

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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Founder

M.N. ROY

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HAPPY 78TH INDEPENDENCE DAY



653

The Website of the Indian Renaissance Institute Launched & YouTube Channel of the Indian Renaissance Institute to be launched soon

We are happy to announce that
our website: www.indianrenaissanceinstitute.com has been launched.

By clicking at the three horizontal lines on the top right corner of the Home page
in your mobile, you can access all the windows/sections of the website.

1. **M.N. Roy** section gives the introduction of Roy and some of his close associates.
2. **The Radical Humanist** section contains
 - (1) all the issues of The Radical Humanist since February 2015;
 - (2) the two volumes of '**Selections from The Radical Humanist**';
 - (3) list of cities from where readers have accessed these two volumes at www.academia.edu;
 - (4) Compiled Record of Articles and Writers published in The Radical Humanist since April 1970;
 - (5) Articles by prominent writers like M.G. Devasahayam, Yogendra Yadav, Prem Singh, S.Y. Quraishi, S.N. Shukla and others on Indian democracy and the challenges faced by the people;
 - (6) Books written by M.N. Roy;
 - (7) Four published volumes of '**Selected Writings of M.N. Roy**' edited by Sib Narayan Ray;
 - (8) Books by other writers on radical humanism and related issues;

M.N. Roy and Justice V.M. Tarkunde Memorial Lectures

Narisetti Inniah's writings

'The Truth about the Gita' (Text) by Late V R Narla &

Audio-book: The Truth About the Gita

Film on M.N. Roy in French with English subtitles (in Four Parts).

3. **Organisation** section has
 - (1) *Photos of 13 Mohini Road, Dehradun where M.N. Roy and Mrs. Ellen Roy lived;*
 - (2) *Constitution of the Indian Renaissance Institute and the list of Members of the IRI;*
 - (3) *Present Office-bearers and Members of the Board of Trustees of the IRI;*
 - (4) *Previous Office-bearers of the IRI since 2017;*
 - (5) *Minutes of the General Membership Meetings and the Board of Trustees since 2017.*
4. **Indian Radical Humanist Association (IRHA)** section has information about the IRHA and its Constitution.

You are welcome to visit the website.

Mahi Pal Singh, 27.6.2024

THE RADICAL HUMANIST

Vol. 88 Number 5, August 2024

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a humanist view of life.

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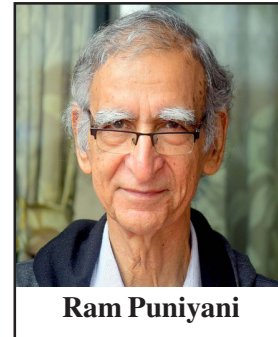
Emergency: Declared versus Undeclared

Om Birla, the speaker of Lok Sabha is mired in many controversies. When he started his 2nd term as Lok Sabha (Parliament) Speaker he read out a resolution against Emergency which was imposed in 1975 by Indira Gandhi. The background of that emergency was the rising Sampoorna Kranti (Total Revolution) Movement, led by Jaya Prakash Narayan (JP). The movement of students of Gujarat which began to protest against the rise in mess bill, was soon joined by the students of Bihar. This spiraled into students requesting JP to lead the movement at national level. JP gave the call of gheraoing (encircling) the assemblies and parliament. On 15th June 1975 in a huge rally in Ramlila Maidan, Delhi, he gave the call to military and police to defy the orders of the Government. Mrs. Gandhi's election was challenged and on flimsy grounds she was disqualified by the High Court. The Supreme Court gave a stay on this on 24 June.

Seeing the growing turmoil in the country, Mrs. Gandhi imposed the emergency using the article 352 of the Constitution on 25th June 1975. This lasted for 21 months, and she herself lifted it. Mrs. Gandhi had regretted the excesses during this period in a speech in Yavatmal on 24th January in 1978. Even Rahul Gandhi offered apologies for the excesses during Emergency. While the opposition leaders were arrested Lalu Pradsad Yadav who was in jail all through emergency, in a recent article along with a journalist (The Sangh Silence on Emergency, (I.E. June 29, 2024) wrote that though the opposition was arrested it was treated with dignity by Indira Gandhi. For many years BJP has been observing the 25 June as the dark period of Indian democracy.

The first major change which occurred around that time was that Jaya Prakash

Narayan, who was one of the tall leaders of the freedom movement, accepted RSS to be the part of the agitation launched by him. RSS's Nanaji Deshmukh, who has recently been awarded Bharat



Ram Puniyani

Ratna by the BJP regime, became the central organizer of the movement. It gave respectability to the RSS as it was under eclipse due to its trained ex-Pracharak Godse having killed the Father of the Nation. As some people pointed out to JP that RSS is a fascist organization, JP in his naivety or whatever went on to say, if RSS is fascist I too am a fascist!

JP's call to the army and police not to obey the orders was very unnerving and this precipitated the intensification of agitations, gherao of Parliament and Assemblies. RSS had played an important role in the Sampoorna Kranti movement, which gave it credibility in people's eyes. After the imposition of Emergency, when many of its members were arrested, it started bowing to the ruling regime. Many of its members signed Mafinamas (Mercy petitions) and got released.

BJP's effort is to project itself as the Hero of resistance of Emergency. Prabhaskar Joshi, the eminent journalist brought out the real truth in his article in Tehelka Magazine, "Balasaheb Deoras, then RSS chief, wrote a letter to Indira Gandhi pledging to help implement the notorious 20-point programme of Sanjay Gandhi. This is the real character of the RSS...You can decipher a line of action, a pattern. Even during the Emergency, many among the RSS and Jana Sangh who

came out of the jails gave mafinamas. They were the first to apologize. Only their leaders remained in jail: Atal Behari Vajpayee [most of time in hospital], LK Advani, even Arun Jaitley. But the RSS did not fight the Emergency. So why is the BJP trying to appropriate that memory?" Deoras's letters were also published in a book, 'Hindu Sangthan aur Sattavadi Rajniti', authored by him and published by Jagruti Prakashan Noida. Same was confirmed by T V Rajeshewar who was Deputy Chief of IB.

Press censorship and excesses on the issue of vasectomy and demolition of slums were painful parts of this period. On the contrary, since last ten years we have been witnessing the arrest of public intellectuals, participants in peaceful struggles, arrest of journalists, the mainstream media bowing to the regime, the opponents of Government policies being called anti-Nationals, the suspension of 146 members of parliament among others. The violations which took place during this period are aided by the foot soldiers of the patriarch of the ruling party, the RSS. The situation for the last one decade has been worse than the declared emergency. This is what prompted the critic of 1975 Emergency, Nayantara Sahgal to call the last one decade as *undeclared emergency*, "Well, we have an undeclared Emergency; there is no doubt about that. We have seen a huge, massive attack on the freedom of expression. We have seen innocent, helpless Indians killed because they

did not fit into the RSS's view of India. ... So we have a horrendous situation, a nightmare which is worse than the Emergency... It is an absolutely nightmarish situation which has no equal." And to cap it all the leader of BJP, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani also called last one decade as undeclared Emergency, "Today there is an undeclared emergency in the country. Even senior BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) leader Lal Krishna Advani hinted the same after the government formed but after pressure from RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), he became silent..." While we look back to the period of Emergency 1975, we need to introspect and ward off the periods like undeclared Emergency which the country has been witnessing for the last decade.

Filing mercy petitions to the rulers is the norm with the Hindu right wing. Savarakar wrote five mercy petitions when he was in Andamans, Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote on similar lines to get released during his arrest in 1942 uprising stating that he had nothing to do with the 'Quit India' movement and during emergency Balasaheb Deoras wrote to Indira Gandhi twice to patch up, and then requested Vinoba Bhave to ask Indira Gandhi to lift the ban on RSS. Also many BJP leaders like the late Arun Jaitley compared the Emergency period to Hitler's regime. The crucial difference between the two is the encouragement of foot soldiers by the fascist regime. It was brown shirts in Germany, in India there are many vigilante groups which flourished during the last one decade 🌈

The Radical Humanist on Website

'The Radical Humanist' is now available at <http://www.lohiatoday.com/> on Periodicals page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India.

– Mahi Pal Singh

New criminal laws mockery of Constitution, enacted without consultation

Teesta Setalvad

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023, which will come into effect from July 1, will replace the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Mumbai: The three new laws set to replace British-era ones from July 1 nationwide are a “mockery of the Indian Constitution”, claimed civil rights activist and journalist Teesta Setalvad here on Friday.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023, which will come into effect from July 1, will replace the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

“These laws mock the sovereignty enshrined in the Constitution. A detailed and

elaborate consultation was necessary before these laws were passed but that did not happen,” Setalvad said while speaking at an event on the topic ‘India’s New Criminal Laws: Reform or Repression?’ Certain provisions of the law that were amended after human rights and legal movements have been reintroduced in the name of decolonization, she claimed.

These laws “militate against participating democracy and the democratic fabric of the nation” and “aspire towards Hindu rashtra”, Setalvad asserted.

Others speakers at the event, Vrinda Grover and Vijay Hiremath, too opposed the new laws.

Emphasising the danger of “routinisation of extraordinary provisions”, Grover said some safeguards in the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) will no longer be available. The new laws are more draconian than the existing ones, Hiremath said.

Courtesy **Deccan Herald**, 29 June 2024. 🌈

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Governance by fear: Signs of failing State!

Even without a formal proclamation of Emergency, the record of BJP government in preserving democracy is equally bad, if not worse. Like during Emergency, even now institutions and individuals are running in panic. Power is centralised and institutions of democratic governance are trivialised

M.G. Devasahayam

INDIA just observed the 43rd anniversary of Emergency. Civil Rights stalwart Rajni Kothari described the period thus: “It was a State off-limits, a government that hijacked the whole edifice of the State, a ruling party and leader who in effect treated the State as their personal estate. It was the imposition of a highly concentrated apparatus of power on a fundamentally federal society and the turning over of this centralised apparatus for personal survival and family aggrandisement. It was one big swoop overtaking the whole country spreading a psychosis of fear and terror.”

Under such onslaught, India’s institutions and instruments of democratic governance—legislative, judicial, executive—were running in panic. Individuals were moving in hushed silence traumatised by what was going on. Though caused by an autocratic Congress Prime Minister, it had the backing of a Presidential mandate issued on June 25, 1975: “In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 352 of the Constitution, I, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, President of India, by this Proclamation declare that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbances.”

Democracy has shrunk and has been replaced by a creeping ‘kleptocracy’ marked by slavish flattery, autocratic arrogance, unbridled greed and criminalised corruption. In the event, the First Republic, so painstakingly constructed by our Founding Fathers, is falling apart and is on the precipice of collapse

Irony is that even without a formal proclamation of Emergency, the record of BJP

government in preserving democracy is equally bad, if not worse. Like during Emergency, even now institutions and individuals are running in panic. Parliament passes harsh laws as Money Bills; Reserve Bank ‘demonetises’ the currency throwing people on the streets;

‘voluntary’ Aadhaar is being rammed down people’s throats through executive diktats. Rapes, lynching and killings take place with abandon. Political rallies are held to rationalise these gruesome crimes. Predatory, nature-killing ‘development’ projects are being pushed through State terror. Those who oppose these are branded as extremists and anti-nationals and draconian laws, including Sedition and National Security Act, are invoked against them. Power is centralised and institutions of democratic governance are trivialised.

As former BJP veteran Yashwant Sinha puts it: “While nobody has been put behind bars as in 1975, there is still an all-pervasive atmosphere of fear and people are scared... Even cabinet ministers are not spared. The situation is far worse than it was in the declared Emergency of Indira Gandhi.” Tragedy is that his own son, Jayant Sinha, who is a Cabinet Minister, garlands and hugs those who have committed the horrendous crime of lynching and murder and swears his obsequiousness to them! Can there be anything more shameful?

I have been a strident critic of Emergency for subverting democracy which is India’s most precious asset. Yet I believe that the present ruling establishment has no shouting rights against Emergency. Let us take a closer look at the

declared Emergency of June 1975 and the undeclared Emergency prevailing in the country in the last few years. There was no lynching of Muslims, killing and assaults on Dalits, communal riots, political killings, Hindutva majoritarianism, targeted killing of left liberal intellectuals and journalists, political rally in support of gruesome rape, cow vigilantes roaming streets attacking and killing animal traders and meat eaters during Emergency as of now.

THERE was also no religion-based senas, dals, vahinis of goons, louts and street lumpens harassing, extorting, assaulting and killing defenceless citizens. There were no arms training to young innocent girls and boys in parks and institutions. There was no fear of majority community among minority communities. There were no hate crimes against fellow citizens. No pub attacks or private kitchen searches for beef. No restrictions on food and clothes of citizens. No moral policing in parks and public places. No forcible closure of NGOs. No fellow citizen was declared extremist or anti-national or asked to go to Pakistan or Europe.

Though the character and contents are different, there is a common thread between Emergency and now—‘Governance by Fear’. Only difference is that the method adopted then was ‘jhatka’ (single chop) and now it is ‘halal’ (slow killing). Effect on freedom and liberty is the same, probably a shade worse now!

Though the character and contents are different, there is a common thread between Emergency and now—‘Governance by Fear’. Only difference is that the method adopted then was ‘jhatka’ (single chop) and now it is ‘halal’ (slow killing). Effect on freedom and liberty is the same, probably a shade worse now!

Why is this happening in a country touted as world’s largest democracy? Answer is not far to seek—it is the deliberate wrecking of India’s Constitution and trying to ‘govern’ the country outside the ambit of this ‘charter of governance’.

DESCRIBING the Republic of USA, Joseph

Story wrote: “The structure has been erected by architects of consummate skill and fidelity; its foundations are solid; its compartments are beautiful as well as useful; its arrangements are full of wisdom and order; and its defences are impregnable from without; It has been reared for immortality, if the work of man may justly aspire for such title.... Republics are created—these are the words, which I commend to you for your consideration—by the virtue, public spirit and intelligence of the citizens. They fall when the wise are banished from the public councils because they dare to be honest, and the profligate are rewarded because they flatter the people in order to betray them.”

Republic of India was structured on similar lines. But seven decades in to its working, it is tottering and sinking because the virtue, public spirit and intelligence of India’s citizens is under assault and the “wise among her sons and daughters have been banished from the public councils for their honesty and integrity, and the profligates rewarded because they are venal, communal and servile”. Democracy has shrunk and has been replaced by a creeping ‘kleptocracy’ marked by slavish flattery, autocratic arrogance, unbridled greed and criminalised corruption. In the event, the First Republic, so painstakingly constructed by our Founding Fathers, is falling apart and is on the precipice of collapse.

Institutions of democratic governance built into the Constitution and other laws and legislations are being ravaged in order to destroy the democratic edifice and build an autocratic State. Instances are the sharp decline of the office of President of India, the Council of Ministers, Parliament, and Constitutional bodies like CAG and the Election Commission. In order to concentrate political and administrative power in few hands, instruments of public service are either demolished or made to self-destruct in order to snatch them away from the people and hand them over to a small coterie of oligarchs

who own over 75 per cent of India's wealth today. In recent years, well-orchestrated communal hatred and polarisation agenda has been unleashed to strengthen the hold of these oligarchs on India's economy and polity.

The higher judiciary, the last bastion of freedom and democracy is itself in deep distress. Four senior judges of the Supreme Court 'paying their debt to the nation' were forced to place their case before 'We, the People' with this poignant statement by the senior most among them: "We are all...four of us are convinced that unless this institution is preserved and it maintains its equanimity, democracy will not survive in this country." Since then things have gone from bad to worse affecting the very credibility of this highest court of the land!

ALL-INDIA Services, public sector banks, public sector undertakings, public broadcaster (Prasar Bharati), defence installations, telecommunication industry, port trusts, are all being deliberately enfeebled and sabotaged from within. 'Development' has become a farce to hand over massive amount of public money to private individuals through predatory 'infrastructure' projects while starving the critical agriculture and social sectors. This has made India the most non-inclusive and inequitable country in the world only next to Russia! Most of the mainstream media, owned or controlled by the oligarchs, have turned mercenary and are singing the paeans of those who are systematically devastating the Republic and the institutions of people's power.

These are the opening words of the Constitution of India: "We, the People of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equity of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the

Nation....do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution."

Sadly, over the years, these core objectives have been mingled in dust. Justice has become inaccessible, distant, costly and purchasable; Liberty is ravaged by a spate of freedom-killing preventive detention laws and gross abuse of the IPC provisions of sedition and 'waging war against the State' as well as Sections of the IT Act; Equity is evaporating with governments selling/mortgaging country's assets to MNCs and big businesses in the garb of 'Reforms' and Fraternity is faltering with dignity of the individual and integrity of the Nation being severely compromised.

Founding Fathers had called for a Constitution "wherein all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people". Their vision of 'Swaraj' envisaged a people-based governance with a bottom-up decision-making process that would give everyone 'a place in the sun'.

In the past few years, demonetisation, Aadhaar and, to some extent, GST have been used to 'terrorise' the common man and make him run around like a headless chicken by destabilising his life and livelihood

In Gandhian thoughts, India's democratic governance structure would rise storey by storey from the foundation comprising of self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities. These self-governing entities will control and regulate the use of natural resources for the good of the community and the nation. This was the trust reposed by the Founding Fathers on the Parliament.

But the governance structure we have today is all-powerful Central and State governments controlling and mismanaging all financial and natural resources. There is no trace of grassroot democracy or Swaraj.

'Fear' seem to be the overarching tool of governance. For this purpose, most draconian and

anti-people provisions of the Indian Penal Code-Section 121: “Waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war, against the Government of India” and Section 124A: Sedition, both prescribing life imprisonment-are being liberally misused by the state.

Parliament has been busy with enacting legislations to facilitate the State and banking institutions to let loose police and financial terrorism (Maintenance of Internal Security Act; Unlawful Activities Prevention Act; Prevention of Terrorism Act; National Security Act and Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Act) on banks, citizens and entrepreneurs. Parliament has not lifted a finger to prevent the gross abuse and misuse of these draconian laws. In the event, peaceful mass protests and people’s aspirations are being brutally put down and common man’s voices go unheard.

IN the last few years, ‘demonetisation’, Aadhaar and, to some extent, GST have been used to ‘terrorise’ the common man and make him run around like headless chicken by destabilising his life and livelihood. Liberalisation and privatisation have turned educational institutions into windowless fortress preventing young minds from blossoming into fruitful citizens and future leaders.

Election is the essence of democracy and Integrity is its salt. Saltiness of India’s elections is fast losing its flavour and the electoral process is being cast out and trodden under the heavy boots of criminal and money-power, rendering democracy virtually worthless. The very dignity of democracy is at stake. EVMs do not conform to basic ‘democracy principles’. Yet Government and Parliament are unconcerned about electoral reforms that have been pending for decades!

Overcome by a sense of fear, while democracy and development have diminished for the common man, India is increasingly showing signs of a ‘failed State’. The first Republic has morphed into a kleptocratic-oligarchy, not a vibrant democracy as originally envisaged.

At the dawn of the last millennium, Rabindranath Tagore, that great Son of India wrote these captivating lines: “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.... Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.” India has moved far away from this clarion. The promised “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” has been replaced with “Maximum Government and Governance by Fear.” Cry, my beloved Country!

Writer is a former Army and IAS Officer.
Courtesy **Gfiles**, July 16, 2018. 

Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist

Dear Friends,

Please mail your articles / reports for publication in the RH to:- theradicalhumanist@gmail.com or mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com or post them to:- Mahi Pal Singh, Raghav Vihar Phase-3, Prem Nagar, Dehradun, 248007 (Uttarakhand)

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A note whether it has also been published elsewhere or is being sent exclusively for the RH should also be attached with it.

- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist

Why India needs one election, one phase

*Climate change and social media have complicated the picture.
With steps introduced by Election Commission in last two decades,
polls can easily be completed in one phase.*

S. Y. Quraishi

The logic of multi-phase elections has increasingly come under question in the last decade. I have been asked this question umpteen number of times and have always defended it, mentioning that the only reason for it is the protection of lives — of voters and the polling staff. People have accepted this reply as reasonable, but not anymore.

It is increasingly clear that the problems arising out of multi-phase elections far outweigh the benefits. The recent seven-phase election was held in 45-50 degrees temperatures, leading to several deaths. The prolonged election was questioned by almost all political parties, the media, not to mention the voters. Even the Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar, admitted that the one lesson the Election Commission (EC) learnt from the latest election was that it should have been shorter.

At the time multi-phase elections were introduced, the situation was radically different. The use of muscle power was rampant. Violence, including murders, on polling day or during the campaign was common. In the mid-1990s, T N Seshan introduced the deployment of central armed police forces. The number of paramilitary personnel made available to the EC was always limited as many of them had to be withdrawn from sensitive areas where they were deployed, including at the borders. There was never enough personnel to cover all the sensitive and hypersensitive polling booths, so they had to be rotated from one phase to the next. This led to the introduction of multiple phases that was welcomed by all political parties who believed that the local police was either weak or vulnerable to political pressure.

While this measure definitely made elections peaceful, with acrimonious electoral competition and social media explosion in recent years, it has created more problems than it had solved. While the forces take four to five days (seven to 11 days in the recent elections) to move from one phase to the other, criminals move much faster. Rumours, fake news and hate speech spread in seconds, which, in multiple phases, have disastrous consequences. In fact, this year's Lok Sabha elections took place over two-and-half months, with the longest ever gaps between phases, and high levels of communal rhetoric. Social media widely disseminated fake news, disinformation and hate speech. The Guardian reported that Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, approved AI-manipulated political adverts during India's 2024 election that spread disinformation, including against Muslims, besides false claims about Opposition leaders.

The social media explosion in the last decade has created a dangerous situation. In January this year, there were 751 million internet users (up from 65 million in 2014), at a penetration rate of 52.4 per cent of the total population. Almost half of them use Facebook. WhatsApp and YouTube are not far behind. CSDS data shows that nearly four times more people use Facebook today than they did in the previous general election. The cheap data revolution, triggered by the launch of the Jio phone network in September 2016, has also transformed Indian politics. Political parties are vying with each other to ride the wave.

Social media's dangerous influence over the general public has come to light repeatedly. A

recent study from Tech Global Institute found that 85 per cent of political content uploaded by Indian influencers across different platforms did not disclose it as sponsored content, thereby hampering transparency and accountability during elections.

Now, the question would be whether going back to a single-phase poll would ensure peaceful elections. I daresay, most certainly, with a range of steps introduced by the EC in the last two decades. The EC has introduced vulnerability mapping of all polling stations in the country, which identifies potential troublemakers who are brought to book under the CRPC with a bond for good conduct. Nearly half a million such persons have been identified in recent times. Campaigns to seize illegal arms have been effective. Even licenced arms are ordered to be surrendered. Most importantly, the non-bailable warrants (NBW) against criminals, including murderers, rapists, kidnappers, etc, which used to stay unexecuted under political pressure for months, even years, with the absconders reported as “untraceable”, are now a thing of the past. The restoration of peace in hitherto militancy and terror-prone areas, as repeatedly claimed by the government, including by no less a person than the Home Minister, strengthens the argument.

There are many existing laws and provisions that can be invoked to ensure peaceful elections. Several powerful provisions in IPC can be applied to control hate speech, cyber crimes and online abuse. These are Section 295A (intentionally insulting religion or belief), Section 153A (promoting enmity between people),

Section 499 (defamation), and Section 505 (statements conducing to public mischief), 506 (criminal intimidation). There is also the Representation of the People Act (RP), Section 125 (promoting enmity between classes in connection with election). All these sections provide imprisonment of one to three years.

All we need is to ensure their prompt and even-handed implementation.

A general election can easily be completed in a single phase. All that is needed is about 4,000-5,000 companies, now easily available with the raising of a large number of battalions of different paramilitary forces and restoration of peace in most trouble-prone areas. The RP Act provides 26 days from the notification of the election to the last day of poll. We can add about seven days for political activity such as selection of candidates. Thus, 33-35 days is all we need to conduct a general election. It will reduce the duration of the paramilitary forces being pulled out, save crores of rupees spent on prolonged campaigns and spare our top leaders the trouble of addressing hundreds of election meetings disrupting normal work. Above all, it will cut down the time for mischief and hate mongering. Hasn't our Prime Minister repeatedly expressed concern about the money spent and work coming to a standstill because of prolonged elections? It is time we addressed his concern.

The writer is former Chief Election Commissioner of India and author of India's Experiment with Democracy: The Life of a Nation Through its Elections

Courtesy **The Indian Express**, June 25, 2024. 🌈

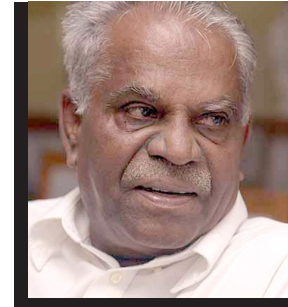
"History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people."

Martin Luther King



The 2024 Lok Sabha Election is a Tale of Egregious Errors and Wanton Violations

The flurry of violations coupled with total blocking of end-to-end verifiability leads one to believe that General Election-2024 has been conducted with lies clothed in truth.



M.G. Devasahayam

The Election Commission. Photo: XI/ @SpokespersonECI

For once if the word ‘pyrrhic’ had any meaning, it is in the recently concluded general election to India’s Parliament. Some are celebrating the ‘victory,’ some the ‘defeat’ and many are licking the ‘wounds’ of both. In the process, hardly any attention is being given to the conduct of the most incompetent and unfair election in history and its outcome, which saw serious and severe violations of laws, codes and Supreme Court judgments.

Former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah puts it mildly when he wrote: “In “Electoral Democracy: An enquiry into the Fairness and Integrity of Elections in India,” a retired group of civil servants researched with the assistance of experts at home, including the IITs, and abroad, broaching the possibility of the electoral process in India being compromised. The nature of elections in Delhi, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, and even in some parts of Uttar Pradesh make these elections worthy of review.”

To start with, Section 59 of the Representation of People’s Act, 1951 (RPA)

which mandates the conduct of elections through ballot paper has been violated with impunity. This is what the provision says: “Manner of voting at elections:- At every election where a poll is taken votes shall be given by ballot in such manner as may be prescribed and, save as expressly provided by this Act, no votes shall be received by proxy.”

This was followed by non-compliance of Section 61A which provides for voting machines at elections subject to conditions: “Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or the rules made thereunder, the giving and recording of votes by voting machines in such manner as may be prescribed, may be adopted in such constituency or constituencies as the Election Commission may, having regard to the circumstances of each case, specify.”

It is to be noted that while Section 59 uses the word “shall”, Section 61A says only “may” making the legislative intention clear—conduct of elections in India should be with ballot paper and EVM may be an option if that was not possible.

Therefore, as per administrative protocol, Election Commission of India (ECI) is required to issue a constituency-wise 'notification' explaining the circumstances under which elections could not be conducted with ballot papers and electronic voting machines (EVM) would be used for the purpose.

No such notifications were issued by the ECI either before or after the announcement of election schedule on 16 March, 2024. This makes the election ab initio illegal.

Next comes the ECI's total inaction on the violation of (a) the Model Code of Conduct, (b) Sections 123(3) and (3A), 125 of the RPA, and Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At an election rally in Rajasthan's Banswara on April 21, 2024 Modi claimed the Congress manifesto had promised to seize and redistribute private wealth of Indians among "infiltrators" and "those who have more children"—a dog whistle reference to India's Muslims.

In the same speech, the prime minister claimed that the Congress would snatch away the *mangalsutras* worn by married Hindu women in its bid to distribute wealth among Muslims. Nearly 20,000 individuals had collectively penned letters to the ECI, urging action against the PM for these devastating comments made against Muslims.

But there was not even a wimp from the ECI on this and other similar 'poisonous arrows.' Emboldened by this, Prime Minister went on making more inflammatory statements that clearly violated the MCC and RPA.

In fact, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar gave a self-incriminating explanation to this impotent inaction when he said that the Election Commission had deliberated over poll code violations during the 2024 general elections at length and had decided to not admonish two top leaders each from the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress—Narendra Modi and Amit Shah of the

BJP and Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the INC.

"We deliberately decided—this is such a huge nation—that the top two people in both the parties we did not touch. Both party presidents we touched equally. Why did we leave two this side and two that side? The persons in position in this huge country also have responsibility. We reminded them of their responsibility," Kumar had said.

This is clear discrimination and constitutional violation by the CEC.

As rightly observed in this piece, "Part III of the Constitution of India is titled Fundamental Rights. It says, "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. Article 14 of this part of the Constitution, titled "Equality before law", reads as follows: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India." It is the provisions of Article 14 that the Election Commission *prima facie* appears to have violated."

This is a very serious matter.

Now, let's come to the ECI's wanton defiance of Supreme Court orders. In its judgment dated 8.10.2013 in *Subramanian Swamy v. Election Commission of India*, (2013) 10 SCC 500, Supreme Court had clearly laid out the purpose of introducing the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) along with EVMs.

"From the materials placed by both the sides, we are satisfied that the "paper trail" is an indispensable requirement of free and fair elections. The confidence of the voters in the EVMs can be achieved only with the introduction of the "paper trail." EVMs with VVPAT system ensure the accuracy of the voting system. With an intent to have fullest transparency in the system and to restore the confidence of the voters, it is necessary to set

up EVMs with VVPAT system because vote is nothing but an act of expression which has immense importance in democratic system,” the judgment had said.

Apex Court’s purpose was to make the EVM voting/counting to comply with the essential ‘Democracy Principles’ of End-to-End (E2E) verifiability i.e. voter should be able to verify that her vote is cast-as-intended, recorded-as-cast and counted-as-recorded.

This ipso facto meant that EVM should be used for voting and all the printed slips in the VVPAT machine should be counted before declaring results. Pursuant to the 8.10.2013 order and other directives, ECI arranged for all EVMs to be accompanied with VVPAT for the 2019 general elections. Without counting of VVPAT slips in a significant percentage of polling stations in each assembly constituency, the objectives of verifiability and transparency in the democratic process would remain unrealised.

But, in defiance of this basic principle, vide its letter dated 13.02.2018 ECI directed state chief electoral officers to mandatorily verify VVPAT paper slips in only one randomly selected polling station in each assembly constituency.

This being around 0.5% sample size which is pathetically low, defeated the very object of installing VVPATs in all EVMs which tantamount to non-implementation of Supreme Court Order. But ironically Supreme Court endorsed this gross violation when a Bench comprising of Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Sanjay Khanna passed this order on 08-04-2019: “.....our considered view is that the number of EVMs that would now be subjected to verification so far as VVPAT paper trail is concerned would be 5 per Assembly Constituency or Assembly Segments in a Parliamentary Constituency instead of what is provided by Guideline No. 16.6, namely, one machine per Assembly Constituency or

Assembly Segment in a Parliamentary Constituency.....”

SC had just increased the sample size from a microscopic 0.5% to miniscule 2 % whereas the demand was for a reasonable 30% to 50% based on sound statistical principles. E2E verifiability had thus been intentionally denied, a typical case of ‘fence eating the crops.’

In its report titled “Is the Indian EVM and VVPAT System Fit for Democratic Elections?” released in January, 2021 and submitted to ECI, Citizens Commission on Election (CCE) had said that EVM system does not provide provable guarantees against hacking, tampering and spurious vote injections and the VVPAT system as practiced does not allow the voter to verify the slip before the vote is cast and the absence of E2E verification would lead to voting and counting manipulation and had suggested remedial measures.

ECI did not bother to respond.

Therefore, in August-September 2023 civil society submitted a memorandum to ECI signed by about 10,000 voters making a specific demand: “The VVPAT system should be recalibrated to be fully voter-verifiable. A voter should be able to get the VVPAT slip in her hand and cast it in a chip-free ballot box for the vote to be valid. These VVPAT slips should be fully counted first for all constituencies before the results are declared.”

ECI did not even acknowledge this Memorandum.

The matter therefore went before the Supreme Court in W.P (C) No. 184 of 2024 wherein the above demand was rejected thus fully facilitating the ECI to trash its own order in Swamy case.

ECI had nefariously succeeded in effectively blocking the E2E verifiability thereby paving the way for voting and counting manipulation on a selective and secretive basis. And CEC Rajiv Kumar was celebrating this defeat of “essential democracy principles”! This is the reason why

despite the results for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections being out, the controversy around the election process persists.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections data shows discrepancies in almost all PCs. A close look at EC data from 543 PCs shows that except for a few PCs like Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Attingal in Kerala, the number of EVM votes counted differs from that of EVM votes polled. In more than 140 PCs, the number of EVM votes counted surpassed the number of EVM votes polled.

ECI is unable to give any satisfactory response to this apparent fraud. Is something rotten in the halls of Nirvachan Sadan?

And there is more. In the same judgment delivered on 26.04.2024 Supreme Court opened two windows for verification through these directions:

“76. (a) On completion of the symbol loading process in the VVPATs undertaken on or after 01.05.2024, the symbol loading units shall be sealed and secured in a container. The candidates or their representatives shall sign the seal. The sealed containers, containing the symbol loading units, shall be kept in the strong room along with the EVMs at least for a period of 45 days post the declaration of results. They shall be opened, examined and dealt with as in the case of EVMs,” said the Supreme Court judgment.

(b) The burnt memory/microcontroller in 5% of the EVMs, that is, the control unit, ballot unit and the VVPAT, per assembly constituency/assembly segment of a parliamentary constituency shall be checked and verified by the team of engineers from the manufacturers of the EVMs, post the announcement of the results, for any tampering or modification, on a written request made by candidates who are at SI.No.2 or SI.No.3, behind the highest polled candidate.... The actual cost or expenses for the said verification will be notified by the ECI, and the candidate making the said request will pay for such expenses. The expenses will be

refunded, in case the EVM is found to be tampered,” the Supreme Court judgment added.

Both these directions were not carried out in letter and spirit by the ECI and direction (b) was sabotaged and wilfully disobeyed. Whereas Administrative SOP for the ‘burnt memory/microcontroller’ was issued on June 1, 2024—just three days before the date of counting and announcement of results charging a hefty fee of Rs. 40,000 plus 18% GST per EVM—no Technical SOP to make it operative as mentioned in Para 7 was issued till June 11, 2024 thereby effectively preventing candidates from availing of this window provided by the Supreme Court. The suspicion is that ECI did this to prevent detection of possible spurious injection of votes to steal the mandate in favour of a particular party.

These and other egregious errors and wanton violations coupled with total blocking of E2E verifiability leads one to believe that General Election-2024 has been conducted with lies clothed in truth. Things have come to such a pass that post the Lok Sabha elections, a substantive criminal complaint has emerged, filed by Advocate Mehmood Pracha, which alleges extensive manipulation and misconduct in the election process.

The complaint seeks immediate registration of cases under Section 129 of the Representation of the People’s Act, 1951, Section 65/66/66F of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and Section 171F/409/417/466/120B/201/34 Indian Penal Code and investigation into the roles of all involved, including ECI officials, BEL and ECIL engineers, and BJP office bearers.

If allowed to go on in the present pace, electoral democracy will perish in the world’s most populous country where in live one-sixth of humanity. Can this be countenanced?

M.G. Devasahayam is coordinator, *Citizens Commission on Elections*.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 20 June, 2024. 🌈

Collapse of trust in examination system amounts to a collapse in trust in system as a whole

Exams are a test of a certain kind of skill: If nothing else ambition, concentration, endurance, commitment and character.

India's coaching industry is much derided.

But coaching is an inevitable consequence where competitive stakes are high

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

There is no question that the **NEET exam scandal** is a colossal breach of trust. In any high stakes examination system, there will be attempts to circumvent the system. Even the famed Chinese Gaokao system was subject to cases of identity theft. But the scale this time is staggering. The paper leaks spread from Gujarat to Bihar. NTA had to preemptively cancel other exams. This suggests a widespread systemic rot, not an episodic lapse. The early indications from Bihar suggest that this racket might extend to other government exams as well. Across exams, almost three million students are now subject to unimaginable psychological pressure, financial hardship and pedagogical uncertainty. It is lucky for the government that the scandal broke after the election. It would otherwise have gone into the election with its reputation for governance in ruins. It now starts a new tenure with a shameful trust deficit.

There are matters of immediate concern: Should retests be conducted? How can students who put their lives on hold and travel in inhospitable conditions be compensated? What safeguards does the examination system need? How will institutions cope with the changed calendar? But beyond the immediate crisis, this scandal poses large questions for India's democracy and the governance of India's institutions.

The Indian Republic runs on two procedural legitimating devices: Elections and exams. In reality, both can be distorted by the operations of power and money. But both are, all things,

considered, the fairest forms of procedural legitimation, at least compared to any other institution in society. They are the only two sites where fairness can at least be demanded. Both also produce enough churn and mobility, again compared to any other institutional setting, to be the source of hopes and dreams.

The entire weight of fairness in our system is borne by the examination system: Not by equal access to schools, pedagogical quality or prospects for employment after exams. Exams function as a legitimating ideology in a system marked by extreme scarcity. The more relative scarcity we produce, by failing to create more and better institutions, by failing to create jobs, the more the stakes in the exam system. So a collapse in trust in the exam system is tantamount to a collapse in trust in the system as a whole. Imagine a day where trust in the UPSC exam collapses. More than a revolution, that might make the Indian state collapse.

Our obsession with exams is a reflection for procedurally signalling justice. First, it provides a legitimating device for the students that are in fact chosen; they have rightly earned their place. Second, it is probably the only means of social mobility available to large numbers of young Indians. The increasing success of students who beat social and financial odds (though still not nearly as large as it should be), adds to the myth of fairness. The fact that many privileged students have seceded from aspects of the exam system, like IIT-JEE or UPSC, because it is too tough, and prefer to find their

pathways elsewhere only adds to the mystique.

Exams are the only means we know for putting students on a single commensurate scale: The myth of meritocracy requires commensuration. And as much as educators decry the emphasis on exams, rather than learning, three things are incontrovertible. As in many cultures, they are lodged in an ideology of filial obligation: Parents can fulfil their obligations best by creating the best possible conditions for exam preparation; students can express their sincerity by preparing — so much of the learning in India's education system is happening in the preparation for exams.

Exams are a test of a certain kind of skill: If nothing else, ambition, concentration, endurance, commitment and character. India's coaching industry is much derided. But coaching is an inevitable consequence where competitive stakes are high. The blunt truth is that in many cases, coaching is actually teaching you more than your regular institutions are. The tuition mania is not just competition, it makes up for lack of school or college preparation. The tragedy is that there are very few options for those who do not make it to this system — the consequences of failure can be crushing. Given the low probabilities for success, aspirants can sometimes set themselves up for bigger failures, not because of lack of effort, but because of a single mindedness that did not yield a desired result. The tragedy is that we make people fail despite immense effort.

So the mania for exams is deeply rooted in our constructions of fairness, commensurability and opportunity. Vested interests play on this. Just as the form of privatisation in Indian Higher Education was driven by a politician-educator nexus, the creation of centralised exams is also driven by a political economy of coaching. In this government, this shift in education has also been marked by a deadly combination of ideological control and administrative incompetence.

There are some areas where national exams are inevitable and make sense. But the question to ask is: Why has there been so little resistance to excessive centralised exam mania? When NEET was enacted, Tamil Nadu raised valid objections on federalism grounds, but most other states, irrespective of party, were willing to cede ground. However, there are new national exams that are a travesty: In fact one of the things we need to review is where national exams are necessary.

This might also reduce the load on NTA, which might help improve its performance. CUET is one such example. It is an entirely unnecessary exam that simply adds another layer of uncertainty and hardship without any pedagogical gain. But the ease with which it was accepted is astounding. Part of what facilitated that centralisation was lack of trust. We don't trust state boards, we cannot do normalisation and commensuration (strictly speaking not true), and so we need centralisation.

In the case of central universities, the facilitation was made possible by successive governments taking a battering ram to public universities, and wresting control of them away from competent academics. Unfortunately, the abdication of the academic community was almost total, ceding control of every aspect of higher education to the central government. Ironically, the thrust in centralised exam mania in higher education was created by a distrust of everyone else: State governments cannot be trusted, boards cannot be trusted, and universities cannot be trusted. But lo and behold, a centralised bureaucratic agency conducting exams can. Now that trust has also come crashing down, leaving destroyed lives and a devastated system in its wake.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

Courtesy **The Indian Express**, June 25, 2024. 

'Doubts About Longevity Of Modi Govt'

Shobha Warrier

'I have serious doubts about the longevity of the NDA government and the longevity of the 18th Lok Sabha itself.'

Political economist **Parakala Prabhakar** was one of the few commentators in India who had predicted before the elections that the Bharatiya Janata Party would not get more than 240 seats! And he was bang on!

In his interview to *Rediff.com*, Prabhakar — who is married to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman — had said, **"Modi fatigue has set in, and the BJP is in for huge punishment by the electorate."**

"There is no point in pretending that things are what they were before. No, they have changed. The sooner the government and people in power recognise the shift in the ground, the better for them," Prabhakar tells *Rediff.com*'s **Shobha Warrier** in the concluding segment of a two-part interview:

You know Chandrababu Naidu very well having worked with him for many years. Do you think he will continue to support Narendra Modi?

Remember the TDP (*Telugu Desam Party*) walked out of the NDA (*National Democratic Alliance*) government in 2018. That was done because the Centre was not ready to give special category status to Andhra Pradesh.

Now, in order for Mr Naidu to continue with the NDA and support the government, he will have to tell the people, 'This is what I got in lieu of support', and that cannot be anything other than special category status.

So, there will be enough pressure on him from the people of the state to get the special category status.

If Andhra Pradesh is given special category status, Bihar will ask. And many other people also will ask.

So, you need to have a sensible Union government which accommodates all these demands.

They have taken a very strong stand against giving special category status in 2018. Now, they have to go back on that.

Now that you spoke about going back on the stand taken earlier, do you think we will not hear about Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan or Hindu Rashtra for some time?

Times are different now. They might make some noises here and there, but you have to remember that none of their allies are ideological allies.

I have my doubts about them going along with the BJP on such issues and issues like Gyanvapi or Mathura.

Will the BJP have the courage to go ahead with Gyanvapi or Mathura now that they have lost Faizabad where the Ayodhya Ram temple is?

Is it not symbolic of people speaking against the kind of politics they were indulging in?

Yes, there is a very clear message from the verdict; that no more of the Hindu-Muslim, Musalman, Mangalasutra kind of politics, and concentrate on the issues that affect people.

If the BJP and the government do not recognise that mandate, and move as though nothing has changed, I think they are going to get a huge backlash.

What will happen to the Electoral Bond scam, the PM Cares controversy and the latest stock market controversy now that they are back in power?

The reason why they want to stick to power is that if an Opposition government comes into power, all these things will be unearthed.

They will be probed, and they will be in a

deep soup.

There are scams starting from the Rafale deal to Pegasus to Electoral Bonds to PM Cares to the stock exchange.

People have calculated that the discrepancy in the difference between the official income of the BJP and the expenditure in terms of building so many swanky offices all over the country, is close to Rs 60,000 crores (*Rs 600 billion*).

Do you feel the scams were not discussed or debated in the country because the mainstream media did not perform its duty?

The so-called mainstream media have become another department of the information and broadcasting ministry.

It's like the DAVP (*Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity*).

That's the reason why a lot of people's pent-up anger came through the independent media.

I have always maintained that in this election, the fight was between Narendra Modi and the people of India, the BJP and the people of India and the NDA and the people of India.

The people of India have spoken very loudly, and they have totally dejected this kind of politics in spite of the control of the media, in spite of no level playing field, in spite of the control of the Election Commission, in spite of jailing chief ministers, in spite of freezing the accounts of the main Opposition party...

Imagine for a while, if it were a level playing field, things would have been very, very drastically different.

Looking at the results, do you feel the people of India are basically secular in nature?

If you want to draw an analogy from economics and markets, you see when the markets get over heated, they get corrected.

Similarly, the Indian polity has undergone a process of correction.

The people have pulled the BJP back into

the political centre from when it was trying to change the trajectory to far right.

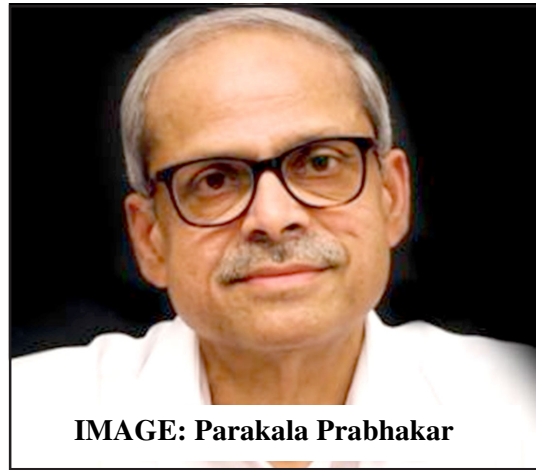


IMAGE: Parakala Prabhakar

Your final thoughts?

The first message of the election is, Indian people have very clearly said, 'We do not want to go down the road of Hindutva, Hindi, Hindu, Hindu Rashtra kind of politics. We want a life where we live together with everybody. And India belongs to everybody. Don't drag us down the road of majoritarian, fascist and dictatorial kind of politics.'

The second message is that people want the government to focus on livelihood issues, employment, price rise, rural distress, farmers' issues, etc.

The third message is, the Modi magic has vanished.

The fourth message is, there is no point in pretending that things are what they were before. No, they have changed.

The sooner the government and people in power recognise the shift in the ground, the better for them.

Finally, my forecast is, I have serious doubts about the longevity of the Modi government, longevity of the NDA government and the longevity of the 18th Lok Sabha itself.

Feature Presentation: Aslam Hunani/Rediff.com

Courtesy **Rediff.com**, June 24, 2024. 🌈

After Elections, Defections

S.N. Shukla

Accordingly, our NGO Lok Prahari working for electoral reforms and probity in public life filed in August 2020 a PIL WP (C) No.1096 in the Supreme Court to challenge the Constitutional validity of paras 4 and 6 of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution so that the growing trend of defections for frustrating the mandate of the electorate and/or toppling elected governments for personal and/or political benefits is checked and the purpose of enacting the Tenth Schedule *for maintaining purity of our legislative bodies as envisaged by the founding fathers the Constitution is really served*. The petitioner's case was fully supported by the observations in para 152 i of the judgment in the case of defections in Karnataka, AIR ONLINE 2019 SC 1448 and in paras 29 and 30 of decision in the case of a Manipur MLA, AIR ONLINE 2020 SC 54. *The prayers 3 and 4 in the writ petition were precisely for ensuring that the aforesaid observations are acted upon at the earliest*. The relief prayed for in the writ petition was fully in accordance with the law laid down by the Apex Court itself and as such deserved to be granted.

Finding a prima facie case, the Court was pleased to issue notice on **8.1.2021**. But despite repeated requests at various levels including the Chief Justice, for early listing since validity of defections by Shinde faction in Maharashtra depended on the validity of para 4, for some inexplicable reason best known to the SC Registry the matter remained unlisted for more than 2 years. *In fact, if it was heard and allowed in time the entire sordid drama in Maharashtra and elsewhere could be avoided*. Finally it was listed on 8.5.2023 when

the Union of India was granted 6 weeks time to file Counter affidavit and the matter was ordered to be listed on 21.8.2023 when it was adjourned to 22.9.2023 and the respondents were again permitted to file Counter affidavit meanwhile. However, no counter was filed by them. Still, even in the absence of any counter affidavit by the Union of India despite repeated opportunities, the writ petition was summarily dismissed on 22.9.2023 after a very brief hearing through VC.

Thereupon a review petition was filed pointing out that the dismissal order suffered from several *fatal errors of fact and law apparent on the face of the record* raising several important questions of law listed in the review petition. The order ignored that the validity of para 4 of the Tenth Schedule *was neither an issue nor decided* in the case of Kihoto Hollohan on the basis of which the writ petition was dismissed *in limine*. Moreover, the order did not take into consideration the highly relevant subsequent developments mentioned in the writ petition requiring reconsideration of the decision upholding validity of para 6 of the Schedule. It was also per incuriam of the observations and directions in the judgments of coequal Benches in recent cases of Karnataka and Manipur MLA. *Not only this, the order did not even mention, leave alone deal at all with, the Prayers 3 and 4 in the writ petition*. As such, all the requirements for review as provided in the Supreme Court Rules and the law laid down in this regard were met. The petitioner's prayer for oral hearing of the review petition also deserved to be allowed in terms of the law laid down in this regard.

The review petitioner had also filed Additional Written Arguments under Rule 3 of Order XLVII of the Supreme Court Rules, which were duly circulated vide office report dated 25.11.2023 *for the kind perusal of the Hon'ble Judges*, pointing out that- .

1. The Bench dismissing the Writ Petition *had no jurisdiction to hear this matter* in view of the requirement of Article 145(3) that *such a matter could be heard only by the Constitution Bench*.

2. *In the absence of any rebuttal of the averments in the writ petition* despite repeated opportunities the said averments *had to be taken as admitted and proved* as per the decision reported in AIR 1993 SC 2592. The order summarily dismissing the writ petition was also not in accordance with the observation of the present Chief Justice of India in (2021) 9 SCC 770 (para39) that “*The order or judgment of the Court must indicate a process of reflection and of the application of mind of the Judge to the submissions of the opposing Parties.*” .

3. Still the writ petition was dismissed overlooking the fact that as mentioned in para 24 of the writ petition, CA No. 5871 of 2016 (in which leave was granted and *hearing expedited on 1.7.2016*) involving validity of para 4(2) of the Tenth Schedule *was still pending for final hearing since then*. As such, it could not be dismissed in view of the settled practice *that when one petition has been admitted, other petition, may be not on better footing, should also be admitted*.

4. The decision in the case of Kihoto Hollohan was wrongly invoked for upholding the para 4 of the Tenth Schedule *even though its validity was neither an issue nor considered in that case as would appear from a bare perusal of para 24 of the judgment detailing the questions which were considered in that case*.

5. The decision relating to validity of Para

6 of the Tenth Schedule, was *prima facie* erroneous *being per incuriam of the developments subsequent to the 30 years old decision in the case of Kihoto Hollohan and the binding precedents* cited in the Additional Written Arguments and Supplementary written Arguments.

6. It was also *per incuriam* of the judgment of a co-equal Bench in the case of Manipur MLA doubting the correctness of the majority view in the case of Kihoto Hollohan upholding the validity of para 6 and recommending setting up of an independent Tribunal in place of the Speaker/Chairman to decide cases of disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.

7. Refusal to reconsider the majority view on the validity of para 6 in the case of Kihoto Hollohan in the light of subsequent developments and the decision of coequal Bench in the case of Manipur *was clearly not in consonance* with the observations of the Constitution Bench in the case of Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India & Another [2018] 7 S.C.R. 1 [Para 277(i)] [177]

8. The petitioner's case for review was fully supported by the observations of the Constitution Bench (in which the present CJI was a member) in Special Leave Petition (Civil) No. 25590 of 2014) [2017] 13 S.C.R. 100 in which it was held that a *co-ordinate Bench of the same strength cannot take a contrary view* than what has been held by another co-ordinate Bench.

9. In the facts and circumstances mentioned in the writ petition, *which remained unnoticed* while pronouncing the order dismissing writ petition, the petitioner's request for referring the issue of validity of para 6 to the Constitution Bench was clearly supported by the decision of the Constitution Bench in Dr. Shah Faesal and ors. v. Union of India and anr. [2020] 3 SCR 1115 [Paras 18,19] and the observation of the Court in the case of Maharashtra reported in the Indian Express of 18.10.2023

that the “*Speaker is not doing his job.*” Evidently, no further justification was required for striking down Para 6.

10. For the reasons stated above, the case for reconsideration of the decision on the validity of para 6 was fully supported by the decision of the Constitution Bench (*presided by the present Hon’ble CJI himself*) in the recent case of Subhash Desai v. Principal Secretary, Governor of Maharashtra & ors. (Writ Petition (C) No. 493 of 2022) [2023] 8 S.C.R. 857 where in it was held that the decision in Nabam Rebia merits reference to a larger Bench because a substantial question of law remains to be settled. [Para 70 & 71]. Likewise, in the present case also the substantial question of law about validity of para 6 of the Tenth Schedule remains unsettled and merited reference to Constitution Bench in view of the contradictory opinions in the majority view in the case of Kihoto Hollohan and the judgment in the case of Manipur MLA.

11. In view of the position stated above, the reference to Constitution Bench for determining the validity of para 6 of the Tenth Schedule could be made even in this Review Petition as per the observation in the dissenting judgment of the present Hon’ble CJI in the case of Beghar Foundation through its Secretary and anr..v. Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (retd.) and ors. Review Petition (Civil) Diary No. 45777 of 2018 [2021] 1 S.C.R. 681 cited in para 10 of the Review Petition.

In the facts and circumstances stated above, Review Petition clearly deserved consideration in terms of the law laid down in the case of CST Vs. Pine Chemicals Ltd. (1995) 1 SCC 58 that “*interpretation of law adopted by the Bench inconsistent with earlier decisions delivered by a Coordinate Bench and a larger Bench will amount to an error apparent on the face of the record.*” It was also expedient in the interest of justice

that the review petition was heard in the open court since the issue of validity of para 4 of the Tenth Schedule *remained unheard on the wrong premise, evidently against the record, that its validity was upheld in the case of Kihoto Hollohan*. However, the review petition was dismissed by circulation vide following order dated 5.12.2023 –

- “1 *Application for listing the review petition in open Court is rejected.*
- 2 *Having perused the review petition, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013 has been established. The review petition is, therefore, dismissed.*”

From a bare perusal of the aforesaid order itself it is apparent that while passing the order dated 5.12.2023 *only the Review Petition was perused* and the Additional Written Arguments and Supplementary Additional Written Arguments *were not even noticed, leave alone considered, while dismissing the review petition*. Considering that the validity of the provision for disposal of the Review petitions by circulation dispensing with the juristic requirement of oral hearing was upheld on the basis of the provision for additional written arguments in Rule 3 *as an alternative to the requirement of being heard, the said order deserved to be recalled on this ground alone in the interest of justice. Otherwise, the whole purpose of the provision in Rule 3 permitting additional written arguments will be meaningless and lost resulting in denial of justice due to violation of a settled principle of Natural Justice.*

Still the review petition was dismissed by a stereotyped cryptic non-speaking order without even noticing, *leave alone dealing, with the very important questions of law involved and grounds taken in the review*

petition and indicating as to how no case for review was made out in view thereof. Evidently, this was not in consonance with the basic juristic requirement of giving reasons for a judicial order to indicate application of mind to the issues raised in the matter. The observations in the order dismissing the review petition were prima facie against the record and patently contrary to the provision in the SC Rules and the law laid down by the Apex Court in this regard. The rejection of application for oral hearing of the review petition was also not in consonance of the guidelines laid down by the Constitution Bench in (1980) 4 SCC 680.

As a result of patently wrong dismissal of

the review petition the sordid game of defections for personal and political gains frustrating the voters' mandate will merrily continue unabated. In view of inaction by the Parliament for obvious reasons it is for the Apex Court to find a way out to put an end for good to the recurring problem of defections. One fails to understand as to what prevents it from doing so. The sooner the present obnoxious situation ends the better it will be for the health of our democracy. Hence, the correctness of the judgment in the writ petition and the order in the review petition need to be considered by the eminent jurists of the country.

S.N. Shukla is I.A.S.(retd.), Advocate;
General Secretary, Lok Prahari 

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SCIENCE AND ETHICS-II

Late Prof Raojibhai Patel

The fact about values is that moral values have biological ones as their background. No human values can be explained except against this background. Life is the ground from which all values (including moral) emerge and develop. This sancity of life is recognised and emphasised in all societies. But life is not a uniform process. There are lives and lives. Every unit of life has a potentiality which is determined by biological (as distinct from genetic) laws. This potentiality puts a limitation on the possible level of growth of its unit. This fact of the level of growth brings hierarchy in the system of values. That life at the human level has a higher value than life at any other existing level becomes intelligible only if the idea of the level of possible growth is affirmed. This growth of life at the human level is characterised by the quality of mind that can emerge out of the determinate potentiality. It is a life at the level of ideation. Ideas are not disembodied from life; they merely characterise life, life of a higher order. What is of value is not idea as an abstraction from life but rather life at the level of ideas. Ideation presupposes awareness. It is awareness at a different level. Neither ideas nor their values are mysterious. Since ideas arise as properties of minds reaching to determine conditions, the conditions also have value. Humanity conceived as life at the level of ideas is objective (scientifically cognizable). Such a humanity has value because in it life fulfills its nature, i.e., freedom-the property of self-determinism. Thus understood, humanity is an object whose study falls within the scope of biological sciences whose function it is to study the laws of living. Self-determination is a form of determinism and precludes indeterminism; hence the science of values coincides with the science of life. Science will thus be a study of the factors that promote freedom. Human

society understood as order among living human organisms to realise their nature (i.e., freedom) is a configuration. Emotions, sentiments, instincts and desires are the brick and mortar of the configuration. The latter derives its value from the primary value of freedom. The order that promotes freedom has also a value. The sense of obligation arises out of the property of sentiment whose function it is to preserve and promote order.

Of the schools of philosophy which have maintained that science cannot be applied to the problems of ethics, it is true to say that their concept of objectivity fundamentally differs from the one which is necessary for the rise of science. The point of departure lies in the view of the state of the ego which must be obtained before it can be objective. In such philosophies it is -conceied that so long as the ego does not eliminate itself by an act of annihilation to nothingness or by an act of merging into some cosmic power which provides an absolute standpoint, (objectivity cannot be attained. Buddha's state of nirvana is an example of the former, and Vedanta's Brahman that of the latter. Even some of the philosophising scientists have accepted more or less one of these positions, and thus confused the problem. -N, The common feature of both the above beliefs is the incapacity of the ego to achieve an objective standpoint. The ideal objectivity, consequently, cannot be attained without eliminating or annihilating the individual ego. The loss of ego is thus a precondition for objectivity, which is generally equated with an impersonal standpoint. The postulate of impersonality is the starting point of theology. It is also a postulate of classical rationalism. In so far as modern liberalism accepted this postulate, it could not outgrow its connection with theology which was allowed to reign supreme in the sphere of

morality. Science which was mainly confined to non-human parts of the universe was indifferent to the postulate of impersonality and acted on the basis of 'organised commonsense.' But when observation conflicted with the theological assumptions of Newtonian absolutist standpoint, the confusion could not be allowed to persist without incurring the charge of being incoherent. There was no privileged frame of reference suitable for verifying the invariance of the laws of mechanics. Einstein introduced the relative standpoint rejecting the postulate of classical rationalism which assumed an absolute criterion of objectivity. Einstein threw off this ballast of the authoritarian philosophy. But it was a negative act and the charge of subjectivity cannot still be cleared till a positive criterion for scientific objectivity is formulated.

In fact such a criterion of objectivity is possible. This criterion of objectivity is simple in mouning. We call it the principle of substituumbunty. For a proposition to be valid, the person making it must be prepared to be substituted by another with respect to observation, verification and logical inference. No ego is privileged for judging the truth-value of a scientifically established hypothesis. Substitutability does not indeed demand any annihilation of the ego, the exercise of which is, on the contrary, considered a necessary precondition of knowledge; all knowledge is the knowledge of the individuals. What it demands is humility and intellectual alertness and respect for any intellectually alert person. It rejects the notion of an absolute standpoint in its approach to reality. For such an objectivity the ego does not relinquish its role in science; it is only ready to be subjected to criticism and refutation. Moreover, it follows that the affirmation of the ego in such an activity is such that its intellectual core dominates over its non-intellectual one. The history of science is the history of the rise of such objectivity. This demand for the affirmation of the self for a scientific objectivity rather than

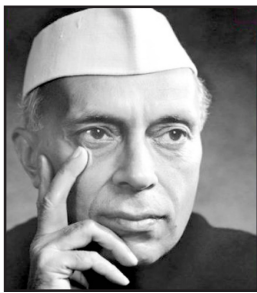
its negation runs counter to the one which is the central theme of theology and of metaphysical rationalism. They characterise objectivity with aboluteness which is unique hence unsubstitutatable. In fact, the whole dispute between theology and modern science was grounded in this difference about the meaning of objectivity. What was the philosopher's attitude in this dispute? Those who adopted metaphysical rationalism were particularly impressed by the achievements of science on pragmatic grounds but were reluctant to relinquish the absolutist approach to ethics, thus oscillating between the two opposite viewpoints. Pragmatism was a compromise. It maintained a scientific attitude in its approach to non-human reality but was absolutist in its relation to human affairs. The climax was Marxism. It was not for nothing that Lenin rejected the Theory of Relativity on philosophical grounds. For Historical Materialism provides an absolute frame of reference to the Marxist. In fact, it is an error to maintain that Communist ethics — is marked by scientific objectivity. Theirs is essentially a theological approach, even though they use the term 'scientific ethics.' (The same criticism applies to hedonism; the concept of knowledge in both is one of certainty it is an absolute concept).

The best version of such an absolutist standpoint is found in Laplace, who postulated an absolute intelligence us the basis of science. This absolute intelligence is unsubstitutatable, otherwise it cannot be absolute. The finite intelligence of man has to merge into 4 this absolute before it can claim to be "objective." e Such a view of objectivity, which is due to an atavistic. craving for the security of a theological order, still operates in human affairs in general and ethics in particular. The postulate of General will in politics, of Home Economicus in economics, and of Universal Wisdom in ethics indicate such an approach. The demands made on man by such postulates for being "objective"

cannot, by their very nature, be satisfied. All contemporary problems facing modern man emerge from such demands. And when such demands cannot be satisfied, man is subjected to conformism and conventionalism. The postulate of absolute objectivity brings in the forces of dogmatism which converts science into absolute knowledge. The claim to absolute knowledge generates a feeling of infallibility. But a science of ethics based on absolute knowledge is not science at all. It is not in the spirit of science to be absolute. The principle of substitutability as a criterion of objectivity enunciated above makes room both for ethics and for freedom. It is ethical because under it a person has to respect every person who is bound by observation and logic. It connotes freedom because it leaves scope for every individual to bring in evidence or logic for a change in the truth-value of a proposition. In fact the principle of substitutability provides an efficient criterion of scientific activity. A science of ethics is possible on such a concept of objectivity because for the comprehension of an ethical norm no other kind of objectivity is necessary. The judgment necessary for comprehending a class of acts or desires which will promote harmony and order in human relations at any particular period does not need a special kind of objectivity. Corsals person

Agreement among scientists is not an accident. It is a corollary of the substitutability principle of objectivity. Objectivity of one does not destroy that of the other, though the objectivity of one may destroy the subjectivity of another. Artists and the mystics cannot be objective as artists and mystics; their outlook is characterised by an attitude which resists substitutability. It is no accident that the aesthetically-minded persons have always rescued the mystics. The two attitudes are linked by a common code of "objectivity" which is absolute and hence resists substitutability. The same is true of the hedonist and the Marxist. In the last analysis, it is egocentrism, which connotes the non-substitutability of one ego by another in principle. So long as moral attitude is conditioned by such an ego-centric attitude, moral confusion cannot be avoided. 1. It is against this view of science that Prof. Michael Polanyi's recent criticisms. (Quest) have been directed. This paper was written before his paper appeared in print. 2. It is not enough to insist that all knowledge is personal knowledge in the last analysis. (Polanyi, op. cit.) It is necessary to provide criteria which ensure that personal knowledge is at the same time objective. (The Radical Humanist Weekly, December 16 & 23, 1962)

Sent by **Bipin Shroff** 🌈



India is supposed to be a religious country above everything else, and Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and others take pride in their faiths and testify to their truth by breaking heads. The spectacle of what is called religion, or at any rate organised religion, in India and elsewhere has filled me with horror, and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it. Almost always it seems to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation, and the preservation of vested interests.

-: Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

Continued from the July 2024 issue...

THE PATH OF GANDHI: EPILOGUE

Koganti Radha Krishna Murty

I thought of writing this epilog after reading *The Fear of Freedom* by Eric Fromm. "Prayer and worship are as natural as are eating, drinking and sleeping." That is what Gandhi said. The process of eating, drinking and sleeping are essential for every individual to sustain a healthy life. It is natural for all living beings, not only for human beings. But prayer and worship are specific for human beings and for only a part of them. It indicates an effort to satisfy some other extraneous forces in order to get his own wishes fulfilled. According to Gandhi (or according to any of the believers) God alone is worth worshipping. Worship implies a desire to get identified with God and obtain salvation. To fortify it, the concepts of sin and punishment, heaven and hell are created. Temples and churches are built. Praise and applause for God have become necessary rituals. Along with it, mediators between God and devotees came into existence. Culture, literature and traditions were molded to serve that purpose. Religion has become the supreme institution in the society. In spite of all this, the discussion goes on whether it is God that created man or it is man that created God. The question was answered long back by rationalism and science. But it did not satisfy all. The question is being raised again and again. Some people refuse to get free from their illusions. With the help of science, man is able to understand the secrets of nature, explain its laws and also to take advantage of its qualities. Still, people are fond of creating an invisible force beyond the reach of his senses, give it a shape (like himself) and attribute all the

qualities required to make it all powerful and prostrating before it willingly.

It was but natural that he was afraid of natural phenomena which he could not understand in earlier stages. He tried to explain the phenomena by attributing it to an unknown and unseen force and tried to seek protection from the horrors of nature by praying to that force. It satisfied curiosity and also brought peace of mind. If he wants the unseen force to save him from the natural calamities, it is necessary that the force must be capable of controlling the natural sequences. Naturally, he attributed such power to the unseen force. This tendency got itself institutionalized over time without his conscious effort, unknown to him as an individual. Collectively, it took the shape of religion, as representative of the supernatural force on earth. Religion is built by man. The earlier society was built around it. But the social life gave an opportunity to act and react in different ways and apply his inquiring qualities to understand nature. As his knowledge of nature has expanded, man tried to use that knowledge for his own comfort by applying different technics. He was able to understand nature and also to adjust himself to the uncontrolled forces and also to control it to some extent. In spite of all the developments, he was not able to come out of the influence of religion created by himself. Perhaps he was not willing to come out of it. There is something more to be known, he realized. Then why to forego the protection of religion and God that is omnipotent? Let it be there. It could be useful in unforeseen situations! Thus the influence of

God and religion continued to thrive.

There are many reasons for it. Ethical systems were devised in the name of religion. The natural characteristics of man like love, respect for others and affection were taught as requisites of ethical behavior and linked to prayers and worship of God. Religion percolated into literature, culture and civilization pervading all aspects of life and became inseparable from life. The religious institutions started to control the society in all aspects touching the individual life of members. It tried to regulate the inquiring nature by putting restriction on his enthusiasm.

Perhaps it is a good thing that there were many religions over the world. It made man aware of the futility of the concept and its limitations. It made him question the basis of religion as there were many religions, all claiming to be representatives of God but at the same different from each other. Men in different regions of the world, subjected to different natural and geographic conditions developed their own system of religion and God. They were naturally different from each other. The conflicts between them were natural consequences as everyone believed in superiority of his own religion. Everybody felt it his duty to protect his religion even at the risk of his own life. Heaps of corpses are lying all over history because of religious rivalry. Religion has become a divisive force and became a menace for human development. Once the religion is crowned with unquestioned power, a class controlling it came into existence. Struggle started to get control of the institution giving rise to different versions and interpretations of the same religion. Conflicts between the different groups also became so severe as between different religions.

In medieval days, independent thinkers like Martin Luther and Calvin challenged the unbridled rights of the church in Europe and

succeeded in reforming the religion to some extent. Similarly in the Hindu religion reformer movements like Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj were able to bring some improvements. Islam was not affected so much by reforms. But there were some relaxations from the severe traditions that were originally prescribed in earlier days. But religion as such did not lose its control on any country or region. It continued to thrive successfully, albeit with some minor changes.

Societies in Europe were not satisfied with reforms. It led to Renaissance movements. Instead of reforming and revitalizing the religion, they tried to resurrect man as an individual and make him stand on his own. Man essentially seeks freedom and wants to seek Truth. He has a right to satisfy his physical needs and also to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. He is rational and capable of building a society that helps him in his efforts for improvement of quality of his life. There was no need felt to think of any supernatural forces and to attribute to it all powers over man. Every individual has to be accepted and respected in his own right. This movement brought in an ideal philosophical basis for improvement of man and human society. The western world has undergone a radical change because of this movement. The religious dogma lost its hold on the mind of man. Feudalism decayed. Kings were no more accepted as representatives of any God. The concept of democracy took shape. Governments for the people were formed by the people. Legislations and regulations were made to help the people more than to control them. Opportunities were created for development in different fields of activity.

Still, it was not a complete success. There were many more things to be done. Industrial revolution brought in capitalism. The control over means of production and distribution fell into the hands of a few capitalists. It gave rise

to vested interests and created an opportunity to exploit others for their own benefit. Similarly, in politics also power was held by few people in the name of representatives of people as a form of democracy. They tried to use their power to perpetrate themselves in the position of power to the detriment of others. At national levels those who came to power invoked the sense of patriotism and showed other nations as their rivals, stressing on the need to raise armed forces ever ready to fight. War has become a part of modern civilization. Armies are equipped with weapons of mass destruction and continuous efforts are being made to create weapons with more destructive power.

In this cruel game, majority were rendered poor and kept in poverty forever. In the name of democracy and nationalism, the exploitation continues. Human rights were restricted and violated with impunity. The institutions created to help man took the place of religion which was replaced by them. The process of domination and exploitation continues as in early days. To the extent that religion continues to have the hold, it is being used successfully to serve the interests of those in power. Religious ethics are modified to serve their purpose. Sacrifice and submission that were taught in the name of religion are now being taught in the name of nation, discipline and progress. Government stepped in the place of God and religion is used as an instrument of control and submission.

Along with capitalism, inequalities also increased. The socialist and communist societies that have come up in opposition to capitalism also did not encourage individual freedom. While the capitalist society deprived man of necessities in the name of freedom, the socialist society deprived man of freedom in the name of society. Man lives not by bread alone. By providing food and shelter alone the need for democracy is not fulfilled. It is the

independent way of life, thinking and acting according to his own wish that gives more satisfaction to man. Any restrictions on that shall be considered as undemocratic and dictatorial. Demanding sacrifice and submission does not contribute to development. It is necessary to ascertain in which direction the society is moving.

Wherever there is poverty and despair there is a place for God and religion. That is how religion is thriving even in the modern society. Submission to an invisible God gives more satisfaction than submission to a mere human being. Religion justifies it. In addition, submission to God is offering something beyond the life, a salvation for which everybody is supposed to crave. It naturally gives a hold on the helpless man. By that, he is entering into a cobweb in which he would be held forever. But he will not be aware of his bondage as the religion supplies a spiritual cloak for it. That points out the necessity to enlighten the man about his place in nature, about his innate capacities and his natural rights and possibilities. Self-awareness will create a conflict in him between knowledge and faith, between his prevailing condition and opportunities available. His natural desire to improve has to be supported and encouraged. If he is allowed to accept submission, it would only help those who want to exploit him and dominate over him.

“Selfless man sacrifices for his family. Similarly family must sacrifice for the village and the village for the district and the district for the state....” and so on. That was the concept of Gandhi regarding social responsibilities. It was enshrined on his tomb also. But where does it lead ultimately? We can consider the development of fascism as an example. After the World War I, the economic systems of all the countries were shattered and left in shambles. There was scarcity for every necessity of life – food,

clothing, medicine and employment. The common man found no way out of the situation. The government of every country blamed the other country for the situation and avoided their own responsibility. People were prepared to submit themselves to anybody who offers a solution to come out of the condition. Willful surrender makes it easy to rule and dictate. Added to that was the spirit of nationalism, fortified by the hatred of other countries and races that were held responsible for the pathetic conditions. It logically led to the formation of a fascist government. People were prepared to support it unmindful of its consequences. They did not have the mind to think of it. The result was the World War II.

There have been many theories proposed for the development of society. Gandhism is one of them. It has its merits and also its drawbacks. It made many popular concepts which were discussed in this book. Some of these concepts created opposition and some defeated the very purpose of the theory itself. Some forces may be able to prevent progress. But no force could take the society back into past history. Past is past. We cannot go back and revive it. It is unrealistic to link the political and economic problems to spiritual conduct and religion. The human problems belong to a different field. The theories of Gandhi contain some valuable principles and it is necessary to segregate them from the impractical ideas contained in it.

Throughout history man has been fighting against natural forces. It was not always for food only. There is an intense desire for freedom, for mental satisfaction in addition to the requirements of physical needs. The struggle of other living beings is confined to get food and shelter. But man is a different kind of animal. He is curious, he is ambitious. He wants to understand nature and take advantage of it wherever possible. He derives satisfaction and also pride out of it.

If we look back on history, the progress achieved by man is fantastic. His way of life has undergone radical change over time. Science and technology expanded the area of his control over nature. To that extent his freedom also increased. Unfortunately, the freedom could not be enjoyed by all equally. Majority of the people are still suffering poverty. It is the result of imperfect social and economic systems adopted by man. The systems have to be improved by trial and error method which takes a long time. To make any improvements at this stage, it is necessary that man understands himself rather than understand nature. Everybody pays lip sympathy to democracy. It is conveniently defined as the rule of majority. The minority and the people at the lower levels are being ignored. It is necessary to establish governments based on sound principles involving all the people. The problem is how to ensure it and do justice to all. It is accepted that it is not possible for all the people to participate in day-to-day administration. Delegation of power to rule is inevitable. The problem is how to make the delegates act as true representatives of the people. Representation is a matter more of responsibility rather than of right. It makes a lot of difference in practice.

In the present conditions the people are kept far from the seat of power. We may be proud of our ancient culture. But we are living in the modern society and must adopt ourselves to the present conditions. We failed to understand the basic requirements of the modern society. Religion tries to pacify people and tells them to be satisfied with what they have and it is a sin to seek more. It conforms to the theory of fate as it depends on the theory of repeated births. The fate cannot be cured and so it must be endured. That religion suffered a setback when Buddha came out with his practical philosophy. But the roots of Hindu religion were

so deep that Buddhism could not strike roots in the country and migrated to other countries. Hinduism spread again with renewed vigor. Invasions and occupations by foreign powers for centuries also could not have any effect as they also tried to use it for their own benefit. The bright idealism was never allowed to enter into India. But time brings some changes inevitably. Nothing could prevent it. That was how the freedom winds blew over India and some of the enlightened people were able to feel it. It should not be ignored that the Congress party that fought for freedom of the country was initially established by liberal foreigners who were influenced by the western humanist values. But the subsequent Indian leaders did not have that advantage of liberal ideas. Their aspirations were limited and not based on any deep philosophical ideology. They were content with political freedom. They could not impress the people much as they were not enlightened. Gandhi took opportunity and was able to make the people understand the value of freedom and the need for a radical change in the society. He did not enlighten the people. He appealed to their sentiments and emotions of patriotism and earned their confidence. He met them at their own level and projected himself as one of them unlike the other leaders. At times he also appealed to their religious sentiments to get their allegiance. But India is a country of many religions. Appeal to religious sympathies antagonized unity of people of different religions. If one religion was satisfied, the other religion was dissatisfied. As he endorsed the religious sentiments, he did not think of sowing the seeds of modern values and ultimately his movement failed. He felt disappointed and lonely in his last days.

The end of World War I demanded heavy investments for economic recovery. It naturally encouraged industrialization and mechanical era started. There were radical changes in the education system of all the countries. Trade

union movements were strengthened. The middle class had an opportunity to enjoy freedom and benefitted by improvement in all aspects of life. In spite of all the developments in different fields, the social system was stagnated and resisted any improvements because of the dominance of religious dogmas. Political independence did not result in any improvement in social and economic conditions of the majority. Religion continued to rule over the minds of people. In that situation the Congress governments did not dare to undertake any radical developments and utilized the opportunity for feather bedding.

Everybody concedes that a political system of democracy is a *sine qua non* for social and economic development. Unfortunately the leaders who grasped power in the name of democracy tried to exploit the situation for their own benefit and to perpetuate themselves in the position of authority. The party has become a means for it. It has to be accepted that failure of democratic governments need not be the only cause for dictatorships to arrive. The concept of democracy is not confined to just political issues. It is a concept that helps human development in all aspects. Man is basically independent and ambitious. It is necessary that the social and political systems must be subjected to changes to his requirements. Attempting to bring in the age old social systems and values to bear on him kills his initiative.

The pride of authority is reflected in the natural affection of parents for the children, in the husband showing care for the wife, in the elders trying to guide the youngsters. Reciprocally the other party shows respect and willingly submits himself to the loving party. The relationship between the teacher and the taught covers a wider area. It includes cooperation and mutual respect in spite of difference in age and level of knowledge.

When man is captivated by his own ideas, he gets confidence in himself and tries to

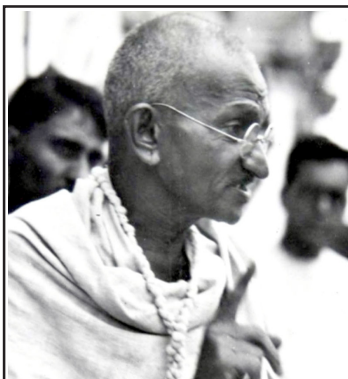
safeguard his independence. The way of life and thinking of an independent person utilizes his rational qualities to determine what is good and bad, and what is desirable and undesirable for his welfare. Such a person seeks cooperation from other persons in the society and lives in harmony with them all. He expects others also to enjoy benefits like himself and wishes them well and helps them to his capacity. That is the basic condition for an ethical society. Thus the fact that man is rational, independent and ethical forms the foundation for democracy and humanism. The parliamentary democracy now in practice is like an autocrat in the name of representative government. Representation is inevitable in any system involving innumerable number of members. Thus we cannot denounce the representative system. Particularly a country like India with its population exceeding billions cannot find an alternative to the representative system of government. A system has to be devised to make the representatives behave like real representatives of their constituencies. The only way for that is to build the structure from bottom upwards as suggested by Gandhi.

The justification for the demand for partyless politics arises in this context. Parties are formed by the people having same or similar ideas and ideals coming together. The representative elected by a constituency starts behaving like the representative of the party in the name of which he is elected rather than

as a representative of the constituency. All the members of the party act in concert to get themselves elected to power and if they are already in power to perpetuate their position. They do everything for the credit and benefit of the party rather than for the constituency or country. That results in failure of representative form of democracy. As an alternative, if the representative is elected based on his plan for improvement of the constituency or the country in general without interference of any party, he would act as a true representative – exception being made for selfish and corrupt behavior. It would be possible only when the constituency is small like a village and the political structure can be built from the bottom level.

People must be motivated and enlightened to strengthen the forces of democracy. They must be made aware of their rights in a democracy. It may need another renaissance movement. It is necessary that religious beliefs and traditions must be kept aloof from political issues. Human rights must be recognized and respected as fundamental rights under the law. Political and economic power must be decentralized. Universities and courts of law must be made independent of political pressure. The media must inform and educate the public dispassionately. Evolution of man as an independent individual is itself a social revolution.

Concluded... 🌈



The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is a correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated on achieving reform from within.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Championing global humanism

Azam Inqilabi

EXISTENTIALISM, as a doctrine, champions the respect for individualism in the pursuit of peace, honour and justice. In the contemporary world, amidst pervasive chaos, individuals are justified in questioning the UN's efficacy. Despite its lofty charter and claims of promoting global harmony, the UN has repeatedly faltered in resolving crises, often attributed to institutional lethargy and ineffectiveness. This failure has left global civil society aggrieved, with peace-loving people lamenting the UN's perceived helplessness. Despite persistent appeals from pacifists and humanists, the UN has struggled to uphold its sacred mandate and international standing, exacerbating turmoil and disillusionment across regions.

Egocentricity is a curse that breeds paranoia, hatred and division. It fosters political polarization, xenophobia and pessimism, leading to chaos and anarchy. Humanists advocate for optimism, unity, and perseverance to counter these challenges. They reject isolationism, aiming to restore hope and confidence in global civil society. Humanism, as a philosophy, offers a beacon of altruism and egalitarianism, promoting solidarity and renewal in times of despair. By embracing humanistic intellectualism, a renaissance can flourish, uniting people worldwide in pursuit of peace and collective well-being.

Therefore, humanists worldwide should unite for a future focused on peace and tranquility. Their success will be the triumph pacifists crave. Advocates of mystic philosophy will support their campaign for objectivity. Eventually, even the UN will recognize their role as a force for democratic reform. Their intellectual parallelism will attract global intellectuals. Why should world-

weariness allow replicating the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for entertainment? The humanist peace campaign must counter the urge for collective suicide.

Humanism, the anguished and concerned philosophy of intellectuals, will continue to criticize indifferent leaders whose passivity endangers global civil society. Humanists cannot condone this neglect; they cannot be silent observers. They must mobilize their supporters into action. Humanists see beyond political borders; they view global civil society as a single family. In medieval times, emperors' egotism led to wars; ultimately, dialogue brought reconciliation. Today, despite political polarization and hostility, pacifist leaders facilitate peace and understanding among warring factions.

I felt thrilled when the honorable US President proposed the Gaza peace plan, later approved by the UN Security Council. It was President Biden's thoughtful humanism that led him to assert US democracy's leadership. His innate humanism could guide him to befriend President Putin in a joint campaign for global peace. Let pacifism guide their efforts, both temporal and metaphysical. I wish them success. Global humanists honor the architects of the UN Charter, believing it sacred and healing. Despite flaws, the UN remains a credible global governing body, crucial for crisis intervention and protecting women and children. My mystic beliefs align with humanism, which values compassion, justice, and objectivity—essential qualities for activism. I empathize because humanism is a panacea for many ills.

A humanist's nonconformity and eclecticism safeguard their pursuit of objectivity, rationalism, pragmatism and

empiricism. People find inspiration in their teachings on peace, fraternity, intellectual exchange, tolerance and compassion. Thus, humanistic dialogue promotes peace, reconciliation, and communal harmony, proving more potent than weapons of mass

destruction. Let every peace-loving person embrace humanism.

—The writer is a humanist based in Srinagar, Iio J&K.

Courtesy **Pakistan Observer**, July 1, 2024.
(azaminqilabi@gmail.com) 🌈

M.N. Roy

Amitabh Pal

On this date (March 21), radical humanist and revolutionary **Manabendra Nath Roy** (né Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) was born in 1887 near Kolkata, India. The Bhattacharyas were Sakta Brahmins, a family of hereditary Hindu priests.

Roy majored in engineering and chemistry in college and became politically active due to the British partitioning of Bengal in 1905. A failed attempt during

World War I to obtain German support for an Indian uprising against imperial rule made Roy a global wanderer, eventually landing him in Mexico via China, Korea, Japan and the U.S.

He became involved in the Mexican Revolution and became part of the international communist movement. Fleeing to the Soviet Union, he barely escaped Stalin's wrath, only to have British authorities subject him to a harsh five years in prison on his return to India. During World War II, he urged full military support for Great Britain, thinking that the defeat of fascism was of higher priority than Indian independence.

In extensive writings that developed his philosophy of radical humanism, Roy tried to disassociate philosophy from religion and instead combine it with science. He helped create the International Humanist and Ethical Union (now Humanists International) and became one of its first vice presidents in absentia after the accident mentioned below prevented him from attending



the inaugural convention in Amsterdam in 1952.

Roy established the Indian Renaissance Institute in the Himalayan foothill city of Dehradun, where the *Radical Humanist*, a journal he founded, is still published as of this writing in 2024. The movement has had a profound impact on secular thought in India and internationally.

Hermann Bondi, a stalwart of the British Humanist Association, cited Roy as an example of profound intellectual evolution. Acclaimed German-American psychoanalyst and philosopher Erich Fromm, a humanist himself, lauded Roy's "Reason, Romanticism and Revolution" as a "thorough and brilliant analysis."

He died of a heart attack at age 66 after undergoing two attacks of cerebral thrombosis sustained falling down a hill in 1952, causing partial paralysis. (*D. 1954*)

"The realization of the possibility of a secular rational morality opens up a new perspective before the modern world. ... It must be realized that human existence is self-contained and self-sufficient; and that, therefore, man can find in himself the power to work out his destiny, to make a better world to live in."

—M.N. Roy, "Reason, Romanticism and Revolution" (1952)

Compiled by **Amitabh Pal** for Freedom From Religion Foundation 🌈

Book Review :

The Story of the ‘Gujarat Model’ and Modi’s Personalisation of Political Power

This is one of the most important recent books to understand how Mr Modi has controlled and governed India from 2014 by extending the template created in Gujarat from 2002 onward.

Over the past decade it has been frequently stated that Narendra Modi’s years as Gujarat Chief Minister were essentially a dress (sic) rehearsal for his tenure as prime minister. The working style, legislative changes, stranglehold on the governance system, marginalising the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliates where he was politically reared and replacing it with a structure that was loyal solely to him, which he perfected in Gujarat, were transposed at a national level.

Gandhinagar appeared to have been effortlessly transplanted to New Delhi with a name change – the Prime

Minister’s Office (PMO). The working style in the new office remained the same – a group of bureaucrats, all bound by an unspoken oath of



Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay

Christophe Jaffrelot speaking at LSE during the launch of his book ‘Gujarat under Modi: The Blueprint for Today’s India’ in the presence of Mukulika Bannerji.

Photo: Special arrangement

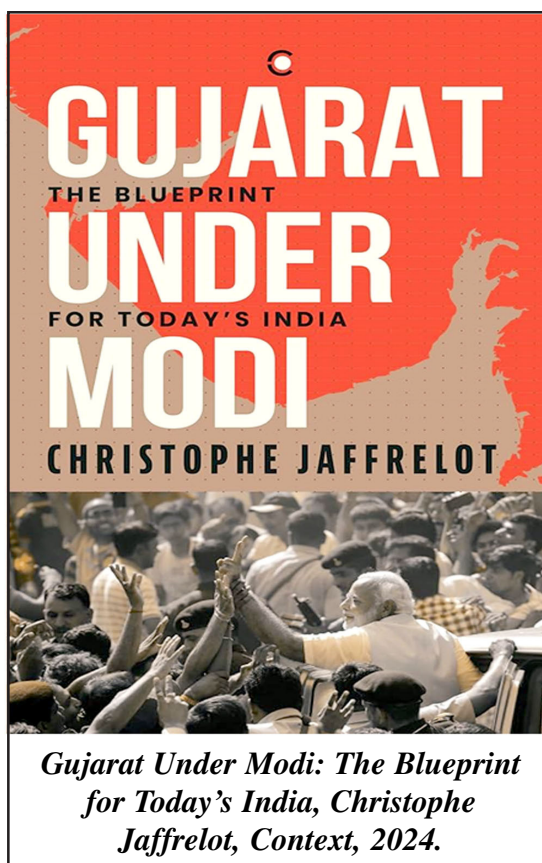


This was greatly facilitated by absolute majority in the state Vidhan Sabha, almost touching the two-third mark if not going well beyond as it did in 2002, being seamlessly altered to a comfortable majority in Lok Sabha in 2014 and bettered by more than ten per cent in 2019. In the decade before the 2024 elections, Mr Modi weakened Indian Parliament just as he marginalised the legislature in Gujarat.

Likewise, the Chief Minister’s Office in

loyalty and secrecy, micro-managed the behemoth of the government. They mostly left individual ministries with little to do but implement decisions already taken and conveyed to them.

Christophe Jaffrelot is no stranger to India and to the study of the rise and growth of the Hindu right wing. His books and occasional interventions in the media have for the past three decades provided extremely valuable perspective to view the sequence of events and



also added information on a subject that set up today's polity.

Jaffrelot worked on his book *Gujarat Under Modi: The Blueprint for Today's India* (Westland, 2024) more than a decade ago, over the course of his engagement and regular visits to Gujarat from early 2001 – significantly when Mr Modi was yet to become chief minister – and the manuscript was submitted in the closing months of 2013 by when he had been declared the Bharatiya Janata Party's prime ministerial candidate.

Unsurprisingly, the book did not secure the approval of legal assessors and it went into cold storage till 2020, when the author felt, after possibly anticipating that the enhanced margin in the 2019 elections would presage a more authoritarian turn, that this book had become more important than ever. The

updates, which draw in developments since 2014, only make it more insightful.

After concerns over the book's release in India, of the kind that preceded Dr Jaffrelot's previous work, 'Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy', this book finally hit the stores in India during the election campaign and the verdict ensures that it will continue being available.

To use the author's words, the book was aimed as a "political biography of an Indian state through the personality and actions of its most resilient ruler." The book is coherently divided into five parts bookended by an Introduction and Conclusion. Each of these five parts has two sub-sections or chapters. Mr Modi was made Gujarat chief minister to stall the BJP's electoral slide down.

Modi failed to halt this and in a bunch of bye-elections in February 2002, only he was victorious. Within days the Godhra carnage triggered mass communal violence across the state and the events over the next few months provided Mr Modi with the "first pillar" of his politics in the state. The book's first part narrates and analyses how, with the Gujarat riots, Mr Modi raised communal polarisation as his primary weapon to reverse the BJP's electoral decline and secure a two-third majority in elections held in December 2002.

The second part of the book is devoted to how Mr. Modi "de-institutionalised" the rule of law in the state and how this became a "strategy for strengthening his political control over the state." This part traces the swift saffronisation of the police, bureaucracy and the judiciary and how vigilante groups linked to the Sangh Parivar were given a carte blanche to indulge in a wide range of extra-legal activities from moral policing to running kangaroo courts and punishing minorities and dissenters.

(To be Contd....on Page -41)

AN EXEMPLAR OF A PROLIFIC WRITER

(Malathi Chendur: 1928-2013)

Dr. Ashok K. Choudhury

The most singular contribution of Malathi Chendur, a prolific novelist, columnist and portrayer of social transformation, was the introduction of classics from Jane Austen to contemporary Arundhati Roy into Telugu through the monthly column 'Paathakeratulu' in *Swathi* magazine. Started her career as a novelist in 1949, she went on to write twenty-six novels in Telugu, and translated more than 300 novels from other languages into Telugu, publishing them in five volumes titled *Navala Parichayalu. Vantalu Pindivantalu* (1953), her classic book on Telugu cuisine, reprinted at least thirty times, depicts what is used in the food we eat daily. It's not only a cookbook but also a medical treatise. Having a feminist slant, most of her novels offered practical solutions to the problems women encounter in day-to-day life. Her weekly column 'Pramadaavanam', in *Andhra Prabha* newspaper, appeared continuously for forty-seven years, answered questions from readers.

Her advices on social and personal issues that helped many women voice their problems and seek counseling. "Ideal people are found in small numbers only. One has to seek destiny through insight. From being a passive member of a mob, one has to be different, different from others. The thoughts, the words and the deeds have to be positive and different from the routine. Knowing one's self helps to make the individual a better human being..." wrote Malathi Chendur while replying to a question posed by a reader. It was one among the thousands of replies she gave through her columns. Her answers covered many subjects and showed her erudition, despite the fact that her formal education was limited as she privately completed her Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Malati Chendur, the sixth and youngest child of her parents Jnaanaamba and Venkateswarlu, was born in 1930 in Nuzvidu in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Malathi and her siblings used to play under the banyan tree, just opposite to their house in Kothapet. She studied up to the Class VIII in the village SSR School. Even as a child, she was fond of reading. She used to actively participate in extra-curricular activities at school. She used to sing in the school in different occasions and celebrations. Malathi could remember some of those songs even in her twilight years. One of the songs was "Domale mana satruvulu" (the mosquitoes are our enemies)! She was sent to Eloor to pursue her high school education. Her stay at stayed at her maternal uncle Chendur Nageswara Rao proved to be a turning point in her life. By the end of 1947 she got married to her uncle, at the age of sixteen. Theirs was reported to be the first registered marriage after Independence in Madras. Chendur, who by then was a writer of considerable standing, encouraged her to study further.

Responding to a question by Sivasankari, whether her husband had supported her in her literary career, Malathi responded rather jokingly, "If Chendur had not married me his life would have progressed along different lines. He would have had seven or eight children and would be roaming around on a cycle with vegetable baskets". Malathi appeared for the SSLC privately and passed. They initially stayed at George Town from where they moved on to Purasawalkam. The Chendurs were attracted to the All-India Radio station at Egmore. AIR, Madras of those days was the focal point of the cultural heritage of the Telugu people of the Presidency. Recollecting those golden days Malathi once wrote: "I used to see Viswanatha

Satyanarayana, Krishna Sastry, Gopichand, Narla, Padmaraju, Rajamannar and other stalwarts at the radio station. The seats where they sat were also venerated by youngsters like me! “It was AIR Madras which encouraged Malathi, the budding writer.

However, her first broadcast was through a play, written by Munimanikyam Narasimha Rao. She played a small role in the play and said a tiny dialogue: ‘Akkaa...baavocchaadu’ (Elder sister! The brother-in-law has come)! Her first talk was reported to be on Tolstoy. Over the time, she became a seasoned broadcaster, writing stories, talks etc. for radio. She also started participating in discussions. Her flair for handling drama was noticed by the authorities at the radio station and was encouraged to write plays for the radio. Malathi wrote all her plays for radio only even after her husband stopped writing plays. Several times Malathi persuaded Chendur to write plays for AIR, but never materialized. Malathi, simultaneously, started contributing stories to then famed periodicals. Her first story was ‘Ravvala Duddulu’ (Diamond ear rings) published in *Anandavani*. Some stories were also appeared in the monthly *Bharati*. She was seen as a writer of promise but there were a few who attributed all of it to her husband.

Malathi, however, arrived in a big way with ‘Pramadaavanam’, a weekly column, published by *Andhra Prabha*, which became very popular. Initially the column was seen as a novelty which would not long last. It sustained for a few decades. The column helped many women voice their problems and seek counseling. In some cases, the correspondents were simply denoted as ‘a sister’, to help protect the privacy of the readers. Malathi, being a voracious reader, had a great and insatiable thirst for books. She put her reading to good use by sharing her knowledge. Once a reader found fault with her for concentrating more on domestic issues and cookery without

caring for the development of women, may be due to concerns of circulation. Malathi replied that she was not concerned with the circulation of the magazine. Her motive was to be helpful to Telugu women in their daily lives; she added that ninety percent of women give prime importance to their homes and families. It was also her wish to help women improve their latent creative abilities, by providing information.

Malathi introduced literary classics of the world through her ‘Paatha Kerataalu’ (Old Waves) and ‘Kottha Kerataalu’ (New Waves). She was also a successful translator. She was made a member of the Film Censor Board at Chennai in the 1970s. To comprehend Tamil films better, she stated learning the language. Her proficiency in Tamil combined with her creative ability made her a successful translator. She translated many literary works from Tamil to Telugu including legendary Pudumaipittan, Jayakanthan, Sivasankari, Sujatha (Rangarajan) and M Karunanidhi, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Being a successful novelist, her novels were also woven around middle-class life. *Champakam Cheda Purugulu* (Champakam and White Ants), her first novel, depicts the life of a middle-class working girl, whose parents never allowed her to marry, with an eye on her income. Her *Sataabdi Sooreedu* (Sun of the Century, 2011) traces the life of three generations of women. Serialized in *Vanita* monthly, it’s the full life of a hundred years of a woman who did not see any happiness! It’s about the ups and downs and conflicts she faced from her childhood to the age of ninety-five years.

Besides, *Aalochinchu*, *Enni Metlekkina*, *Sisira Vasantham*, *Kalala Velugu*, *Bhoomiputri*, *Manasuloni Manasu*, *Champakam*, *Cheedapurugulu*, and *Sadyogam* and *Vaisaakhi*, some of her popular novels, are concerned themselves with life around. She never indulged in complicating themes. She never lost an opportunity to imbibe positive

attitude in her novels. Most of her women characters appear to be individualistic and capable of independent thinking. In *Aalochinchu* (2009), a character seeks another to think: “Think... Try to find the reason for everything. There would be a reason for every act. There would be causes for every pain and anguish. We try to find out the causes for our physical illnesses. Likewise, we should find out the causes and origins of our mental agonies. That is why I want you to think...” Malathi was very much concerned about the exploitation of the downtrodden women, especially those of rural India. She opined that writing could only help to create awareness in the literate populace and to inspire the rural women; the activist-writer should live amongst them.

Worried about the ever-increasing media and cautioned against increasing indiscipline, Malathi suggested proper use of education, discretion and good sense in handling present day life. She was also a prolific short story writer and published several of stories in weekly magazines. In a literary career spanning beyond five decades, Malathi acted as a bridge between Telugu and Tamil literature. She introduced books in other languages to Telugu readers. She learned Tamil to understand films that she watched as a member of the Central Censor Board in the early 70s. Even then, she had earned a reputation as a novelist and columnist on women’s issues and won several honors. Her translations used to appear in *Swati*, which provided innumerable Telugu readers a window to the world of literature. She was offered the translation work of Jayakanthan’s *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manidargal* by National Book Trust. This apart, Malathi translated Sujatha’s *Gayathri*, Na. Parthasarathy’s *Samudhaya Veedhi*, Sivasankari’s *Oru Manidanin Kadhai*, Pudhumaipithan’s short stories, including ‘Saaba Vimochanam’, and M. Karunanidhi’s *Anil Kunju*.

Before her death she was busy writing for *Suraksha*, a magazine brought out by the Andhra Pradesh police department. Malathi was engrossed in Kiran Desai’s Booker winning novel *Inheritance of Loss*. Many English novels to Telugu were published under the title Paathakeratalu in *Swathi*. In 1992, she was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *Hrudaya Netri*, based on the social and political conditions in the country before and after the independence of India. It covers four generations a reflection of modern Indian History with reference to the Telugu people from the freedom struggle up to the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and after. The protagonist here pleads against the formation of linguistic States in India. The novel begins with the prelude to Duggirala Gopalakrishna’s ‘Chirala-Perala’ movement, which pleased Mahatma, and discusses Independence struggle, the performance of the Congress and Janata governments, the emergency, and the aftermath, and ends with Indira’s assassination.

When Potti Sreeramulu sacrificed his life for the sake of a Telugu-speaking State, Malathi said through her protagonist in this novel that she had great respect for Potti Sreeramulu but she could not approve the creation of linguistic State because it was likely to create many divisions among people of India on the basis of regions and languages. Translated in English retaining same title by B Parvathi, brought out by Sahitya Akademi in 2008, had the freedom struggle as its backdrop. Besides awarded many prestigious awards: Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award (1990), Raja-Lakshmi Award (1996), Telugu University Award (2005), she was the recipient of Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy Award, and Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati awarded her with an honorary doctorate and title of Kalaprapoorna. In 2005, Malathi Chendur and her husband received the first Lok Nayak Foundation

Award, instituted by Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad. She was conferred with honorary doctorate by Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati.

Ideal people are found in small numbers only. One has to seek destiny through insight. From being a passive member of a mob, one has to be different... different from others. The thoughts, the words and the deeds have to be positive and different from the routine. Knowing one's self helps to make the individual a better human being..." wrote Malathi while replying to a question posed by a reader of a magazine. The theory she had practically applied in her life before passing as she had a will. Accordingly, after her death on 21 August 2013 in Chennai, her body was donated to Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research

Institute for research purposes. As a columnist, radio artiste, counselor, cook-book writer, novelist and social worker, she had touched Telugu people in numerous ways until she breathed her last. And she continues to rule hearts through her writings. A role model of sorts for the Telugus, especially women, with her plausible solutions to their day-to-day problems, Malathi, a lovable human being, with her death, a Telugu cultural icon has disappeared. Her influence on Telugu woman was unparalleled. To them Malathi was an inspiration, a counselor, and above all a close aide.

Dr. Ashok K. Choudhury, is a Delhi based Independent Lit Critic, holds Ph. D. from Utkal University and D. Litt. from Sambalpur University, Odisha. 

Contd. from page - (37)

The Story of the 'Gujarat Model' and...

Promotion of cronyism and pursuit of economic policies contributed to the state's growth but not development and did not reduce economic inequalities either, and this comprises the third part of the book. It underscores what the Gujarat Model was: One in which the state frees space for the private sector and creates an enabling environment for it.

The fourth section is extremely significant; it details how Mr Modi personalised political power and promoted what is now an omnipresent cult. Significantly, in this process he also destroyed his own party's collegial character which enabled it to underscore its distinctiveness.

The fifth and final part of book examines how Mr Modi widened the party's primary social base from the narrow upper-caste urban middle class while also drawing critics into an imaginary arc of conspirators that destabilised the nation by aligning with opposition parties, a strategy pursued nationally with success before some chinks appeared in the 2024 polls.

This is one of the most important recent books to understand how Mr Modi has controlled and governed India from 2014 by extending the template created in Gujarat from 2002 onward. The twist in the tale has come with last month's verdict which does not provide Mr Modi with an untrammelled parliamentary majority, making his use of the various tools and pillars raised in Gujarat more difficult to deploy.

Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay is an author and journalist based in Delhi-NCR. His latest book is The Demolition, The Verdict and The Temple: The Definitive Book on the Ram Mandir Project, and he's also the author of Narendra Modi: The Man, The Times. His X handle is @NilanjanUdwin.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 07 Jul 2024. 

Samvidhan Hatya Divas

25th June is named
“Constitution Murder Day”
And this has been done
By Official Gazette way
If the Constitution died
On that particular day
What do leaders and milords
Swear upon every other day?
The dead body of that book
Recently travelled very wide
During electoral campaigns
In pockets of every side
A chastised leader bowed
And touched his forehead
On a dead Constitution
He may not have read!
Milords still interpret it
Giving dead words some worth
Which makes me believe
It may have taken rebirth!

Raju Z. Moray



The New Normal

Mishaps happen
Hundreds die
Enquiry commissions
Shall find out ‘Why’?
Status quo continues
Disasters multiply..

Whether hoardings fall
Or people drown
Tragedies spare neither
Village nor town
Channels air discussions
By experts of renown

The new normal is
To be selfish and mean
Recall the viral videos
Everyone has seen
Few try to help victims
Hundreds film the scene!



Raju Z. Moray practices law in Mumbai. For more than 30 years he has been a contributor of articles and poems to publications of the Lawyers Collective. An anthology of his humorous writing for ‘The Lawyers’ magazine was published in 2017 as ‘Court Jester’ and the series of 60 poems he penned during the 2020 Lockdown for ‘The Leaflet’ has been published in December 2020 as ‘**The Locked Down Lawyer**’

Reader’s Comments

Dear sir,

Your editorial of July issue, ‘Interpreting Verdict 2024’ is superb. It has covered all aspects succinctly. I wish I could write like you.

P.A.S. Prasad

Readers’ Comments on the Launching of the IRI website

Dear Shri Singh,

Hearty congratulations for this excellent commendable work - a memorable landmark in the history of the IRI.

With best wishes,

S.N. Shukla

Dear Sir(s),

A really commendable initiative. Heartiest congratulations to all of you. Thanks & regards.

Goutam Bhattacharya

Books written by M.N. Roy available at our website:

www.indianrenaissanceinstitute.com

1. **If I Were Stalin**
2. **Beyond Communism**
3. **Cultural Requisites of Freedom**
4. **From Savagery to Civilisation**
5. **Historical Role of Islam**
6. **Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary**
7. **Materialism**
8. **M.N. Roy's Memoirs**
9. **Revolution and Counter Revolution in China**
10. **Men I Met**
11. **National Government or People's Government**
12. **New Humanism – A Manifesto**
13. **New Orientation**
14. **Politics, Power and Parties**
15. **Reason, Romanticism and Revolution – Volume 1**
16. **Reason, Romanticism and Revolution – Volume 2**
17. **Draft Constitution of Free India**
18. **M.N. Roy's Letters to the Congress Socialist Party
(Written in 1934-36)**
19. **The Philosophy and Practice of Radical Humanism**
20. **Problem of Freedom**
21. **Humanist Politics**
22. **Science, Philosophy & Politics**
23. **Vigyan Ki Kasauti Par Darshan, Sanskriti Aur Dharam (Hindi)**
24. **Navmanavad (Hindi)**
25. **Islam Ki Etihadik Bhoomika (Hindi)**
26. **Hamara Sanskritik Darp (Hindi)**

**‘Selections from
The Radical Humanist,
Volume I and II’ reach still
bigger audience**

As reported by www.academia.edu:

‘The Radical Humanist Volume I’ was your top paper last week - 2,035 Views till 06.02.2024

‘Selections from The Radical Humanist Vol. II’ was your top paper last week - 3,517 Views till 21.12.2023 ‘You have 554 highly engaged readers till 10.07.2024.

A total of 2,028 people have read your papers on Academia.’

The two volumes have been read in **272 cities in India and 635 foreign cities**, a total of 907 cities of the world.

Editor, ‘The Radical Humanist’