dance bars everywhere in Maharashtra including in Mumbai. The self-proclaimed moral custodian and the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra suddenly declared that the bars were having a "corrupting influence" on the city's cultural fabric.

An estimated 175000 bar girls and 3, 00,000 bar-waiters were rendered unemployed.⁴ Interestingly, the ban came after renewal of the licenses of all dance bars in January. One cannot help and see this as a politically motivated move, how else could state let go the Rs.1500 crores inflow into the state exchequer?

Chains extend to basic choices

Raju and Mala, a lesbian couple in a conservative and remote district in Punjab made a juicy media byte when they decided to dismiss the convention of 'man weds his bride'. Their sexual lives and preferences are not only disregarded by the society but also the law books. The Indian Penal Code regards same sex communion as a criminal offense. The offenders could be sentenced to a lifetime of imprisonment besides being fined. Incidentally, Queen Victoria's government devised this archaic law in 1860. It is also worthwhile to note that Britain has now deleted this section in its own law! It is absurd to note that section 377 is far cry from accepting human diversity.

The state forgets the basic underpinning that human beings are far more rational, responsible and socially-conscious than they think them to be.

In a poor country like India, the State should have better things to do rather than create a raucous every Valentines Day...

The law criminalizes all sexual acts that do not lead to proliferation of human race. Moreover, there have been instances where the law enforcement agencies have blackmailed homosexuals who are too afraid to come out in the open due to social stigma.

Trust Thy Citizens!

No individual or community at present is allowed to run its own community radio broadcast.⁵ Only reputed educational institutions or organizations affiliated to the government are allowed to apply for Community radio licenses. Community radio in a democracy like India could prove to be a vibrant network for information dissemination. Besides radio shares immense popularity and can penetrate into the remotest regions of the nation. It is precisely this reason that the government currently not only tells the channels what not to do but also what to do- reducing the medium into a government mouth piece. The channels have to follow the Programme Code of All India Radio, thus defeating the whole purpose of community radio which is to cater to local needs. Further, these channels cannot carry political content or advertisements. The content regulations prescribe commonsensical conventions like those that the content broadcasted should not 'promote-anti-national attitudes' and 'improper exploitation of religious susceptibilities'. Why should the state presume that the citizens possess malafide intentions? Far from encouraging free expression, the Department of Telecommunication seized a transmitter set up by a World Bank-funded and state-government supported programme in Andhra Pradesh, Mana Radio, run by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty. The government is actually yanking channels off air!

⁵ Licensing procedure for community radio accessed on 20 September 2005 at <http://mib.nic.in/informationb/CODES/frames.htm>

The Emperor has no Clothes

James A Dorn in his essay "Rise of Government and the Decline of Morality" lucidly says that Government intervention in the economy, in the community and in the society has increased the payoff from political action and reduced the scope of private action. He accuses the state of being intellectually, morally and constitutionally bankrupt.

Though we keep hearing of numerous examples of the state erring on accounts of corruption, perpetrating terrorism, proliferating nuclear weapons and causing custodial deaths (and a few months ago-a police constable raping a young girl in Marine Drive) –some of us still think our morality can be decided in the parliament.

In a poor country like India, the State should have better things to do rather than create a raucous every Valentines Day and penalize couples romancing at Chowpatti beach. Besides, the state is accountable to public for carrying any such clampdowns, because the State uses up tax payers' money. Government benevolence is artificial. In fact, French liberal Frederick Bastiat goes as far as to term it as a 'legal plunder'.

The State allows individuals to undertake all kinds of perilous actions-from mountaineering to smoking and even eating fire. It allows people to consume liquor and well, in Delhi, the state undertakings supply liquor! These are all pursuits which raise concerns for mothers and insurance companies alike, but are readily tolerated by the State.

John Stuart Mill, British liberal philosopher urged that the state had no right to intervene to prevent individuals from

doing something that harmed them, if no harm was being thereby done to the rest of the society. "Over himself and his body and mind, individual is sovereign" proclaimed Mill. Considering the entirety of the scenario, can the state be expected to become moral?

Conclusion

It is difficult to chalk out definite boundaries while talking of morality. Boundaries melt into one another-what one group finds moral the other may not. If the citizens allow the state to

enter one domain it is most likely to make its way into almost everything. The state can express its opinion on matters of public welfare but punishing citizens for not complying is immoral- Morality ends where coercion begins.

Each day numerous silent freedom struggles are being fought. In the India of my vision, Tagore's dream will be lived- India would be a land 'where the head is held high and mind is without fear'.

*• Morality ends
• where
• coercion
• begins.*

**Right to Do or
Do it Right**

—Manasi Singh
Hindu College, Delhi

“To be or not to be, that is the question,” says Hamlet, the prince of Denmark in the great Shakespearian tragedy.

The spirit of his father, the king of Denmark, beckons Hamlet from the heaven to take revenge on his uncle, the murderer of his father and the usurper of the throne of Denmark. The uncle is seated in prayer, totally unarmed and unprotected, a sitting duck for an avenger. Take revenge he must, but should he kill him in the state of prayer? “Conscience doth make a coward of us all,” declares Hamlet, and removes himself from the scene. ‘End should justify the means’, or ‘means should justify the end’. That is the question. Hitler was the exponent of the first, and Gandhi, the apostle of the second. History remembers both, but how differently!

“Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains,” says Rousseau, the great French philosopher. In the conduct of his affairs man is governed by certain social norms, codes of conduct and laws enacted by the society to control his behaviour. Man, however, is too complex and too intelligent a creature to be really controlled by preset rules. Further, no norm can be final in a growing body organization, which a society is. History is replete with instances where people of

great substance rebelled against the norms of society, got punished for their acts of defiance, but finally succeeded in getting their ideas accepted, and setting new norms for the coming generations. Christ was crucified, Socrates was made to drink the poison, and Galileo was condemned to prison. All these greats exercised their *right to do*, but societies thought that they were not doing *right*. Today they are hailed as the source of light for the entire mankind. *Satipratha* (the practice of self immolation by the widows) was, once upon a time, the right of a woman as well as a right thing to do in a Hindu society. Today it is neither. India still debates whether Gandhi was right in accepting the partition of India. The civilized world today is divided over the question of capital punishment and on many other issues of importance. When the man and society are in such a state of evolution and change, *right to do* will keep on changing and so will the *do it right*.

Further, societies differ, and, therefore, there can be no uniformity about the social norms and guidelines to govern human behaviour. While for a Muslim it is absolutely normal to marry more than one woman, for a Hindu or a Christian it is out rightly unlawful. It is no more a question of right or wrong here. It is a question of what is acceptable in a particular society. That means what is right and lawful in one

When the man and society are in such a state of evolution and change, right to do will keep on changing and so will the do it right.

Should not then he be let free to follow his natural instincts, to do whatever he thinks is his right to do?

society, can become wrong and unlawful in another. So there is nothing absolute about what the right or wrong is.

Also, sometimes it appears that it is the powerful, which decide what their own right is and what is right for others. In other words 'might is right' appears to be a reality. Right to keep nuclear arms is right for one country but another country can be attacked for exercising its right to do the same right thing. In the matters related to what is right or wrong for a woman, man has for long tried to be the deciding authority.

When right and wrong are in such a fluid state, and when their authority itself is sometimes so questionable, should not the man be freed from the chains of social norms? Should not then he be let free to follow his natural instincts, to do whatever he thinks is his right to do? That is where he was in the Stone Age, when it was absolutely natural for him to kill an animal to satisfy his hunger. He, however, raised himself to the state of Buddha, to whom, killing even an ant was inhuman.

It is such a puzzle. A free man creates laws to curtail his own freedom, to control his own right to do. An intelligent creature, that man is, cannot be acting against his own interests, and, therefore, it is logical to conclude that his *right to do* must be having its origin in *do it right*. And if it is so the two should never be in conflict with each other. Both should go hand in hand. It should never be a matter of choice between *'Right to do'* and *'Do it right'*. It, however, is,

What then is the solution? Is there anything like universal laws, which can help a person in this state of confusion? Yes there are. There are laws of inner working. But before we understand those, let us understand what the purpose of all

these rights and responsibilities is. What are we trying to ensure by enacting all the laws to govern human behaviour? What is the objective of all the norms, social, ethical, moral or whatever? Law, be it inner or outer, why after all? What ultimately are we seeking?

The ultimate quest for a human being is the quest for happiness. While different people may have different opinions about what happiness is all about, for the sake of having a uniform reference point let us agree that happiness is something in which the spirit of the man experiences the joy of existence, something which is lasting, which makes man flourish, which enriches his sojourn on planet earth, which results into growth and brings about self-fulfillment.

Generations come and go, civilizations develop and get destroyed, but human spirit does not change. Neither does its quest for a lasting happiness. So there has to be something more permanent than the fickle social norms to ensure that lasting happiness. There have to be some principles that act as a lighthouse in the rough waters of life, something like the law of gravity, a law, which is impossible to break, acting against which we can only break ourselves.

Counting a few such principles, there are *integrity and honesty*, which create the foundation of trust so essential for cooperation and long-term personal growth; and *human dignity*, containing in it man's inalienable rights of 'Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness'. Another principle is *service*, or the idea of making a contribution. Another is *quality or excellence*. Then there is the principle of *potential*, which Deepak Chopra calls the Law of Pure Potentiality, the idea that we can grow and develop, with the accompanying need for principles such as *patience, nurturance, and*

encouragement. Enumerating these in his book, ‘Seven Habits of Highly Effective People’ Stephen R. Covey says, “ Principles are not practices. While practices are situation-specific, principles are deep, fundamental truths that have universal application. They apply to individuals, to marriages, to families, to private and public organizations of every kind.”

Let these principles be the guide in the affairs of the man. True, we may still require those practices, those enacted laws, but our effort should be directed towards living and leading a principle-based life. Once these principles take deep roots in our value system, there will never be a confrontation between ‘*Right to do*’ and ‘*Do it right*’, between the means and the ends.

The question arises how to do it. Here comes the role of leadership, the role of having a vision, a longer-term view of life, of caring and developing, and of handing over the torch of effective living to the next generation. It is not only the nations that require leaders. Leaders are required in every sphere of human activity, and they will not descend from some alien land. Each one of us needs to assume this role as parents

in our homes, as teachers in schools and colleges, as students at the campus, as workers and managers in the organizations, and above all simply as citizens of the planet earth in whichever walk of life we may be. We have to just make sure that the leadership we provide is principle-based and our acts are directed towards greater human happiness, for action speaks louder than words. Each one of us has to be a role model for the people whose life we are in a position to influence.

Every great journey begins with one step. Every great enterprise starts with one person’s dream. Each one of us can make a difference. Let each one of us play his role in the drama, rather *Dharma* of life, upholding the principles of human dignity, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, quality, potential, growth, patience and encouragement, making his appearance on this stage a beautiful and enriching experience both for himself and for others. Let each one of us leave a legacy, which is worth being relived time and again. Let us not look for shortcuts. As there are no shortcuts to success, there are no shortcuts to lasting happiness.

It is not only the nations that require leaders. Leaders are required in every sphere of human activity, and they will not descend from some alien land.

यह संसार
काजल की
कोठरी के समान
है, कितना ही
सदाचारी मनुष्य
क्यों न हो उसकी
छवि पर एक न
एक दाग लग ही
जाता है।

ईमानदारी एक दैवीय गुण है जिसमें व्यक्ति अपने भीतरी और बाहरी व्यक्तित्व में सदा समान रहता है। वह एक सत्यवादी और आदर्शवादी व्यक्ति होता है। वह सर्वनाश का विकल्प चुन सकता है लेकिन बेईमान होना स्वीकार नहीं कर सकता। वह अपने कार्य, परिजनों, समाज व देश के प्रति वफादार होता है। ईमानदारी वह अवस्था है जिसमें व्यक्ति देवतुल्य हो जाता है। इस अवस्था में वह मोक्ष प्राप्त व्यक्ति के समान संसार की समस्त सूचना संजाल से बाहर हो जाता है।

समझदारी एक मानवीय गुण है जो व्यक्ति को कर्म करने के लिए प्रेरित करती है, संकटों से जूझना सिखाती है, विपदाओं को जीतना सिखाती है। हमें सही मायनों में मनुष्यता सिखाती है। हमारे भीतर जीवट, आशा और उत्साह का संचार करती है। समझदार व्यक्ति शुभ विचारों और दृढ़ संकल्पों वाला व्यक्ति होता है।

ईमानदारी उस नवजात शिशु की तरह होती है जो सांसारिक मोह-माया और भ्रामक प्रवृत्तियों से बिल्कुल अनजान और मासूम है। ईमानदारी हिमालय की गंगोत्री से अभी-अभी निकली स्वच्छ गंगा की तरह है जिसमें शरीर के साथ-साथ आत्मा के भी दर्शन हो जाया करते हैं।

लेकिन नवजात शिशु सदा नवजात नहीं रहता, समय के साथ-

—मीनाक्षी चौरसिया
भीमराव अम्बेडकर महाविद्यालय, दिल्ली

साथ उसका शरीर और दिमाग भी विकसित होता है। धीरे-धीरे वह सांसारिक विषयों की तरफ आकर्षित होने लगता है और तब वह पूर्णतः ईमानदार नहीं रह पाता। यह संसार माया द्वारा निर्मित है। पग-पग पर भ्रामक प्रवृत्तियां बिछी हुई हैं इनसे खुद को रक्षित करने के लिए केवल ईमानदार होना काफी नहीं है। यह संसार काजल की कोठरी के समान है, कितना ही सदाचारी मनुष्य क्यों न हो उसकी छवि पर एक न एक दाग लग ही जाता है। व्यक्तित्व निर्माण और व्यक्तित्व विकास के लिए समझदार होना अनिवार्य है।

हिमालय की गंगोत्री से निकल रही गंगा का कोई उपयोग तब तक नहीं है जब तक वह मानव समुदाय की बस्ती से न गुजरे। जब भी नदी मानव समुदाय की बस्ती से गुजरती है वह मैली जरूर होती है। बस्ती में आकर नदी समस्त प्राणी जगत की प्यास बुझाती है, दिनचर्या के कार्य उसी नदी-तट पर संपन्न होते हैं, उत्पादन की प्रक्रिया का आरम्भ वहीं से होता है। लोग जीने की कला वहीं से सीखते हैं।

मैला होना और पवित्र रहना, ये दो दृष्टिकोण हैं जो देखनेवाले की दृष्टि अथवा विचार पर निर्भर करते हैं। देखा जाए तो मानव होने के नाते हम प्रतिदिन खुद को स्वच्छ रखते हैं लेकिन हमारे घरों में हमारे शरीर में एक विशेष स्थान होता है जिसे हम अपने धार्मिक और सामाजिक मतों के अनुसार अपवित्र मानते हैं लेकिन वह स्थान हमारे लिए इतना अनिवार्य है कि हम उसे बहिष्कृत नहीं कर पाते।

यही समझदार होने के गुण हैं। हम कभी भी परम पवित्र नहीं हो सकते। मैलेपन से ही जीवन का जन्म होता है और मैलेपन में ही जीवन का अंत हो जाता है। हालांकि मृत शरीर को स्वच्छ कर विदा करने की औपचारिकताएं निर्भाई जाती हैं मगर अंततः वह फिर मैला हो जाता है। ईमानदारी और समझदारी की भी यही अवस्थाएं हैं। पूर्ण रूपेण ईमानदार होने का अर्थ है नवजात अवस्था में ही मृत्यु हो जाना जबकि आपने संसार को देखा तक नहीं अन्यथा समझदारी के साथ मैले होने की शर्त अनिवार्य रूप से जुड़ी हुई है।

ईमानदार उस ईश्वर की तरह है जो मौन है जिस पर करोड़ों लोग बिना किसी तर्क के विश्वास करते हैं। श्रद्धा से सिर नवा कर चले आते हैं लेकिन समझदारी उस मनुष्य की तरह है जो सद्गुणों और दुर्गुणों से मिलकर बनी है। जिसमें सबलताएं भी हैं तथा दुर्बलताएं भी, जिसमें वासना भी है और जीवट भी। यह मनुष्य है जो द्रंढ सहता है और अंततः उस पर विजयी होता है। ईमानदार व्यक्ति देश और समाज के नियमों के अधीन रहना सीख जाता है मगर समझदार व्यक्ति किसी तरह की अधीनता स्वीकार नहीं करता, वह जीर्ण-शीर्ण मान्यताओं का विरोध करता है वह समाज में रहते हुए अपने पृथक व्यक्तित्व का निर्माण और समाज का विकास करता है। उसके जीवन का एक लक्ष्य होता है, जिस ओर वह निरंतर प्रयासरत रहता है।

जीवन की तुलना जलेबी से की जाती है जिसकी राहें सपाट और सीधी नहीं हैं मगर हैं एक दूसरे से जुड़ी हुई हैं। एक समझदार व्यक्ति इस जीवन की गोल-मोल रसभरी राहों की कुंजी खोज पाता है और एक शानदार जीवन जीता है। वह अपने पीछे छोड़ जाता है अपना संघर्षपूर्ण गौरवशाली अतीत जिसे आने वाली पीढ़ियां बरसों-बरस याद करती रहती हैं इससे मनुष्य के परिश्रमी एवं जुझारू होने का परिचय मिलता है।

ईमानदारी में करुणा मिश्रित भाव होते हैं जबकि समझदारी में व्यंग्यपूर्ण दृष्टि और गहरा चिंतन छुपा होता है। मनुष्य एक चिंतनशील

प्राणी है, समस्त चराचर जगत में केवल वही बौद्धिक माना जाता है। अपने इसी गुण के चलते वह पशुओं से भिन्न हो जाता है। मनुष्य ने ज्ञान प्राप्त कर खुद को सभ्य बनाया, प्रकृति से सम्पर्क साधा, संचार के साधन विकसित किए। एक देश से दूसरे देश तक की यात्रा की। आदिम युग की पाशविक संस्कृति का त्याग कर आधुनिक युग तक पहुंचा और आज मानव ने दुनिया को अपनी हथेली में समेट लिया है।

समझदारी से तात्पर्य मनुष्य की व्यावहारिक बुद्धि से है। यह परिस्थिति की प्रकृति से उत्पन्न वह निर्णय है जिसे मनुष्य कुछ विकल्पों में उचित समझकर लेता है। इसमें व्यक्ति की गहरी समझ, अनुभव और दूरदृष्टि शामिल होती है। इसमें आगामी गतिविधियों को भांप लेने की आश्चर्यजनक क्षमता होती है। समझदारी में कूटनीति, रणनीति और चहुंमुखी चिंतन का समावेश होता है।

ईमानदारी की अपेक्षा समझदारी से काम करना इसलिए आवश्यक हो जाता है क्योंकि जिस समाज में हम रहते हैं वो हमें पूरी तरह ईमानदार नहीं रहने देता, या तो व्यक्ति ईमानदार रह सकता है या कामयाब हो सकता है। यह इस प्रतियोगी समाज का सत्य है। यहां समझदारी को तिकड़म से नहीं जोड़ा जा सकता क्योंकि समझदार होने और बेईमान होने में फर्क है। समझदारी से तात्पर्य सहज बुद्धि प्रयोग से है। “अक्ल बड़ी कि भैस”, “बलवान कि बुद्धिमान” जैसी उक्तियां इसी संदर्भ में निर्मित हुई हैं।

एक बार गणेश और कार्तिकेय को भगवान शिव और पार्वती का आदेश हुआ कि जो भी समस्त धरती और आकाश के सात चक्कर लगा कर पहले वापस आएगा वही देवताओं में श्रेष्ठ और सर्वप्रथम पुजे जाने योग्य होगा। कार्तिकेय अपने वाहन गरूड़ पर सवार होकर उड़ गए। भारी-भरकम गणेश का वाहन चूहा वो क्या करते? उन्होंने अपने माता-पिता के सात चक्कर लगाए क्योंकि माता धरती के समान होती है और पिता आकाश के समान पुत्र का संरक्षक होता है। इस तरह वे अपनी तीव्र बुद्धि के कारण सभी देवताओं में श्रेष्ठ और

यहां समझदारी को तिकड़म से नहीं जोड़ा जा सकता क्योंकि समझदार होने और बेईमान होने में फर्क है।

एक समझदार
व्यक्ति की
परिभाषा करें तो
समझदार वो है
जो परिस्थिति की
गंभीरता और
परिवर्तन की
अनिवार्यता को
समझता हो, खुद
को उन
परिस्थितियों में
ढाल लेना जिसे
आता हो।

सर्वप्रथम पूजे जाने के अधिकारी माने गए। समझदारी से तात्पर्य ऐसी ही बुद्धि प्रयोग से है।

समझदार मनुष्य कम समय में ज्यादा दूरी तय करता है जबकि ईमानदार मनुष्य दूरी तो बराबर तय करता है लेकिन जब तक वह लक्ष्य तक पहुंचता है समय निकल चुका होता है और उसका परिश्रम व्यर्थ हो जाता है। व्यवहारिक जीवन में प्रतिपल समझदारी की जरूरत पड़ती है। एक समझदार व्यक्ति की परिभाषा करें तो समझदार वो है जो परिस्थिति की गंभीरता और परिवर्तन की अनिवार्यता को समझता हो, खुद को उन परिस्थितियों में ढाल लेना जिसे आता हो। जो व्यक्ति बदलते समय के साथ खुद को ढाल पाते वे अपना अस्तित्व खो देते हैं। यहां चार्ल्स डार्विन का सर्ववाइवल आफ फीटेस्ट का सिद्धांत लागू होता है जिनमें संघर्ष करने की क्षमता नहीं होती वे लुप्त हो जाया करते हैं। व्यक्तित्व निर्माण के लिए व्यक्ति में आत्मविश्वास बढ़ाने के लिए किसी भी तरह की प्रतियोगिता में सफल होने के लिए समझदार होना अनिवार्य है।

उदाहरण के लिए क्रिकेट का खेल है। यहां स्पष्ट कर देना आवश्यक है कि सट्टेबाजी या फिक्सिंग को इस खेल में समझदारी से नहीं जोड़ा जा रहा है। इस खेल में दोनों तरफ की टीमों पूरी इमानदारी से परिश्रम करती हैं और जीतने की आशा लिए पूरे विश्वास के साथ खेल के मैदान में उतरती हैं। इस खेल में जो खिलाड़ी खेल की तकनीक से वाकिफ है, जो खेल के मैदान में खेलते हुए यह भांप ले कि प्रतिपक्षी टीम का कमजोर पक्ष यह है और इसका पूरा फायदा उठाया जा सकता है वहीं खिलाड़ी खेल का विजेता बन जाता है।

समझदारी निरंतर विकास की परंपरा को बढ़ाने और बनाए रखने में सहयोग करती है। समझदारी में कर्म का लक्ष्य, उद्देश्य व परिणाम संलग्न होते हैं जो परत दर परत खुलते रहते हैं। समझदारी समाज में व्यवस्था बनाए रखती है। समाज व्यक्ति-व्यक्ति के आपसी समझौते के आधार पर निर्मित होता है। समाज में जनहित के लिए सक्रिय संस्थाएं इसके कई अंग हैं जैसे न्यायपालिका, संसद, समाजसेवी

संघ, प्रशासनिक संगठन, सरकार आदि। यदि इनके बीच समझदारी और सहयोग की भावना न हो तो पूरी व्यवस्था चरमरा जाएगी।

कहावत है कि अकेला चना भाड़ नहीं फोड़ सकता उसी तरह व्यक्ति समाज से बाहर नहीं जी सकता, उसका विकास समाज में समूहों में रहकर की होता है। अपने एक जीवन में व्यक्ति समाज के विभिन्न समूहों का हिस्सा होता है। परिवार, आफिस, सभा-संगोष्ठी, देश और विश्व स्तर पर। यहां व्यक्ति-व्यक्ति के स्वभाव का अंतर अलगाव की गहरी खाई पैदा कर सकता है, इस खाई को पाटने के लिए, समूहों के सफलतापूर्वक संचालन के लिए सहयोग और समझदारी से काम करना आवश्यक है। इससे व्यक्ति में नेतृत्व की क्षमता का विकास होता है। यह व्यक्ति को जागरूक, अंधविश्वास मुक्त और जीर्ण-शीर्ण मान्यताओं पर रूढ़ रहने से बचाती है।

आरम्भ में कुछ सामाजिक कुरीतियां प्रचलित थीं, जैसे दास प्रथा, बाल विवाह, विधवा उत्पीड़न, स्त्री की निम्न दशा, जाति व्यवस्था में वर्ग संघर्ष, जाति व्यवस्था से बाहर हाशिये पर पड़े लोग जिनमें वैश्या, भिखारी, किन्नर, भंगी, कसाई, चाण्डाल, कोढ़ी, धर्म परिवर्तन करने के बाद वापस अपने धर्म को अपनाए लोग शामिल हैं जिन्हें अधीनस्थ समाज की संज्ञा दी जाती है। आज यदि ये समाज के हाशिये से निकलकर कवरपेज का मुद्दा बन रहे हैं तो ये सब व्यक्ति की स्व अनुभूत समझ का ही परिणाम है।

बच्चों को अकबर-बीरबल के किस्से, तेनालीराम की कहानियां, अलिफलैला के किस्से और चाचा चौधरी के कॉमिक्स बहुत पसंद आते हैं केवल बच्चे ही नहीं बड़े भी बड़े चाव से इन कहानियों को सुनते और पढ़ते हैं। ऐसी कहानियां पढ़ाने का उद्देश्य होता है कि बच्चे जीवन के व्यवहारिक पक्ष से वाकिफ हो सकें। कई महान व्यक्तित्व जैसे गांधी, प्लेटो, सुकरात, कबीर, गुरूनानक और मार्क्स ये सब अपने शोधों के अलावा हास्य प्रेमी और हाजिर जवाबी होने के कारण भी याद किए जाते हैं।

समझदारी संसाधनों के सदुपयोग से जुड़ी हुई है। प्रेमचंद की कहानी ईदगाह में वो गरीब बच्चा अपनी दादी के लिए मेले में लोहे का चिमटा खरीदना अधिक उपयोगी समझता है। वह अपने दोस्तों के सामने उस लोहे के चिमटे का बखान करता है कि यह चिमटा उनके मिट्टी के खिलौने और मिठाईयों से कहीं अधिक मजबूत, टिकाऊ और उपयोगी है। इससे एक साथ कितने ही काम किए जा सकते हैं। कभी

इसे खिलौना बना ले तो कभी घर की कोई उपयोगी वस्तु। यह कभी न खत्म होने वाली संपत्ति है। यह समझदारी का उत्तम नमूना है, इसने मैनेजमेंट की कला का विकास किया है। समझदार व्यक्ति सीमित संसाधनों में से अपने लिए उपयोगी वस्तु को कई तरह से प्रयोग कर अपना प्रयोजन सार्थक कर लेता है।

समझदारी
संसाधनों के
सदुपयोग से
जुड़ी
हुई है।

**We Have Not Inherited the
Earth from Our Fathers;
We are Borrowing It from
Our Children**

We Have Not Inherited the Earth from Our Fathers; We are Borrowing It from Our Children

—Naintara Maya Oberoi
Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi

“When the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught, we will realize we cannot eat money.” - Cree

We live in a time of rapidly mounting crisis. Extensive human economic activity, especially in the last century, has pushed the biosphere far from its natural equilibrium point. We are now reaping the consequences of that carelessness and disregard for the earth, in the form of freak weather phenomena, frequent earthquakes, global warming, and, most tellingly, less and less resources. In the last decade, human consumption and waste production has reached its highest point ever, exceeding by approximately 15 percent the planet’s biological capacity to produce and absorb. Commodity prices recently hit a 24-year high, driven by worries that burgeoning global demand is rapidly outstripping supply. It is predicted that we will shortly use up all our resources, that new and alternate technologies will not meet growing needs, or easily replace old ones, and that these will be accompanied by irreversible climate change and food shortage.

The age of arrogance is over. We can no longer pretend that the earth and its resources exist for our own personal convenience, to be used, wasted and discarded at will. It is

time to realize that the idea of claiming ownership of the earth -for ourselves, or for any other generation, or any other species, is ridiculous. The earth is no commodity, but the source of our sustenance, the source of life and livelihood. It is our collective responsibility to protect natural resources and nature, for our own survival as a species, for the survival of all species and all beings, and for the survival of the planet as a whole.

The current world population, already over six billion, is clearly too large for our planet to support; eight hundred million people suffer from malnutrition. Faced with this, much of the developing world faces a stark choice: protecting the environment or feeding its people, or in other words, feeding its current population or being able to feed future populations. Our water problems are, in particular, some of the most pressing, and most mismanaged, as well as those with the maximum potential for international disputes. Across the world, rivers have been straightened to ease navigation, banked for flood control, dammed and diverted for irrigation, and filled with toxic waste. To facilitate development, wetlands

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have been drained, natural flows and stream channels altered. The result is a world where most major rivers and lakes no longer retain their full ecological function, which severely hampers how water sources replenish and renew themselves. Significantly, Palestine rejected a recent peace proposal from Israel because, among other things, it did not give them control of water resources within their semi-arid territory. Israel's water policy heightens political resentment and, ultimately, makes reaching any peace agreement more difficult, lending credence to the fears that the next world war will be fought not about Serbia or Poland, but about water and other natural resources.

One of the biggest flashpoints of ecological concerns relates, quite literally, to nuclear power and to industrial forces. Touted as a solution to our resource problems, nuclear power is in reality, only a bigger problem with overwhelmingly disastrous consequences for our health and the earth's. While proponents of nuclear power argue that that it is a great alternative to fossil fuels, which are not only ecologically harmful, but also running out, the process of uranium enrichment for fuel for nuclear power releases huge quantities of carbon dioxide and dichlorotetrafluoroethane or CFC-114 (which is a considerably more potent global warmer and heat trapper than carbon dioxide) into the air. Every nuclear reactor produces tonnes of highly radioactive waste each year, the majority of which is extremely long-lived, and must be isolated from the ecosphere for thousands of years. As it leaks into the environment, it will bio-concentrate by orders of magnitude at each step of the food chain, becoming more and more terrifying the further up the chain it travels. The effects of this on future generations are inconceivable, but a prelude can already be seen in the large number of genetic mutations and occurrences of disease found near industrial areas where toxic

factory waste is dumped by the kilolitre into nearby rivers and soil. These, the only source of water and food respectively for entire villages, become not fountainheads of sustenance livelihood, but of slow death, psychological disorders, genetic defects, skin and lung cancers, and poisoned occupations. The phenomenon by which people are first deprived of the means to their livelihood, and then inducted into the system itself, by being provided an alternative job at the very nuclear power plant or factory that has taken their occupation from them, allows no protest, tolerates no criticism of ruthless industrial development. It silences by pretending to sustain, when in reality, it poisons and stifles.

But the tension between the forces of development and the fight for environmental preservation is misleading; the two are not antithetical to each other. It is only the particular twentieth-century implementations of capitalism, which took no notice of the environment, that allow us to believe so. A new industrial system, in fact, a new industrial approach armed with environmental conscience and consciousness is possible. It is no longer feasible to go on behaving as if the environment is a minor, unimportant, and extraneous factor of production, and we must accept it as the centre of all economies, the wellspring of all sustenance and resources. Future economic progress will now best take place in democratic economies in which all forms of capital, including human, manufactured, financial, and natural capital, are fully valued, where technology is not extractive but replenishing, and where the goal is not wealth but collective well-being.

In the next century, as human population doubles and resources shrink, a great transformation of industry has to occur, attempting to create a world economy that uses radically less material and energy. The concept of sustainable

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development is intended to be a means of planning and acting so that we may meet our current needs while preserving biodiversity, natural ecosystems, and resources bases for the future. In simpler words, sustainability is providing for the best for people and the environment both now and in the indefinite future, achieving the well being of the ecosystem as well as the human race. To this end, we must re-evaluate our entire system of production and consumption, every tool, machine and process. Anything that is produced by the world economy should fulfil not just the criteria of being economically viable but also of being environmentally sustainable, generating or saving as much energy as it consumes. A product or process or service must be valued by how much energy goes into its production, and how much energy it takes to replace the precious raw materials used.

Increasing the productivity of resources, and reducing waste will slow resource depletion, lower pollution, and also provide added forms of employment. The alarming trend of worldwide planetary destruction can be halted and possibly, eventually even reversed, by reinvesting in sustaining, restoring, and expanding stocks of natural capital, so that the biosphere can rest and replenish itself. In the meantime, perhaps a moratorium on new scientific innovations that may have potentially negative implications for the planet and people is necessary; if human history shows us that we have been unwise and self-centered, we can now learn to be patient and wise. We cannot now behave as if we are unaware of the

implications of our actions, we cannot now plunder and waste, believing it our right to drive the earth to destruction and toxic barrenness.

We, as a race, hope to inhabit this planet for a good many more millennia. That inhabitancy can only be possible if we curtail our careless and arrogant patterns of production and consumption, and their accelerating effects on the planet. We must make sure our descendants inherit a viable world and an economy of workable technology. We cannot now live as we have for so long, ignoring the vitality and humanity of the earth, and nourishing only ourselves. If we claim the title of the most evolved race on earth, we must also shoulder the stewardship of the planet, and this goes beyond mere economic values, and certainly beyond feeding our own insatiable desires. It means preserving and protecting the elements and returning all we take to the cycle of regeneration. It means restoring the equilibrium we have shattered, and emphasizing the environmental, ethical and spiritual values that are vital to any true and viable civilization. It means living in right relation to the earth, recognizing that it is a living entity, not putting price tags on its resources, but valuing and preserving them. And finally, it means achieving our utmost potential and well-being through the well-being of all around us, living not as if we have no relation to the soil beneath our concrete, but with a true sense of celebration of the planet, living not just *on* the earth, but *with* it.

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Isn't it unarguably clear that we, the present generation are enjoying immensely at the expense of our future progenies?

Children of God

An agonized wail emanates from a post-surgery recovery room, renting the cool night air. A pale young mother clings to her grotesquely sick hydrocephalic newborn. The baby's eyeballs are twisted rancorously in their tender sockets and its sutures are separated. Its dilated scalp veins and peculiarly water-melon-sized head clinch the pathetic vision. The mother's face contorts with horror as the baby's face turns into a malevolent shade of blue. As the child breathes its last, its head lolling back lifelessly, the woman's wild screams continue unabated, reaching an insurgent crescendo. She is unconscious of the doctor's arm on her shoulder, unconscious of being whisked away in a stretcher with a grief-stricken husband in tow.

Isn't it unarguably clear that we, the present generation are enjoying immensely at the expense of our future progenies? We have not acquired the right to despoil future's children. Drawing benefits from the plethora of scientific and technological advancements, which have bombarded the globe today, is acceptable only if we do not in the process thwart the ability of our future generations to meet their needs. I care deeply about nature and humanity. I hereby make a personal pledge to the youth of the present era and the potential yet-to-be-born global visionaries of tomorrow.

—Nischinta Amarnath
Stella Maris College, Chennai

The human race is far from perfect. No optimality can be realized in practical life. What can be achieved is a near-perfect trade-off between equity and efficiency through induced incentives – the second best, which in many an instance has proven to engender results substantially more promising than those of that elusive first-best solution. Given this scenario, humanity warrants my love, reverence and nurturance. The world will continue to evolve in a positive direction, if each of us takes decisions, unflinchingly keeping the future in view.

The tragic demise of the hydrocephalic newborn in the prelude to my article symbolizes the apathetic face of the nuclear ethos, which reigns supreme in all its turbulence today. My heart leapt to my throat when I beheld those lucidly coloured photographs of what in cold medical nomenclature is termed as 'congenital anomalies' (which you and I would better understand as hideous birth deformities). Instances of babies being born with brains rotting outside their skulls, heads bearing deformed legs, half a head and nothing more than a head and two amphibian arms, are numerous. Aren't we responsible for these obscenities?

Birth deformities constitute merely the tip of the chilling

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iceberg. Hedonistic pursuits have led us to indulge in activities that cast a devastating impact on the world ecosystem in the guise of cyclones, global warming, over-exploitation and exhaustion of resources, reduced soil fertility and loss of biodiversity on account of toxicities and high levels of air and water pollution. The disruption of the marine ecosystem along the Black Sea Coast, which is unceremoniously used, as a drainage yard by six surrounding countries is not unknown to many. Only 6 of the hitherto 26 species of commercial fish remain in sizeable quantity today, thanks to the cumulative effects of 60,000 tonnes of phosphorous, which the sea was later found to contain. This action on our part also insinuates an abuse of common property and open-access resources. What can we offer to our future generations if we deface the gift of the Divine that is nature? Should they be left to pick up the shattered remnants of a disturbed ecological balance or rot in the injury we have subject our environment to?

Fortunately, environmentalists, developmental economists and social activists are pitching in to influence policy makers to execute action-packed solution strategies with governmental foresight. The ban imposed on the sale of snakeskin, which extended a profitable avenue to leather manufacturers and the Chipko movement, which, initiated en masse moved deforesters so much that it weaned them away from felling down rows of trees, are cases in point that are to be chronicled proudly in the annals of Indian environmental history. However, blindly urging economic and environmental growth will lead us nowhere unless this oft-repeated multi-dimensional variable that we term 'development' encompasses another component – 'long-range planning' – to ensure sustainability.

Charity begins at home, they say. So, what can I as a core constituent of the future of tomorrow, do to alleviate the

impact of wanton human activity on our planet?

To begin with, I would as a parent teach my children to be responsible for themselves, instilling in them strong ethics, value systems and cultural beliefs that they could pass on to their scion, radiating love and harmony across the world.

As a writer, media analyst and the mastermind of a media unit, I will play an integral role in repositioning the media sector as an engineer of a revolutionary change in the mindsets and attitudes of the masses. I would like to establish a nationally based media enterprise and contribute to the expansion of tangible and intangible wealth in our nation.

As an entrepreneur in my own right, I will lay emphasis on increasing both human and non-human aspects of wealth for society, directing more focus on expanding human wealth, which we can harvest from the present value of earnings obtained by putting our intellect to constructive use as against non-human wealth, which is generated from the value of income acquired from financial and capital assets. While the non-human wealth resource pool would indeed endow us with the materialistic delights of life, it is human wealth, which is the sole key to spiritual enlightenment, which I view as a sentinel of peace, love and harmony – three elements that would triumph over greed at a personal level and imperialism at the international level. The latter can be seen in numerous examples that world history is replete with.

Another related question pops into my mind. Are the world's superpowers today doling out grants and aids to backward nations because of a genuine concern for the less developed? Or do they take pleasure in reasserting their 'superior positions'? If the syndrome of Dogs Vs Underdogs is

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at play, I can state with conviction that the trend will not continue for long. With the brilliant foray of transnational conglomerates into the Indian economy, India is scaling newfound heights as a hard-to-rout competitor in the global market. If our nation keeps up this level of performance and develops Her intellectual capital with emphasis on 'Quality Improvement', she would Herself become a superpower by 2030.

But what delays us from achieving this objective? Although India is welcoming change and producing platoons of highbrows, She is not able to mount the high-development status stallion, owing to mass corruption, inadvertent squandering of resources, dissipation of disbursed state revenues into unintended zones, inefficient administrative capacity, unpunctuality and lack of prioritisation and streamlining of activities.

What is required is a judicious blend of creative and practical thought, which would revamp the standards of policy-making by infusing social and distributive justice and encouraging a more conducive global ambience for women, marginalized or otherwise. If I, as a first-generation media baron, possessed the power to influence change at every level of society, economists and political analysts are the groups of persons I would first work on.

I would adopt innovative CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives to educate the downtrodden and marginalized. When I frame a budget for personal or professional purposes, I will balance my luxuries with the needs of humanity. I would plough back a portion of retained earnings from my company to set up a trust exclusively for the

purpose of initiating awareness campaigns on prevailing social issues, funding meritorious but financially precarious students and encouraging individuals from the lower economic strata to enroll at tertiary levels of education.

Growth should never be stagnant even in nations that have successfully attained high standards of living and an enriching quality of life. Constant innovations are necessary to accelerate the pace of dynamism of an economy. But in inventing and innovating, environmental concerns must not be forgotten. Resource exhaustion is to be handled effectively too. As a writer, I would embark on projects that involve propelling producers and Governments to create a pool of savings from exhaustible resources (like oil) and reinvest the percentage of returns obtained from their extraction into renewable capital assets (such as investments in large-scale water desalination projects, as Saudi Arabia is currently resorting to).

If we are to lead a discordance-free existence, bigotry and ethnocentrism must be fended off. An acceptance of and adaptability to diverse cultures and lifestyles is essential to keep at bay the evils of war, technology and insouciance, infusing the power of love in every soul. We are all Children of God. What each of us needs as the curtain of life draws to a close is the blissful knowledge of having made a difference to someone's life (no matter how small a difference it may be) and six feet of ground to rest in eternal peace.

I will therefore be instrumental in bequeathing to the future generations a world, which is technologically, economically, ecologically and morally feasible.

—*Shailey Hingorani*
Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi

Present Imperfect

Those days are still very vivid in my memory. The days when with the outset of winter and onset of the spring the sparrows, the pigeons would begin flitting in and out of verandahs in our house in search of suitable crevices, spaces in the ventilators to build their nests and lay eggs. The sparrows would as if by some previous arrangement occupy the back verandah while the pigeons the front verandah. I would watch them amazingly. The cacophony of their incessant chirping with the break of the dawn would act as a signal for me to get out of the bed to get ready to go to the school. I was then in the 9th standard. The following year I had my 10th Board examinations. I needed to get up earlier than the dawn and so I switched over to the time alarm. 11th standard was less taxing but I needed to go to the school. It was at this time that I observed the absence of flurry of the flitting in and out of the sparrows and pigeons in our house. Though I could spot them outside in the open they were not in their usual large numbers. There were fewer of them. Missing among them was my favorite sparrow with a leg broken which used to make her wobble around. I was sad. I could not comprehend the reasons for their so large a disappearance until I came across an article in the Femina which voiced concern over the dwindling population of the sparrows and pigeons in the cities and listed

reasons therefore which I have discussed later in this article. Another species which is fast becoming extinct, at least in India, is the vulture. It is believed the population of the vultures in Indian cities has dwindled by a whopping 90%. The exact reasons for this are not known.

Past Imperfect

Everybody concedes that the earth is not the same as we inherited from our forefathers. It is badly bruised today. Man in his greed to make his life extra comfortable has played havoc with the earth's natural resources and harmed the ecological balance. What is tragic is that he is not any happier than his previous generation and the real happiness still eludes him.

The ills afflicting the earth are all well known. I would not go into their details but briefly list them as follows:

- pollution, which is a direct result of over-population, industrialization and other human activities like agriculture and deforestation has loaded earth with diverse pollutants
- soil erosion
- desertification, change of river directions, extinction of species vulnerable ecosystem, depletion of natural

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resources, waste accumulation, deforestation, thinning of ozone layer and global warming.

All these ills are man-made, man induced and not natural. Man is the only organism which tries to modify the environment to fulfill his needs. His acts, wanton as they are, have often disturbed the links and balance of the environment leading to disastrous effects not only for himself but sadly for other organisms too. It is alright for man to do whatever he wants to do with his life but to upset the rhythm and harmony of the life of other organisms is surely a sinful and unpardonable act. It is here that I would like to come back to my story about depletion of population of sparrows and pigeons in our cities. The said article ascribed it to the huge surge in the volume of air waves due to increased use of mobile phones and reasoned that the mobile phone micro waves damaged the nervous system of these birds and ultimately led to their deaths. Of course the mobile companies vehemently denied.

The solutions to the ills harming the earth too are very widely known. I would list them as under:

- There is a need to save energy, to introduce energy-efficient motor vehicles.
- The dependence on oil has to be reduced.
- Deforestation has to be checked.
- More trees need to be planted.
- The concentration of the greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere has to be reduced.

There is no dearth of solutions, viable ones at that.

Future Perfect

I am not an expert, nor have studied the subject or researched into any aspect of it. I am a commoner with a genuine interest and concern for the earth and environment. I believe despite all the harm that has been done to the earth by the man, the situation is not alarming. Man is not fool, but only a bit lethargic. He would sooner or later restore the earth to its old glory because he knows on it depends his very own survival. The reasons for my optimism spring from the following:

- The communication revolution sweeping the world for the past couple of years has squeezed the world into a small global village where everybody is watching every other body 24*7*365. It is no longer possible to get away with sinful acts. The blackbucks, the chinkaras, the peacocks, the blacknaped hares, the tigers all must rest assured that no harm would ever come to them again. The hunters have become hunted. The sparrows, the pigeons must take heart from this. They have innumerable well-wishers constantly looking for any ill effects that the congested air waves may be causing to them.
- A very good and refreshing phenomenon that has lately unfolded itself on the national scene is that the eminent persons in fields other than the politics have stopped being passive and moot spectators of the games that the politician play day in day out in the name of public interest to further their interests. They now evince keen interest in the affairs of the nation and are not afraid to speak their mind. One of the very eminent editors beautifully described this phenomenon thus 'Fifteen years of reform may not have drawn out all of the

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socialist venom in our systems but they have brought about enough change so that it is no longer so easy to paint a Murthy, a Tata, a Premji or an Ambani as a mere capitalist usurper...’ They are adored by the masses. It is no wonder then that when these persons show their concern over the need to improve environment conditions in the country, the Governments sit up, take note and start correcting the things.

- The recent flooding of Mumbai due to the unprecedented heavy rains in its history united the rich and poor to the need for less dependence on the Government agencies and doing their own little bits and lending Government their cooperation. The result. The ubiquitous polythene bags get banished from the Mumbai overnight.
- The authorities the world over are veering towards the fact that the nuclear energy is the only non-greenhouse gas emitting power source that can effectively replace the fossil fuels and satisfy global demand. India is today at the threshold of new nuclear technologies- those being developed indigenously and those that may be available from the outside. India is also fast developing and adopting the non-conventional sources of energy like hydro, wind, solar, hydrogen, ethanol, bio-diesel, etc.
- Though despite crores of rupees spent on the ‘Clean Ganga’ and the ‘Clean Yamuna’ river projects, the two rivers continue to be as dirty and polluted as ever, there is really no need to throw in the towel yet. The Thames river in London too was once like our present day Ganga and Yamuna rivers. The London authorities did not give up and ultimately succeeded in cleansing the river. If they can do it, our authorities too would rise to

the occasion one day and emulate them.

- The air quality in USA is said to be 30% better than what it was at the time of the first earth day in 1970. Given a correct political will and active involvement of the people such a thing can be successfully replicated in India too The Delhi Government has shown the way by making CNG mandatory for all the public transport. It may not have made the air cleaner but has definitely reduced the visible pollution that used to cause suffocation and burning in the eyes. It would not be long before this movement spreads to other parts of India.
- The Supreme Court admirably assisted by the media and NGOs has made it difficult for the political establishment to abdicate its responsibility to provide a clean and pollution-free environment to the citizens. So the sprawling ridge in Delhi has been freed from the petrol pumps and encroachments sitting amidst it, much to the relief and joy of the citizens.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to say that the children need have no fears. They are going to inherit an earth that would be a thing of joy forever to them. Let the celebrations begin!

Every body concedes that the earth is bruised today but is it as bruised as the doomsayers would have us believe.

According to them

- the climate is sizzling;
- forests are being mutilated;
- water is becoming toxic;

I would like to say that the children need have no fears. They are going to inherit an earth that would be a thing of joy forever to them.

*Consume less
water as there
is already
severe
shortage of
potable water.*

- oceans are becoming dead;
- earth is being slaughtered by the surging population and consumption; and
- that we have already reached the point of no return in terms of atmospheric temperature and pollutants.

I am a diehard optimist. While there is much to be vigilant about and much to work towards, at the same time there is much to applaud and much to support. For example:

- In many countries of EU sustainability and environment are major issues in the general elections.
- In China a major programme of reforestation has pulled Asia out of the red in forest denudation.
- Japan has the highest instance of tree to human land use ratio.
- Athletes participating in the upcoming Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines are asking for toxic free, zero waste games as was done during 2002 World Cup in Seoul and the Sydney Olympics before that.
- China currently is said to be home to 16 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world with capital Beijing earning the dubious distinction of being the most polluted city in the world. It would have to clean up the pollution in Beijing and other cities before the 2008 Olympic Games begin there. China has no choice but to clean up fast, very fast.
- Our own India is the champion of small scale farming and natural medicine.

- Apart from all these positive pluses, one very significant thing that has been happening in the last 3-4 years is the catapulting of India to the centre stage of the world affairs. Thanks to the prowess of its Knowledge Industry, India's voice is no longer a voice in wilderness. It is now heard with due respect by one and all.
- My vision is that with India playing a very active role in the world affairs, the process of environmental protection and improvement would get a big boost. Our people may not be prosper and most of them subsist on simple *dal roti* or *bhat* but these very poor people rank very high on the world happiness scale.

There is a lesson in it for the rest of the world:

- Consume less and consume wisely.
- Consume less food; it would keep you fit and healthy.
- Consume less water as there is already severe shortage of potable water. It is a myth that 8 glasses of water a day are must. Yogis in ancient India used to go without food and water for days on end without any ill effect.
- Consume less oil, prefer walking to transport.
- If any further degradation of the earth is to be stopped, the humans must give up their crass consumerism, their belief that the earth is a bottomless pit of resources.
- Make 'simple living and simple thinking', the motto of your life.
- A sensitized campaign backed by some celebrities endorsing it would need to be launched to wean away the people from the consumerist life style and return to

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the village life style, in tune with the nature.

- The urbanization has to be discouraged and reversed. The villages would need to be made self-contained and self-sufficient so that the people do not migrate to towns and cities.
- Luckily for the rest of the world, there is already a well thought out and viable model for this in India. A brain child of Dr. A.P.J. Kalam, our much respected and loved President, it is called PURA— that is— Providing

Urban Amenities in Rural Areas.

- If the measures outlined above are implemented in right earnest, I am sure we would be able to hand over to our children a far better earth and if the good work continues our great great children several generations down may get an earth of Satya Yug kind where the biblical prophecy of “lion lying down with the lamb” or “the child handling the snake without fear of being bitten” would be fulfilled.

The villages would need to be made self-contained and self-sufficient so that the people do not migrate to towns and cities.

जिंदा रहना और
आगे आने वाली
पीढ़ियों के नाम
ऐसा संसार छोड़
जाना जहाँ वे
खुलकर साँसें ले
सकें

शीर्षक में एक काव्यत्व है यानी भावी पीढ़ी की अमानत बनने की ताकत। बाइबिल का “पैरेबल ऑफ द टेलेंट” याद आया जो मिडिल स्कूल में कभी माँ ने पढ़कर सुनाया था। माँ जो खुद एक धरती है, लगातार याद दिलाती है कि धरती भी माँ है - गोर्की की माँ, “हजार चौरासी की माँ”, करोड़ों बच्चों की माँ जिसके प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का दोहन पराकाष्ठा पर है। एक बूढ़ी माँ, प्रेमचंद की “बूढ़ी काकी” की तरह हमने इसका सर्वस्व छीनकर इसे अनादृत छोड़ दिया है। धरती मुरझा रही है। इसे एक पान के पत्ते की तरह संभालकर रखना है हमें।

“पैरेबल ऑफ द टेलेंट” याद है न ? व्यापारी के तीन बेटे थे। तीनों के हाथ बराबर धन देकर उसने दुनिया में उन्हें भेजा कि जो चाहे इसका करना और मिलना तो दस वर्ष बाद। पहले बेटे ने कंजूसी की और धन गाड़कर रखा कि यह तो पिता की निशानी है, पवित्र निशानी। “ज्यों की त्यों धर दीनी चदरिया” का तबोताव नहीं, बस नासमझी ! उसे यह समझ में ही नहीं आया कि गाड़ा हुआ धन और गाड़ा हुआ पत्थर बराबर है। दूसरे बेटे ने सारा धन उड़ा दिया। पक्का उपभोक्तावादी था, खुद को यह तर्क दिया होगा कि धन तो अब मेरा है, जो भी करूँ - मेरी मर्जी ! सिर्फ तीसरा बेटा था ऐसा जिसने अच्छे व्यापार में लगाकर धन की बढ़ोत्तरी की और बढ़ा हुआ धन पिता को लौटाया जो उन्होंने भावी पीढ़ी के नाम दर्ज की। ... इसी तरह प्रतिभा का धन लेकर दुनिया में आए हैं हम और पुरुषार्थ इसी में है कि दुनिया जैसी हमें मिली है, उससे बेहतर छोड़ें, संसाधनों का दोहन तो नहीं ही करें, उसके सही और समानुपातिक वितरण का, distributive justice का सही नेटवर्क भावी पीढ़ी के नाम छोड़ जायें। सोवियत संघ के

—उत्कर्ष अमिताभ

दिल्ली कॉलेज ऑफ इंजीनियरिंग (एन.एस.आई.टी.), दिल्ली

विघटन के बाद के अनुभवों पर एक नया “Das Capital” लिखें जो मुक्त बाजार में अमरीका की दादागिरी बंद कर उसे तीसरी दुनिया के सबसे वंचित व्यक्ति के पक्ष में खड़ा करे। ऐसी स्थिति न रह जाए जहाँ पूँजी तो ललमुनिया की तरह पंख खोलकर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय क्षितिजों पर उड़ती नजर आए और श्रमिकों-किसानों के पाँवों पर उन जंजीरों की गिरफ्त और भी सख्त हो जाए जिसे कभी मार्क्स ने सम्बोधित करके कहा था - “Workers of the world, unite, you have nothing to lose but you chain.”

दुनिया के वंचित जनों के पक्ष में, प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के रिजेनरेटिव उपयोग और सही बँटवारे के संकल्प के साथ जीना आसान नहीं। हमें जीना पड़ेगा बड़ी संजीदगी के साथ, मसलन - किसी गिलहरी की तरह जो बर्फाले दिनों के लिए धरती में कुछ-कुछ बचाकर रखती है। जिंदा रहना और आगे आने वाली पीढ़ियों के नाम ऐसा संसार छोड़ जाना जहाँ वे खुलकर साँसें ले सकें - एक मुकम्मिल काम होना चाहिए।

मेरा इशारा सिर्फ पर्यावरण की ओर नहीं है। प्रदूषण एक व्यापक बिम्ब है - भाषिक प्रदूषण, नैतिक प्रदूषण - सब इसकी छतरी में दुबके बैठे हैं। भाषा और भाव - दोनों में गर्दोगुबार, ढेर-सारा धूल-धुआँ, शोर-शराबा और औद्योगिक/ग्लोबल कूड़ा-करकट भरा जा रहा है। नैतिकता की छाती जकड़-सी गयी है।

ऐसे में जीना कोई हँसी-खेल नहीं। हमें इसे गम्भीरता से लेना

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चाहिए। ऐसे और इस तरह कि हमारे हाथ हमारी पीठ पर बँधे रहें (वीर भगतसिंह की तरह) या ईसा मसीह की तरह हम पूरे-के-पूरे ही दीवार में ठोक दिए जाएँ - फिर भी हमारे संकल्प डिगें नहीं। “सर्वाइवल ऑफ द फिटेस्ट” में “फिटेस्ट” कौन है - इसके मायने बदलने हैं हमें। “जिसकी लाठी, उसकी भैंस” का जंगल-राज खत्म करना है। “फिटेस्ट” वह है जो सम्वेदनशील और मानवीय है, कठोर और अन्यायी फासिस्टों का प्रभुत्व नष्ट करना है। सत्तर की उम्र में भी हमको बोना है - जैतून का पौधा जो सैंकड़ों वर्ष बाद अपनी छाया में सुस्ताते हुए लोगों से बोले कि हम मृत्यु का पता जानते थे पर उस पर विश्वास नहीं करते थे। जीवन, हम कहते थे, मृत्यु से ज्यादा वजनदार है।

मान लीजिए, हम बहुत बीमार हैं - ऑपरेशन की जरूरत है - जिसका मतलब है कि हो सकता है, हम उठ भी न सकें उस सफेद मेज से - हम फिर भी हँसें चुटकुले सुनते हुए, देखें खिड़की के बाहर कि बारिश तो नहीं हो रही या चिंताकुल प्रतीक्षा करें ताजा समाचार प्रसारण की मान लीजिए हम मोर्चे पर हैं - लड़ने लायक किसी चीज के लिए। वहाँ पहले ही हमले में, उसी दिन, हम औंधे गिर सकते हैं, मुँह के बल मुर्दा। हम जानते होंगे इसे एक अजीब गुस्से के साथ। फिर भी हम सोचते-सोचते हलकान कर लेंगे खुद को उस युद्ध के नतीजे के बाबत जो बरसों चल सकता है।

याद कीजिए, स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम में जेल गये सेनानियों को जो जेल में थे और पचास की उम्र की लपेट में और जानते थे कि क्या जाने कितने बरस लग जाएँ लौह-फाटकों के खुलने में, फिर भी सोच रहे थे कि हम फिर जिँगे बाहर की दुनिया के साथ, उसके लोगों, पशुओं, संघर्षों और हवा-पानी के साथ, दीवारों के पार की दुनिया के साथ। उन्होंने सिखाया हमें कि कहीं भी हों हम, कैसे भी, हमें यों जीते जाना है जैसे हम कभी मरेंगे ही नहीं।

यह धरती ठंडी हो जाएगी एक दिन, सितारों में एक सितारा - ऊपर से सबसे नन्हा ! मेरा मतलब है - यही - हमारी महान पृथ्वी, यह पृथ्वी ठंडी हो जाएगी एक दिन, बर्फ की सिल्ली की तरह नहीं, मुर्दा बादल की तरह भी नहीं, बल्कि एक खोखले अखरोट की तरह यह लुढ़कती होगी - एक घनघोर, काले शून्य में...अभी इसी वक्त हमें इसका दुख मनाना चाहिए - अभी, इसी वक्त

जरूरी है हमारे लिए यह अफसोस महसूस करना - क्योंकि दुनिया को इतना ही प्यार करना जरूरी है अगर आपको कहना है, “मैं जिया !”

आर्किमिडीज, लीवर-सिद्धांत की व्याख्या करता हुआ कहता था कि आसमान में एक टेक मिले तो एक छड़ी से सारी दुनिया पलट दूँ। यह टेक हमें साधनहीन लोगों के भग्न हृदय में मिल सकती है। हमारी मुश्किल ये है कि हम छड़ी से या सख्ती से या “कैरट एण्ड स्टिक” नीति से दुनिया की किस्मत पलटना नहीं चाहते। गाँधी का हम पर प्रभाव ऐसा गहरा है कि नहीं बनना चाहते हम फासिस्ट, नहीं करना चाहते हिटलर-मुसोलिनी-नीरो की क्रूरता। हममें से ज्यादातर के माँ-बाप मार्टिन लूथर किंग, गाँधी, नेल्सन मन्डेला और मदर टेरेसा के ऐसे पैरोकार हैं कि बचपन से उन्होंने हमें घुट्टी में ये ही पिला रखा है कि एक दमन-चक्र का जवाब दूसरा दमन-चक्र नहीं होता। वर्ग, जाति, लिंग, नस्ल आदि के आधार पर भेद-भाव अब तक हमारे इस जनजीवन का त्रासद यथार्थ है। गुस्सा तो काफी आता है अन्याय-अनाचार पर लेकिन सोवियत संघ के विघटन और चीन के उदारीकरण के बाद युवा आक्रोश को सही दिशा देने वाला कोई दर्शन फलक पर नजर ही नहीं आता। गुस्से का राजनीतिक पल्लवन नजर आता है तो आतंकवाद, धार्मिक दंगों या धुआँधार पेट्रो युद्धों में और वे पेट्रो-युद्ध और आवर्त साम्प्रदायिक दंगे आवर्ती दशमलव के भाग की तरह एक ही संख्या पर अटक गये-से दिखते हैं और वह संख्या है शून्य, एक विराट शून्य। बुद्ध वाला गोल्डेन जीरो नहीं, मीडास-टच वाला लालची शून्य जो हर ताकतवर संख्या के पीछे दुमछल्ले की तरह जा सटना चाहता है। कौन है हमारा “गॉड ऑफ स्मॉल थिंग्ज” - यही फैक्टर “एम” या धनदेवता - “गॉड ऑफ (रियल) स्मॉल थिंग्ज।” कहाँ गये बड़े सरोकार ? सत्य-अहिंसा-परोपकार-वृत्ति, परदुखकातरता, धीरज और निग्रह और शान्ति के आदर्श ? कहाँ उड़ गये ? - क्या वॉशिंग्टन की डिफन्क्ट यू.एन.ओ. बिल्डिंग के ऊँचे वातायनों पर कबूतरों की तरह घोंसले बनाकर रहने चले गये आदर्श ? बीते दिनों की गुटर-गूँ हैं बड़े मूल्य ? क्या सचमुच इनकी प्रासंगिकता छीजने लगी है ? फिर ये शाश्वत मूल्य कैसे कहलाते थे ?

भारतीय कविता के शेली, श्री सुमित्रानन्दन पन्त की पंक्ति है :-

“आ, धरती कितना देती है।” संसाधनों की सूची सर्वविदित है। जीने

“फिटेस्ट” वह है
जो सम्वेदनशील
और मानवीय है,
कठोर और
अन्यायी
फासिस्टों का
प्रभुत्व नष्ट
करना है।

धरती कोई भुना
हुआ भुट्टा नहीं है
कि दाँत से उसका
एक-एक दाना
भकोसकर आधार
एक तरफ पेंक
दें हम !

का आधार, अन्न-जल-आवास-स्वच्छ हवा, हरियाली और (क्षमा, धीरज, दृढ़ता, विनम्रता, त्याग और बलिदान आदि बड़े जीवन मूल्यों के प्रतीक) विभिन्न प्राकृतिक संसाधन - पेड़, पहाड़, नदियाँ, आकाश, सूरज-चाँद-तारे, पशु-पक्षी, खनिज-वनस्पतियाँ और औषधियाँ, फल-फूल, अग्नि-आकाश-रोशनी, 128 तत्त्व - यौगिक, मिश्रण, पाँच ऊर्जाएँ - सब तो प्रकृति का ही वरदान हैं। यह दिल-दिमाग - मानवीय मूल्यों का आकाश भी मूल दाय तो प्रकृति का ही है। जन्म से मृत्यु तक लगातार प्रकृति का दोहन करते हैं हम और बदले में इसको देते हैं क्या ? धूल-धुआँ, उठा-पटक, शोर-शराबा, आतंकवादी विस्फोटों से मुरझायी कश्मीरी घाटियाँ, नष्ट बामियाने, ढही मस्जिदें और आस्था के अन्य ढहे-ढिमलाए स्तूप ?

वर्ड्सवर्थ से लेकर आधुनिक लेखकों-चिन्तकों और कलाकारों ने, सांख्य दर्शन से लेकर मार्क्सवाद, अस्तित्ववाद और उत्तर-संरचनावाद के प्रवर्तकों ने प्रकृति और पुरुष के अन्योन्याश्रय संबंध पर जो भी मन्तव्य दिए हैं, उनका सार कुल मिलाकर तो मुझे यही नजर आता है कि समन्वय ही सुख का मूल है, अतिरेक विनाश का कारक, “अपने लिए जिए तो क्या जिए”, अपने लिए पशु भी जी लेते हैं, हम तो “पैरेबल ऑफ द टेलेण्ट” की अधिक प्रतिभावान सन्तानें हैं, हमें अपनी प्रतिभा और कारयित्री ऊर्जा प्राकृतिक साधनों के दोहन में नहीं, उनके संरक्षण और परिवर्द्धन में खर्च करनी चाहिए।

एक महर्षि भागीरथ थे, हमारे पूर्वज, जो भागीरथ प्रयत्नों से गंगा माँ को धरती पर उतार लाए थे और हम उनकी सन्तानें गंगा - यमुना को गन्दे नाले से बदतर छोड़ जाना चाहते हैं। हमें मिली साधु-सन्तों, आर्ष-ग्रंथों और गम्भीर चिन्तन की सिद्ध विरासत, रंग-बिरंगा मिथकीय लोक, दिग्गज इतिहास, एक-से-एक कहानियाँ, अद्भुत-सा काव्य-विवेक और छोड़कर क्या जा रहे हैं? शर्मनाक अफसाने, आगजनी, ठगी, बलात्कार, हत्या, फरेब के, हिंसा और अविश्वास के गर्हित प्रसंग। जीवन को हमने घुड़दौड़ समझ रखा है। इस प्रसंग में मेरी माँ बिल्कुल ठीक समझाती हैं - “Even if you win the rat race, you remain a rat. Isn't it a better idea to highlight your human potentials?” धरती कोई भुना हुआ भुट्टा नहीं है कि दाँत से उसका एक-एक दाना भकोसकर आधार एक तरफ पेंक दें हम ! यह नारंगी के आकार की होगी, पर नारंगी नहीं है कि

एक-एक फाँक चूसकर भविष्य के नाम (कूड़ेदानों के बाहर ही पड़ी हुई) सीढ़ियाँ छोड़ दी जाएँ।

गये जागीरदारों के दिन ! गये मन्सबदार ! गयी मन्सबदारी ! कम-से-कम अपनी पीढ़ी से मुझे ये ही उम्मीद है कि वह पिछली पीढ़ी की अस्तव्यस्तता से पाठ पढे और अगली पीढ़ी की अमानत समझकर बचाए रहे - दुनिया की सब सुन्दर चीजें - “सत्यम् शिवम् सुन्दरम्” का आदर्श, “वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्” का आदर्श, समता और समन्वय के सिद्धान्त, प्रेम और शान्ति का आचार, पाप-पुण्य की तात्त्विक परिभाषा जो सब धर्मग्रन्थों में एक-सी है -

“अष्टादश पुराणेशु व्यासस्य वचनम् द्रयम् ।
परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ।”

इस प्रसंग में एरिष फ्रीड हमेशा याद आते हैं मुझे ! धरती जैसी हमें मिली - उससे कुछ बेहतर छोड़ जाने का मूलमंत्र मुझे वहीं नजर आता है। कविता का अनुवाद अपनी भाषा में दे रहा हूँ क्योंकि अपनी भाषा में माँ के दूध का स्वाद होता है।

फिर एक बार बातें करना
जिन्दगी की गर्माहट की
ताकि कुछ एक तो जान सकें -
वह गर्म नहीं है।

पर वह गर्म हो सकती थी !
मेरी मौत के पहले
फिर एक बार बातें करना
प्यार की
ताकि कुछ एक तो जान सकें -
वह था,

वह जरूर होगा !
फिर एक बार बातें करना
खुशी की, उम्मीद की
ताकि कुछ लोग तो सवाल करें -
वह क्या थी, कब आएगी वह फिर ?





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