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Women's Reservation Bill



Grave Humanitarian Crisis in the Middle East



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WILL RESERVATION IN POLITICS IMPROVE WOMEN'S PLIGHT?

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Fundamental Principles of PROUT

Fight against
materialistic
philosophy
tooth and nail,
for it is the
greatest enemy
of humanity.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

1

No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body

2

There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe

3

There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.

4

There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.

5

The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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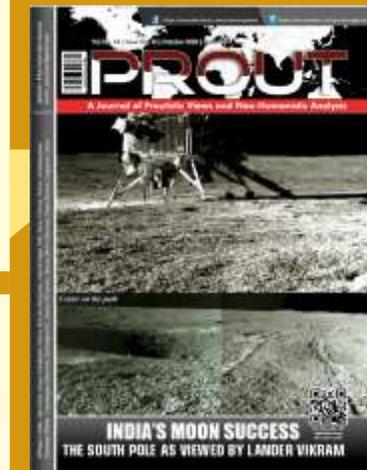


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Grave Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza

Historically the region where the Jewish state of Israel exists today was originally their homeland. Palestine originally belonged to the Jews and the Arabs drove them out. After centuries of persecution and following the Second World War there was mass migration towards West Asia and Palestine. The United Kingdom and France, which had colonised parts of this region, also played a role in deciding its fate and in 1947, the United Nations accepted a partition plan for the division of the region into Arab and Jewish parts, but Arab parties rejected it. Also, the idea of a “promised land” here for Jewish people had been building up around this time and the state of Israel was established in 1948.

The recent flare up in the Middle East starting October 7 after rocket attacks by Hamas on Israel from the Gaza strip as retaliation to punish Hamas, with Israeli warplanes bombing have led to an unprecedented loss of lives something that the war weary people in the region had never experienced before. In Israel 1500 were killed and in Gaza strip around 2750 people killed and 9750 wounded and according to a UN Report a million people displaced due to Israel's relentless bombing. This with Israel's complete siege of Gaza and its population of 2.3 million Palestinians has spawned humanitarian catastrophe that touches nearly every one of them.

Hamas, the Arabic acronym for “Islamic Resistance Movement” is accused of killing hundreds of innocent Israelis and has been proscribed as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union, is sworn to destroy Israel with rocket, mortar and suicide attacks. Ironically it exists today because of Israel, who helped turn a bunch of fringe Palestinian Islamists in the late 1970s into one of the world's most notorious militant groups?

This has been confirmed by former Israeli officials such as Brig. Gen. Yitzhak Segev, who was the Israeli military governor in Gaza in the early 1980s, who later told a New York Times reporter that he had helped finance the Palestinian Islamist movement as a “counterweight” to the secularists and leftists of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Fatah party, led by Yasser Arafat. The latter himself referred to Hamas as “a creature of Israel.”

Also Avner Cohen, a former Israeli religious affairs official who worked in Gaza for more than two decades, told the Wall Street Journal in 2009 : “Hamas, to my great regret, is Israel's creation,”. Back in the mid-1980s, Cohen even made an official report to his superiors warning them not to play divide and rule in the Occupied Territories, by backing Palestinian Islamists against Palestinian secularists. And suggested that steps be taken urgently to destroy the monster they had created before it hits them. No one paid heed.

In the recent past Israel has gone to war with Hamas thrice, in 2009, 2012, and 2014 killing around 25000 Palestinian civilians in Gaza in the process. Meanwhile, Hamas has killed far more Israeli civilians than any secular Palestinian militant group. David Hacham, a former Arab affairs expert in the Israeli military who was based in Gaza in the 1980s, adds : “When I look back at the chain of events, I think we made a mistake. But at the time, nobody thought about the possible results”.

Israel today faces a piquant situation. Their internal politics is blaming Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and the Palestinians and will even go to the extent of blaming the Supreme Court judges (whom the current government tried to curb), the media, the army chief of staff and their own defence minister. And they will blame the Palestinian citizens of Israel, the anti-Zionist leftists, and the academic staff in Israeli universities. They will also blame the liberal Zionists leading the protest movement. However a desire for violent retribution is the glue holding Israeli society together for the time being.

That apart, the need of the hour is to prevent the conflict to spin out of control and provide relief to the innocent Palestinians who have little or nothing to do with Hamas. The United Nations has declared this illegal and has asked Israel to have a safe corridor to conduct humanitarian relief measures. Israel must agree to this at the earliest. This has so far been denied.

It has been rightly said: “Fissiparous forces always create disunity and exploitation in collective life. To counteract these fissiparous forces, PROUT encourages those common factors amidst divergent views which lead to unity and synthesis”. Right now this is the most important endeavour of the international community and all efforts should move in that direction. ●



Nation Building

The article by Prout's founder highlights many issues that have been neglected over the years by the leaders of society authorities. It's never too late to follow those precepts to build a strong nation.

- Arundhuti Sen, Kolkata

India's Moon Success

A very appropriate cover story, current to the times. The brief history of India's space endeavours and the successive moon launches, their success and failure shows in India if there is political will anything is possible. And this goes for implementation of Prout too. For that PBI needs to be strengthened first at the grassroots level, then in few states and finally the whole of India to bring about a Proutistic political revolution by the democratic process.

- Satyanand Prakash, Ranchi

Proutist Prime Minister's Speech

An excellent vision of the not too distant future. The author ought to be congratulated for writing such a thought provoking piece.

- Shalini Singh, Jaipur

India's G 20 Presidency

The article gives a brief overview of India's G 20 year and the different activities that were planned and executed in different parts of the country.

- Rajdev Chauhan, Pathankot

One Nation One Poll

This certainly makes a lot of sense both economically and administratively. With elections

behind them governments can get down to serious developmental work.

- Bokul Dey, Howrah

Century of Lady Lawyers

A very noteworthy article, short and sweet, that explains the struggles faced by lady lawyers in the country over the past 100 years.

- Manju Gupta, Lucknow

Hawaii Fires

A great tragedy that occurred in the Western Hemisphere... Though, this particular incident was caused by fallen electric cables and not to Climate Change as for the bushfires in Australia. World temperatures are increasing so one can ever be over careful in heeding to its disastrous consequences.

- Grace Mallory, Atlanta USA

France's Loot of Africa

Enough is enough of this colonial mindset continuing. First it was political now it is economic. It's shocking that this is still continuing. Good that the tables are turning. What Africa needs is good leaders who can transform the continent. In fact the whole world does so.

- TS Aikhomu, Lagos, Nigeria

Human Migration

— Colonial Exploitation

It's unfortunate that even today political circumstances turn humans into nomads once again. It's a pathetic state of affairs which causes untold and unnecessary human suffering. These are rightly the consequences of colonial exploitation.

- Chander Sain, Ludhiana

Himalayan

Ecology Under Threat

Serious note should be taken of these pertinent points pertaining to the environment.

- Amita Ganguli, Nagpur

Poverty Stats

On the face of it, these appear to be misleading. A more holistic approach to judging the numbers

and effects of poverty in India needs to be undertaken.

- Aryan Karmakar, Pune

Last Month's Issue

Thanks a lot for this magnificent PROUT Oct 2023 Digital Issue, highlighting: 1. Propulsion of Happiness: India's Moon Success; 2. Immediate Course of Action for Nation Building: by stopping fissiparous tendencies; 3. A Proutist Prime Minister's Independence Day speech: Let us create a new dynamic Bharatavarsá, and a new world in the spirit of 'Samghchadwam'; 4. G 20 Summit, and India's Presidency: India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council; 5. One Nation One Poll: Political democracy has snatched away the right of economic equality, resulting in gross economic disparity between the rich and the poor; 6. Century of Lady Lawyers in India: Women Lawyers can play a pivotal role in saving the innocent, and helping to save criminals from unjustifiably harsh sentences; 7. Horror, Survival, and Hope on AUGUST 8, 2023: Lahaina holds a special place in my heart, with our family roots extending over five decades; 8. France Never Stopped Looting Africa, Now the Tables are Turning: Solving Africa's problems by transformative leaders shrugging off legacy of colonialism and carving a genuine path to self-reliance; 9. Migration - the Consequence of Colonial exploitation: Racial inequality persists in welcoming migrants; 10. India's Himalayan Forests under Threat with New Bill : endangered species and decreased environmental resilience AND 11. How Real is the Decline in India's Multidimensional Poverty? The multi-dimensional poverty index suffers from gaps and opens the door for suspicion. Health and education indicators have a high contribution to this Index. Items 8, 9 and 11 have all along been of big concern to me. ●

- Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista, USA

From Tyre Shack to Judicial Chamber

This is the story of 26 year old Ahad Ahmad who occasionally helped his father Shehzad Ahmad repair tyres from a tiny shack ;who will soon be dispensing justice from judicial chambers and is eagerly waiting for the day he can move his mother and father to his comfortable government quarters.

Ahad belongs to Barai Harakh village of Prayagraj's Sringeripur block where his father owned a tyre repair shop and mother Afsana Begum stitched clothes for neighbourhood women, both proud parents of a son who defied challenges of a hard life, became first a lawyer and then cleared the provincial civil services (judicial) final exam. Ahad would become a civil judge (junior division) after his yearlong training which is likely to start this year.

Ahad's parent's house is as modest as their extraordinary determination. This success shows faith in the power of education. Their three sons are living examples having been put through school and college. The eldest Samad (30) is a software engineer. The youngest Wajahat (24) is a manager in a private bank.

Ahad completed his integrated law course from Allahabad University in 2019 and began his career as a junior lawyer assisting a High Court advocate. His ambition was to move from the bar to the bench and started preparing for the judge's exam. It was right when the lockdown began. But not to be discouraged he took help from free online coaching classes as financial constraints did not allow him the luxury of a coaching institute. He cleared the exam and secured the 157th rank among 303.

His mother aptly sums up the hardships the family faced, "My husband's earnings were barely enough to feed us, but we wanted to educate our children. So I took up sewing many years ago. Both of us worked very hard and our efforts paid off".

Adds Ahad with a touch of humour, "Helping my father repair tyres de-cluttered my mind and that helped during the exams". None can argue with that! ●



Human Society Is One and INDIVISIBLE

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

There is no reason whatever to recognize one race as superior to another race.



There are a great many diversities and apparent distinctions within humanity. The people of some countries have dark skin, tall bodies, black irises, black hair, thick lips and flat noses, while the people of other countries have a fair complexion, medium height, blue irises and aquiline noses. There is a wonderful diversity, in regard to physiognomy – hair, eyes, skin, nose, lips, etc. – among the inhabitants of the different parts of the world. In fact, this difference between human beings is so staggering that sometimes people are wrongly led to believe

that the white people are perhaps superior to the blacks, and that they are only a little higher than our animal ancestors on the scale of evolution. As human beings were not able to unravel the mystery of this diversity, they wrongly preached the doctrine of racial supremacy, resulting in hatred of their fellow human beings and heartless cruelty, and indulged in savagery and bloody warfare – these were the darkest and the most lamented chapters in human history. Even today in Europe, particularly in Spain and Portugal, and in the USA, South Africa and Rhodesia one unmistakably notices the curse of this ignorance.

But is racial supremacy a scientific concept? Is it humanly justified? What does ethnology say? What is the origin of humanity? Did the ancestors of human beings of various colours belong to the same stock, or were they different? According to ethnology the human ancestors were the same. From them originated the Aryans, the Austriacs, the Mongolians and the Negroes of today. Those first forebears of the human race have been termed Australopithecus in ethnology. On an auspicious day in the remote past, say 1,000,000 years ago, the first human being saw the light of this verdant earth.



The Australopithecus group branched out into two categories of creatures – chimpanzees and orangutans on one side, and human beings on the other side.

The first human beings were born in the vast geographical area between the Java Islands and Palestine. The Australopithecus gradually transformed themselves into human form. Ethnologists, to be more precise, have conceived of an intermediate stage of beings – the Homo Erectus – who are neither Australopithecus nor exactly human beings in form and nature. The fossils of these creatures have been found in different parts of Java, China, and East and North Africa. These creatures of the Homo Erectus species emerged in the unknown past, chiefly during the Pleistocene Age of the earth. Because of the immutable law of nature, these species also had to leave this earth forever, without leaving any trace behind. But before their extinction they left behind their descendants – Homo Sapiens were the first ancestors of humanity.

The first Homo Sapiens did not remain tied to one place. In

quest of greater ease, comfort and safety in life, they spread out from Eurasia to the Arctic Ocean, from the Bering Strait to Melanesia, and from there again they moved in other directions, to find new homes in unexplored horizons.

Thus the single species of Homo Sapiens scattered itself over different parts of the world. At first the colour and physiognomic differences between the scattered Homo Sapiens were not very prominent. But with the passage of time, as they passed their lives over long periods amidst diverse geophysical conditions, differences in their physical structures became more and more apparent. Thus the apparent diversity in the human world today is the product of natural conditions.

There are four main races in the world today – the Aryans, the Austriacs, the Negroes and the Mongolians.

The Aryans first moved from West Asia and migrated to different parts from the Black Sea to the Danube Valley and then to Central and West Europe. They advanced and settled in Iran, Syria,

Palestine, Egypt, North Africa and Spain, and along the Mediterranean coast. They spread out from West France to the British Isles, and later spread to Afghanistan, the Indus Valley, the Red River Valley, and Korea and Japan in the Far East.

The Mongolians had China as their main homeland. Later they spread out from the Arctic Ocean to the Bering Strait and to the White Sea. They could not move westward because of high mountains in Asia. So they advanced eastward and southward and reached Burma, Siam (Thailand), Indochina, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Philippines and Japan, and joined the original inhabitants of those places.

The Negroes lived near the equator in Africa and New Guinea, near the southern coast of the Indian Ocean. Their descendants are found in South India, the Andaman Islands, the Malayan Peninsula and the Philippines.

Human society comprises these various branches of various races. There is no reason whatever to recognize one race as superior to another race. The external

differences in constitution among these human groups cannot alter their basic human traits – love and affection, pleasure and pain, hunger and thirst. These basic biological instincts and mental propensities equally predominate in human beings of all complexions in all countries and in all ages. A mere rustic, unlettered, half-naked tribal mother of an unknown hamlet of Chotanagpur Hills (in Bihar in India) bears deep maternal affection for her young children; in the same way, a well-educated mother of a locality of New York pours out of her heart a great love for her own children. The subterranean flow of love and affection exists in all hearts alike. Every person cries out in pain, everyone feels pleasure when there are occasions of joy and happiness. In different geographical, cultural, social and other environments the lifestyles of different human groups may vary – a few special psychic traits of some of those groups may assert themselves – but fundamentally their mental existence flows along the same channels of ideas and consciousness. Containing the same cosmic momentum and

under the same cosmic inspiration, they all have set out for a tryst with the same destiny.

From the unknown past until this day, the various branches of the human society have given rise to different civilizations. The Alpines and the Mediterraneans (two branches of the white race) produced the Hellenic, Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations. The Nordics and the Dravidians were responsible for the Indus Valley civilizations. And the yellow race produced the Chinese and Japanese civilizations. The Red Indians built up the American civilizations.

Black people did not lag behind either. True, compared with other races their contribution to human civilization is less impressive, not because of their racial inferiority, but because the so-called civilized races (for their selfish political interests) deprived them of sufficient scope in their development. Furthermore, the hostile natural environment did not allow introversion of their psychic potentialities. There is still the burning desert of the Sahara right in the heart of Africa, surrounded by sea on most sides, and there is

still the deep and impenetrable forest thwarting any easy human communication. This unfavourableness of nature prevented the Africans from looking within and that accounts for their failure to build any civilization in the past. In spite of that, there are immense human potentialities lying dormant in them too. And for that the most pressing need is to develop those possibilities by creating a congenial environment.

There is an admixture of blood of different races. In India, all the four prominent races – the Aryans, the Mongolians, the Austriacs and the Negroes – have been inseparably mixed up. The present Filipinos are a mixture of Negro, Mongolian and Aryan races, though the Mongolian elements are predominant. Ethnological research has proved that the present Philippino race grew out of a heterogeneous mixture of people from India, Indonesia, Malaya, China, Africa and Arabia. Similarly, the Japanese race was evolved out of a blood mixture of the Aynus (a sub-branch of white people) hailing from the banks of the Amur River, a sub-branch of the yellow race from Korea, and a hybrid community of brawny-black coloured people who migrated from Malaya and Indonesia. The Chinese people are composed of people from South Russia and Central Asia. The population of Great China is a mixture of those different communities.

Only recently Hitler fed the German nation on the spurious notions of Aryan supremacy and incited the vain and arrogant Nazis to fight a horrible war. He raised his arrogant slogan – “The Aryans are not to be ruled but to rule”. But is this chauvinistic and blind concept of Aryan supremacy supported by the science of ethnology? No, this science holds that the modern Germans are not a



homogeneous race. They are a mixed race. Thus, if analysed, it will be found that none of the existing human races are free from admixture of the blood of other races. Therefore the talk of “purity of blood” of a race is meaningless, for there cannot be any purity of blood of a particular race. Rather, blood is always pure.

In India, the maximum mixture of blood has been in Bengal. The Bengali race evolved out of the Aryans, Mongolians, Austriacs and Negroes. The people of Bihar and Orissa and the Kayastha belong to this Bengali race. In southern India, too, Negro blood came to mingle with the Austriac blood, and a new race, the Dravidians emerged.

Thus in the dim past of unknown history, different human groups came in one another's contact. There was unavoidable intermingling of blood, and ultimately there arose many so-called new races after gaps of long periods. The innate migratory nature of human beings has goaded

them to journey from one horizon to another, from one hemisphere to another. For more than one reason, human beings have broken narrow geographical boundaries and set out for other lands and associated with other communities.

Ultimately this close association amongst themselves culminated in marital bonds. Many small races were fused into a new race through inter-racial marriages. For instance, in South America, as a result of constant intermingling of the blood of the Negroes, the Europeans and the Indians, a new race has emerged. Similarly, in Colombia and Mexico, a new Mestizo community has come into being as a result of interracial marriages between the Europeans and Indians. That is why it is not proper to attach much importance to differences in respect to noses, eyes, hair, height, etc.

Human society is continually striving to arrive at a synthesis through analysis, some sort of unity through diversity. The

natural obstructions of small clans, narrow communal interests, geographical distances and intractable customs and usages – none of these obstacles could hinder the steady and silent movement towards a supreme goal. That is why the policy of apartheid, the vanity of racial superiority, national chauvinism or regionalism – these relative doctrines or social philosophies – could not thwart the progress of human society. The outdated ideals of nationalism are crumbling to pieces today.

The newly awakened humanity of today is anxious to herald the advent of one universal society under the vast blue sky. The noble and righteous persons of all countries, bound by fraternal ties, are eager to assert in one voice, with one mind, and in the same tune that human society is one and indivisible. In this voice of total unity and magnanimity lies the value and message of eternal humanism. ●



Will the Reservation in Politics Improve WOMEN'S PLIGHT?

■ Ganesh Bhat

In the Bill, women's hopes and aspirations for empowerment seem far removed from ground reality



The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. (Women Reservation Bill), was approved in both Houses of Parliament on 20 and 21, September 2023. The bill, which was pending for nearly three decades, is now an Act that proposes 33 percent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. People all over India are rejoicing and hailing it as a landmark achievement because it will increase women's representation and participation in politics and governance. They hope this will empower women promote gender equality in society, and improve the quality and effectiveness of governance and policymaking in India.

Analysis: The hopes and expectations of empowerment of women by this Act appear to have ignored the ground reality. In a society where women face various forms of discrimination, violence,

Criticism of the bill:

Some of the points are :-

- The Bill does not include reservation for the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils.
- Rotating reserved seats every election may weaken an MP's motivation to work for his constituency since he/she may not be re-elected.
- The election cycle from which women will get their share is not specified, it will come into effect after an exercise of delimitation –that is only after the restructuring the parliamentary seats – may be in 2029 election or later.
- Some parties have demanded that there should be a sub-quota for women from backward classes and minorities. Some have opposed this demand, saying that it will further fragment society along communal lines and undermine the unity and solidarity of women.
- Many women candidates are likely to be nominated by their male relatives or patrons who will influence their decisions and actions.
- The voice of women will not be heard, since they will have to toe the policies of their party leaders.
- It might foster a sense of inferiority complex among the women

and oppression, such as female feticide, child marriage, dowry, domestic abuse, rape, sexual harassment, honour killing, trafficking, and the wage gap, etc., merely making a few women ministers or members of parliament will not serve as glaring examples of equal rights and women's progress. A woman of any country who becomes a minister or an ambassador is not an index of the real status of women in that country. We see many of the

women ministers openly exhibiting and propagating the religious and social dogmas of male-dominated social order. Supporters of the legislation say that quotas for women have already been successful at the local level after they were first introduced in 1993. But, the reality is that in most cases, it is the male member of the family who rules in the name of the women member, who is elected in the reservation quota. The numerical strength of women in politics alone is not going to lead to their empowerment.

Status of Women in Society:

Even today women are slaves to the male-dominated social order everywhere in the world. For centuries, Indian society like most of the other societies has been a male-dominated one. PROUT observes, “With the establishment of male dominance in the society, all power was concentrated in the hands of men. Women were gradually deprived of all their rights – social, cultural, religious, political, and economic. Some religious preceptors declared in the name of God that women were inferior to men in all respects and issued many commandments against them. As a result of all this, on the one hand, male lawmakers formulated many social regulations, penal codes, and so on against women, and on the other hand women began to curb their own rights by thinking and saying, “We women are weak, we cannot undertake such huge tasks as men; how can we women solve such big and complex problems?” Because women are physically weaker than men, they are considered as the private property of men and are meant for their pleasure only.

Women are treated as commodities. Social disparity reached its climax when the independent identity of a woman became denied in the marriage ceremony. By the custom of her



father, elder brother or any other male guardian literally “giving her away” in marriage the independent identity of the girl remains unrecognized. “Because of injustices against women with respect to their social rights and because women are economically crippled, a section of women is compelled to take to prostitution. Although there are many causes of this profession, these are the main two. The system, in which characterless men swagger about in society while fallen women are denied proper opportunities despite their sincere desire to lead an honest life, can never be supported by justice”.

“Women are considered second-class citizens in each and every religion. Some religions say that if the husband is virtuous the wife is benefited, so the wife does not have to do anything herself. Other religions say that men can go to heaven, but women have to remain standing at heaven's gate. In many religions of the world women are considered unfit to participate in spiritual practices; are not allowed to become priests in the religious hierarchy. All this

is dogma.” There are many people who claim to respect women, loudly praising them as a race of mothers, but who in practical life suppress them underfoot. Does the husband tend and nurse his wife during her illness as much as she does during his illness? Religious observances/penances are prescribed for women to ensure wellbeing of their husbands, but not for men.

History of Exploitation of Women :

In many parts of the world, women have been rendered helpless by hundreds of years of imposed ignorance, superstition and inferiority complexes. Experts opine that the degradation of the status of women started in the later Vedic period, because in the Rig – Vedic period there are references to many women scholars. In the later Vedic period the situation started changing drastically with the increased dominance of the puritan and obscurantist ideas. Women's condition had reached its abyss by the medieval period with systems like “Sati”, “Parda”, polygamy, maltreatment of widows etc.

In Puranic society [around 500-1300 CE], it was declared that women were not entitled to mukti or mokṣa. Only if and when they attained male bodies by dint of their penance for many lives together could they attain liberation or salvation. As long as they were in female bodies, their supreme duty would be to serve their husbands.

PROUT says, “During the intellectual era – that is when the society was under the influence of intellectuals, the cunning intellectuals reduced women to the position of wage-less slaves. Conspiring to cripple women in every way they fabricated “divine” commandments together with numerous kinds of scriptural injunctions, illogical tenets, and imaginary yarns of sin and virtue. Listening to these it would seem that man alone, is the chosen person of God for whom the rest of humanity had taken birth only to provide enjoyment. To fulfill this sinister design, dogmas were created and cunningly popularized which led to psycho-economic exploitation. Psychic exploitation has been infused into the minds of women and many symbols which are religiously observed are



nothing but symbols of slavery. The opportunists who have taken advantage of women fail to realize that by paralysing women's minds, the whole society becomes crippled”.

Women's Rights:

According to PROUT men and women, are the progeny of the same Supreme Consciousness; both are equally divine and inherit similar and equal rights to life, liberty, and expression. Life means living for a great cause; it implies the endeavour to have the freedom to express one's potentialities in the physical, economic, psychic,

and spiritual realms. Women have their potential no less than men. The difference in natural and biological characteristics between men and women speaks only of coordinated cooperation, not of subordinated cooperation. Women should be recognised as dignified human beings as men and should be encouraged to be economically independent of men. In the marriage system, both men and women should have equal responsibility; there should be no bar on women's entitlement to spiritual practices as followed in Ananda Mārga

PROUT's View:

Ideally, women should also move with their own strength and with the same speed as their male counterparts. Although the system of seat reservation is against democratic principles, temporary arrangements for seat reservation, if desired, may be permitted. The right to contest reserved seats should not be limited to women. At the time of the primary election of the candidates for the reserved seat, only women will enjoy the right to vote. Two people among the contestants scoring the highest votes will be nominated for one seat in the primary election. Later, either of the two will be finally elected by the vote of the general public. If, in the primary election,



only one candidate is nominated – that is, there is no other contestant – in that case, his or her popularity must be tested before the general public.

PROUT's Suggestions:

Greater political power alone will not improve women's plight. To abolish dogma and liberate women from psychic exploitation, there should be:

1. Free education for all women in all countries of the world in a proper educational system.
2. No discrimination in the social, educational, and religious realms.
3. Create a powerful, dynamic, and up-surging social consciousness, among women, so that they are inspired to rise, abolish dogma, annihilate all symbols of slavery, and usher in a new era of coordinated cooperation and glorious achievement.
4. Encourage women to gain economic independence from men, so that they will win back respect. Dowry and other social ills will die natural deaths. As women gain economic self-reliance, they will gain a voice in the
5. By use of modern equipment in agriculture, it will not



household as well as in the society-at-large. Men will not be able to impose their whims on women who are no longer economically chained to them. Social, religious, and educational dogmas that oppress women will go the way of slavery and sati. Women will find new opportunities for self-development, and in return be able to employ their special qualities for the benefit of all.

remain labour intensive; women and children will be freed from related work so they will get the scope to develop themselves.

Hidden Agenda:

The so-called landmark bill comes months before Indians head to the polls for the next general elections, due by May 2024. The intention of every political party is to talk in terms of reservation only, instead of hitting at the basic cause of such inequality between men and women. It would become a populist tool at the hands of powers, as in the cases of other types of reservations. This tactic is said to distract from election reform concerns like the criminalization of politics, unemployment, and other major issues.

Shrii Prabhát Ranjan Sarkár, propounder of PROUT supported the emancipation of women from the stranglehold of dogmas and ignorance. He said, "For society to move forward, women must regain their self-confidence and take their rightful place in society. Men also must take an active role in this process. Let women be the vanguard of a new revolution which humanity must achieve for a glorious tomorrow". ●



Our Vision and Mission for UNIVERSITIES

Let's initiate a renaissance in India, to impact all realms of public life and people's living.

Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista

to promote Holistic development in India

A higher education domain that needs considerable attention and development in India is the importance of academically comprehensive, research intensive, and community contributing universities, in order to address community, regional, and national needs.

It is our vision and mission to further develop the universities in India, to initiate a renaissance in India in all realms of public life and people's living, by:

1. Developing the Central universities, State universities, and IITs to become prime research & development universities, contributing to sustainable community development.
2. Having all IITs to have Medical Colleges, because biomedical engineering is woven into medicine, for development of precision medicine and patient-tailored surgical procedures.
3. Set up a new batch of Indian Rural Universities (IRUs), to promote holistic rural development.
4. Transforming Private Universities to be research and community-engaged universities.

To thereby (i) promote urban and rural developments, smart governance for community development, healthcare delivery, and industrial development, and (ii) herald a new era of shared prosperity, peace, and progress. In

The below Items I to IV are portraying this vision and mission for universities, to promote holistic development in India.

Item I. Our Grand Vision and Mission for Holistic Development in India

We want to:

1. Revive Urban India, by developing 'Smart Cities', providing core infrastructure, clean environment, basic amenities (of electricity, water supply, sewerage), public transport and housing for the urban poor.
2. Promote Rural development, through enhanced agricultural production by efficient irrigation system, primary to tertiary healthcare delivery system, solar power electricity system for rural homes, farms, and industry.

3. Make India a manufacturing powerhouse, by involving universities in promoting indigenous industrial development.
4. Develop Smart Governance of cities and states, to contribute to urban and rural infrastructure and economic development.
5. Rejuvenate the Cultural heritage of India, by promoting Yoga science, cognitive enhancement, and integrated medicine.

In this regard, Central universities, State Universities, IITs, and Private Universities can all play primary and pivotal roles for the implementation of this mission.

Our visionary perspective of the role of a university in society is as follows: A university is verily a laboratory for the development of a progressive society, by delineation of its ideals in all fields of human thought and endeavor, and by the development of education and research programs for imparting these ideals. A university hence needs to have a pulse of the problems challenging society and a clear delineation of its role in cultivating the requisite solutions for its progress.

Item II. Importance of academically comprehensive, doctoral research, and community engaged Universities to serve community needs:

A domain that needs considerable attention and development is that of the importance of academically comprehensive, doctoral research, and community engaged universities. In India, our universities are in big need of this structure and theme, and this includes IITs, AIIMS, Central universities and State universities. For example, nowadays, considerable breakthroughs are taking place at the intersection of medicine and biomedical engineering. However, in India, medical colleges (such as AIIMS) are on their own, while science and technological universities (like IISc and IITs) do not have medical colleges. So, we need to implement the concept of academically comprehensive research universities, to promote such interdisciplinary research and development.

Universities also need to contribute to (i) governance and planning of cities and states, to promote

optimal operation and performance of all the public sectors, and (ii) industrial and community infrastructure development. Essentially, we want Indian universities (Central universities, State universities, IITs, and Private universities) to (i) be academically comprehensive, and to be involved in developing new knowledge in academic fields and (ii) be community engaged, by contributing to industrial development, and by developing economically sustainable communities.

In this way, we can also get Indian universities to be ranked among the top 50 universities in the world, like even so many Asian universities.

So for a university to appropriately develop new knowledge in academic disciplines, to promote holistic development in India (as outlined in Item I), it needs to have an academic structure comprising of many of the following colleges: **1.**College of Humanities and Social Sciences;**2.**College of Sciences: physical, biological and environmental sciences;**3.**College of Engineering, **4.**College of Management: business management, city planning & management, hospital& healthcaremanagement; **5.**College of Medicine (allopathic, ayurvedic, naturopathic medicine) and Health Sciences; **6.**College of Law and Governance; **7.**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; **8.**College of Yoga and Mind-Body Medicine; **9.**College of Education, for School Teachers (such as in STEM Education); **10.**College of Sports Science and Engineering (to educate scientific sports coaches).

Item III. Universities as Centers of Excellence in Education and Research, contributing to Community Development and People's Living

1. Universities need to promote advancements in all academic disciplines, as indicated above.

This can lead to more elevated thinking and progressive living of the people. In these Colleges, **many** of my textbooks and journal papers can contribute to programs and courses, particularly in social sciences, biomedical engineering, medicine and health sciences, management science, STEM education, yoga and yogapathy, sports science and engineering.

2. In the Biomedical Engineering Department of universities (such as of IITs), we can offer a new type of Physiological Systems Engineering Courses, based on my textbooks:

- (i)** Applied Biomedical Engineering Mechanics (CRC Press, Taylor and Francis, 2009):
- (ii)** Cardiology Science and Technology (CRC Press, Taylor and Francis, 2016), designed as Computational Cardiology to transform cardiology and take it into the era of STEM.
- (iii)** Biomedical Engineering of Pancreatic, Pulmonary, and Renal Regulatory Systems, and Applications to Medicine (Elsevier Publisher, 2023). These courses can provide precision formats of

function, dysfunction, and treatment of physiological systems.

3. In Medical Colleges (such as AIIMSs), we can incorporate the “STEM Model of Medicine”,

in the medical curriculum, to provide a more rigorous and precision formulation of medicine, which can then also be applied to enhance the level of clinical care. Then my paper, **New Era of Integrated Biomedical Engineering and Medicine: STEM Model of Medicine (STEM), Part 2. Gateway to new format of Medical Colleges,** *Pacific Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, is setting the stage for a new era of integrated medicine, resulting in the formulation of new types of computationally based disciplines of Anatomical Engineering, Physiological Engineering, Medical Engineering, and Surgical Engineering.

We can also set up MD-PhD (Biomedical Engineering) Programs between Medical Colleges and Departments of Biomedical Engineering, towards development of precision medical diagnostics and patient-tailored surgical procedures, medical inventions, and devices.

4. In the College of Business Management of universities, we can offer MBA degree program in Hospital and Healthcare Management (HOHM), based on my journal paper: Hospital and Healthcare Management Program (Curriculum and Outcomes), *Pacific Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*,

This could then even lead to a novel MD-MBA (Hospital and Healthcare Management) Program, jointly between the Medical College and College of Business Management.

The HOHM Program is designed to provide hospital and healthcare administrators the relevant multidisciplinary knowledgebase in business administration, clinical and hospital engineering, economics and financial management, related to cost-effective operation of hospitals and healthcare delivery.

5. In the College of Education of universities, we can offer Integrated STEM Education Program, based on my paper: I STEM Education: Integrated Approach to Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine, for Advanced Knowledge, Community Infrastructure, Healthy Living, and Society Building:

STEM is working all around us and within us, and it affects virtually every component of our everyday living. Community development involves the development of all the public sectors, which can all be designated as STEM fields.

6. Setting up the College of Yoga: Yoga Meditation and Yogapathy (Mind-Body Medicine) at universities:

Today, Yoga is the most in-demand field, for psychosomatic health and well-being, cosmic thinking and cognitive development, promoting enlightenment and mind liberation from propensities.

We can set up this unique College of Yoga, having Departments of

- (i) Yoga Meditation: Science and Practice, for Psychosomatic Health and Well-being
- (ii) Yogapathy (Mind-Body Medicine): Psychosomatic Preventive and Curative Medicine **offering courses based on my journal papers:** Yogapathy: Meditation Science and Practice, for Psychosomatic Health, Neuroplasticity, and Well-being-An Insight, Pacific Journal of Medical and Health Sciences,

Yogapathy: Psychosomatic Preventive and Curative Medicine. My paper could then lead to the development of an important MD-PhD (Yogapathy) Program, jointly between the College of Yoga and the Medical College.

7. Setting up the College of Sports Science and Engineering, at universities.

This would be the first such Program in India and worldwide, for careers in sports coaching. The courses offered in this Program would be based on my book chapters:

- (i) Biomechanics of Fitness Index: Optimal Walking and Jogging Modes, and Hip Joint Assessment, Chapter 14, Applied Biomedical Engineering Mechanics.
- (ii) Analysis of Spinning Ball Trajectories of Soccer Kicks and Basketball Throws, Chapter 15.

8. Setting up “Political Governance, Cooperative Economy, and World Government Program”, jointly in the university College of Humanities and College of Law. This important program would be based on my textbook: **Socio-Economic Democracy and the World Government.**

In developing an enlightened political-governance and socio-economic environment, this book provides a people empowered and benefitting socio-economic political-governance system, based on (i) Democratic Governance System (DGS), whereby the most qualified representatives of all the

functional sectors of the community get elected to the local legislature, and (ii) Cooperative Economic System (CES) of cooperatively managed institutions and enterprises, whereby the corporation's revenues are only distributed among the company employees. Together, DGS and CES can promote progressive living for the people and economic equity.

Then the World Government constitution in the United Nations can be structured to promote progressive development of all the countries of the world, prevent domination of some militarily powerful countries and their invasions of other countries, promote fair governance of countries and progressive living of their people, and serve as a template of world peace.

Item IV. Higher Education for Holistic Development of India:

Our vision for universities is for them to be temples of higher learning, engaged in gathering, generating, storing, and disseminating knowledge relevant to societal needs. **By making all these developments outlined above in Section III, we can upgrade Central universities, State universities, IITs, and Private universities** to (i) make them more comprehensive in academic disciplines, and (ii) also have them involved in industrial development and sustainable community development. **Let us also set up a new network of Indian Rural Universities (IRUs)** to promote all-round rural development. Together these universities can cultivate immense research and development to address the problems of India's urban and rural development, knowledgeable governance of cities and states, agricultural productivity, and indigenous industrial development, towards inculcating a renaissance in India and transforming it into a people dedicated and holistically prosperous country.

Through it all, our noble objective is to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals: to help initiate such a renaissance in India, to impact all realms of public life and people's living. ●

For further reading following links may be seen

<http://dhanjooghista.googlepages.com>)

[<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzOPIHbjWLYta3djeFV0MkRaMXc>]

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tw2WVLElwlLlIblazb8S-GPXh8Y_hwI10/view]

[<https://www.elsevier.com/books/biomedical-engineering-of-pancreatic-pulmonary-and-renal-systems-and-applications-to-medicine/ghista/978-0-323-95884-4>]

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PgLsgjKAm_BeIFl1gclYf0tMxvxI3Wae/view?usp=sharing].

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qswWgiQPrY20QeB31oU5Urnxp4LmDw6/view?usp=share_link]

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_eO8TYifBOT7q_N9bK20ZDuf8W9w7PI_/view?usp=share_link].

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VsQGdW68FrR69AQ9UUb_g8Y6b2qwJnt1/edit?usp=share_link&oid=114163053545700604699&rtpof=true&sd=true

[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ksDIU4s8ioAN6ORsk7pX26EGjbPOpf3J/view?usp=sharing>

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-Rzjx2wKqygbKryYvv9zlgRQxf38ZHT6/view?usp=share_link

[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/143CinVyNPeqzHpBBGUfQE0D9SzopBZlu/view?usp=sharing>]

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G_SFDACx7enPAAnlMzxI-qbN-BNoCGM4/view?usp=sharing].

[<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzOPIHbjWLYtUI93UTNRLTZIUkE>.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U9JpDN83w0TXYC5muQB9H-oi7M_9auc4/view?usp=sharing

The Palestinian militant organisation Hamas's rocket and other multi pronged attacks on Israel starting 6.35 am on October 7, marked one of the deadliest days of violence in Israel since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it left at least 1200 killed in Israel, many Israelis taken hostages including those from other countries; and over 1050 Palestinians killed and 260,000 displaced in Gaza strip due to retaliatory air strikes. Israel's Defence Forces have also claimed to have recovered bodies of 1500 militants within Israel. Israel's longtime ally United States also assured support and dispatched an aircraft carrier strike group to the eastern Mediterranean as standby, to be of assistance to Israel.

Later they enforced a total siege of Gaza and cut off food, water, power and fuel. The United Nations considers this illegal and has requested Israel to provide a safe corridor. Israel is yet to agree to that. Hamas has meanwhile threatened to kill the hostages if Israel continued to bomb civilian targets.

It is not exactly clear as to what exactly led to the rocket attacks, but some experts believe they are Hamas's response to attempts at achieving "normalisation" of relations between Israel and other West Asian countries – which was not the case for a long period in the region's modern history.

Let us briefly examine the history of this Israel-Palestine conflict and how it has impacted regional politics. Following World War II and the persecution of the Jews in Europe, there was mass migration towards West Asia and Palestine. Countries such as the United Kingdom and France, which had colonised parts of this region, also played a role in

Israel Hamas WAR 2023

Over the years, Israel and Hamas have been in a perpetual state of conflict

 Bhupendra Singh



deciding its fate. In 1947, the United Nations accepted a partition plan for the division of the region into Arab and Jewish parts, but Arab parties rejected it. Also, the idea of a "promised land" here for Jewish people had been building up around this time and following the post-WW II migration, the state of Israel was established in 1948. Due to this Arab states attacked Israel in 1948, which led to what was called the Nakba or catastrophe. According to the Council on Foreign

Relations (CFR), the UN estimated that 750,000 Palestinians were uprooted after Israel emerged victorious – backed by American support. Palestinians retreated to the Gaza Strip, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, and the West Bank.

Hamas is the largest Palestinian militant Islamist group and one of the two major political parties in the region. Ironically it was Israel that gave birth to it to counter Yasser Arafat and his politics. Currently, it influences

more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The organisation, however, is also known for its armed resistance against Israel. Hamas as a whole, or in some cases its military wing, is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and other countries. Mohammed Deif, the leader of Hamas' military wing, said 5,000 rockets had been fired into Israel early October 7 to launch what he called "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm". "We've decided to say enough is enough," he added.

Hamas was founded in the late 1980s, after the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip — the Jewish state had captured the two Palestinian territories after winning the 1967 Israeli-Arab War. The main reason for its creation was a deep sense of failure that had been set within the Palestinian national movement by the late 1980s. This primarily happened after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) —

involved in the armed struggle against Israel from the mid-1960s to 'liberate Palestine' — made two massive concessions.

Also essentially Hamas is "the internal metamorphosis" of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, which was established in Jerusalem in 1946. They remained on the margins of Palestinian politics for decades till the 1980s because their strategy, which was non-confrontational. They believed they needed to Islamise the Palestinian society and it was a prerequisite for an engagement with the wider battle against Israel. In brief, they didn't use armed struggle. But in 1987, when the first Palestinian intifada took place, the organisation decided to transform itself — and "established Hamas as a militant adjunct to specifically confront Israeli occupation.

Hamas gained prominence after it opposed the Oslo Peace Accords signed in the early 1990s between Israel and the PLO, the body representing most Palestinians. The accords aimed to bring about Palestinian self-determination, in the form of a

Palestinian state alongside Israel. The Palestinian militant group, however, was against them as it believed a two-state solution would forgo the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the historic lands seized from them in 1948 when Israel was created. The wheels of History turned again and Palestine that originally belonged to the Jews and the Arabs had driven them out, now the Jews took it back and later expanded their territories in subsequent wars.

To disrupt this Hamas launched suicide bombings and carried out numerous bus bombings, killing many Israelis, and stepped up its attacks after Israel killed the group's chief bomb maker Yahya Ayyash in December 1995. The failure of the peace process wasn't only Hamas' fault, though. According to the Al Jazeera report, right-wing Israelis didn't want to give any concession to the PLO and Israeli settlers resisted the deal as they feared it would lead to their eviction from the legal settlements in the occupied territories. And Hamas'



suicide attacks once again made headlines during the second intifada between 2000 and 2005 — it began after the peace talks between Israel and Palestine completely collapsed. Another reason was the failure of the peace process, combined with the ever-increasing brutality of the Israeli occupation, which left the Palestinians with no faith in the option of negotiating a peaceful settlement with Israel”.

Over the years, Israel and Hamas have been in a perpetual state of conflict and the former holds the group responsible for all attacks coming from the Gaza Strip. The deadliest face-off between the two sides took place in 2014. At least 2,251 Palestinians, including 1,462 civilians, were killed during 50 days of fighting. On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers and six civilians were killed. In May 2021, hundreds of Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli security forces at the Al Aqsa compound in Jerusalem. After demanding Israel withdraws security forces from the compound, Hamas launched a series of rockets from Gaza into Israel. Israel hit back with air strikes on Gaza. Fighting went on for 11 days,

killing at least 250 people in Gaza and 13 in Israel.

Many attempts were made for the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, by carving up the region – but none were accepted by all parties. Over the years, many conflicts broke out between Israel and Arab states over territory annexed by Israel, such as the Golan Heights in Syria which it still controls, and the Sinai Peninsula which has since been returned to Egypt. Arab states then refused to accord recognition to Israel and they only maintained informal relations. This changed in 1979 after the US negotiated the Camp David Accords between leaders of Egypt and Israel and it led to some mutual concessions and agreements, but did not mean an immediate establishment of diplomatic relations for most other nations in the region.

A Brookings Institute report titled 'The emergence of GCC-Israel relations in a changing Middle East' noted that in 2002, Saudi Arabia led the Arab Peace Initiative. It outlined the withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied in 1967, including the Golan Heights, the

settlement of the Palestinian refugee question and the recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

Only then could there be normalisation of relations between the Arab world and Israel, it said. But today even without attaining those conditions, normalisation has gathered momentum. Some analysts believe that after the governments in West Asia and North Africa went through the Arab Spring in 2010, during which many countries saw attempts to overthrow long reigning monarchies and governments, it became crucial for them to rally regional support.

The protracted nature of the Israel-Palestine issue and the changing economic and strategic needs of individual countries also contributed to normalisation. In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is keen to expand beyond his kingdom's traditional spheres of economic interests. Netanyahu had also said a few weeks ago that an agreement with its historical rival in the region was in the works and would be brokered by the US.

Both Israel and the UAE signed a normalisation deal in 2020 that came into effect the following year. Also brokered by the US, the “Abrahamic Accords” led to the UAE becoming the third Arab country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, to agree to formally normalise its relationship with Israel. The two also signed a trade deal in May 2022. The Abraham Accords initially included the UAE and Bahrain, and later, Sudan and Morocco.

The Brookings report also mentioned that as per Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Israel is seen as a formidable regional power so better ties with it make strategic sense. The promise of being closer to the US is an





important factor too. But China is another factor, which was behind an attempt at normalisation of ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran this year. All these point to another lasting, complex political issue in the region seeing some kind of forward movement. It also showed China utilising its economic power to emerge as a player in regions that so far mostly saw US involvement.

A significant factor here is that the city of Jerusalem and areas surrounding it hold religious and cultural importance for three major Abrahamic religions –

Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. And so, laying claims to the land has held importance for many groups. Ismail Haniyeh a Hamas leader, said on Al Jazeera television: “All the agreements of normalisation that you (Arab states) signed with (Israel) will not end this conflict,” referring to the larger Israel-Palestine conflict. The Iran backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, which has also attacked Israeli forces, said that the action was a “decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalisation with Israel”.

As for the issue of Palestine being seen on the back burner, even though frequent conflict and violence there has not stopped, the Palestinian government has also criticised many of these agreements. In a 2020 article for the think tank Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 'Without the Palestinians, Israeli Normalization Is Still Beyond Reach', it was argued that normalisation of ties cannot take hold truly unless past annexations and other points of concern are not resolved. This was crucial for the region's people, and not just governments.

“Normalization is not simply a top-level exchange of officials; rather, it's a public to public engagement. Decades after the Egyptian peace accords, people-to-people normalization does not exist, and relations remain quite cold on a cultural level... announcing partial or full diplomatic relations with Arab states do not result in acceptance by Arab populations, unless accompanied by grassroots buy-in, which is inextricably connected to the question of Palestine,” the report said. ●



The Israeli Ultimatum Palestinians Flee Gaza

The Gaza Strip is one of the world's most densely populated places, with 5,500 people per square kilometer. Half of the population is under 18 years old. More than half of the Palestinians in Gaza are descendants of refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, when hundreds of thousands fled or were expelled from what is now Israel. A massive population displacement would connect, in the collective memory of Gaza, with the Nakba, the flight or expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians and the destruction of more than 400 localities. Such memories are still fresh as an element of identity, even among young people who only know it through stories.

Israel, after dropping 6000 bombs in 6 days and flattening entire neighbourhoods in North Gaza, on Friday the 13th October, issued an ultimatum to all people living there to evacuate to the south within 24 hours. This caused tens of thousands of civilians to flee, according to data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA). The Israelis insisted that civilians could safely make their way south on the two major parallel roads until the 4 p.m. deadline which on Sunday was extended to 1 p.m. local time. This ultimatum followed the earlier deadline that expired in the early morning hours of Saturday. Several rights groups have denounced the order and warned that a potential forced transfer of

Even before the Israeli ultimatum, many Gazans fled, because their homes had been destroyed or they were seeking refuge

 Nand Varma



the civilian population would be a violation of international law. Many Palestinians said they would not heed the order. Meanwhile Hamas that holds hostages hopes to trade them for thousands of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

During this exodus dozens of Palestinians were killed in Israeli air raids; according to Hamas officials. The media office of Hamas, the Palestinian group that governs the besieged Gaza Strip, said 70 people, mostly women and children, were killed in the air raids on cars leaving Gaza City adding that vehicles were targeted in three places. Hamas has told people to stay put, and many of the enclave's

residents already believe there is nowhere safe they can go.

Thousands of people were walking along the road heading south, even as loudspeakers in the mosques urged the population to stay put. Gaza's Hamas authorities have spoken of the Israeli warning to evacuate as "propaganda aimed at confusing citizens and breaking internal Palestinian cohesion." The United Nations estimated that tens of thousands had fled homes in the north by Friday night.

Israeli army international media spokesman Richard Hecht said, "We are aware that it will take time, but they have to be moving south, we are doing everything we

can to make it happen, we understand the complexity, but we are determined to act against Hamas". The mass evacuation order applies to all of Gaza City, home to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

Neither the U.N. nor the humanitarian organizations working on the ground consider such a population movement feasible in one of the most densely populated areas of the planet, where 2.3 million people are unable to leave. Even before the Israeli ultimatum, many Gazans were already on the move, either because their homes had been destroyed or because they were seeking refuge. The number of people who fled their homes reached 423,000 by the 13th.

The unprecedented evacuation order was received with concern by international organizations. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA) called it "horrendous." "The scale and speed of the unfolding humanitarian crisis is bone-chilling. Gaza is fast becoming a hellhole and is on the brink of collapse," said Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's commissioner general.

The Israeli ultimatum is, according to Amnesty International, an impossible demand that even the Israeli army

spokesman has admitted cannot be carried out in a single day. The same organization denounces the use of white phosphorus in the air raids that the Israeli army is carrying out in areas inhabited by civilians in the Gaza Strip. "The use of white phosphorus in Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, magnifies the risk to civilians and violates the international humanitarian law prohibition on putting civilians at unnecessary risk," added Human Rights Watch in a statement this week, adding that nobody has the right to attack civilians, no matter what the other side has done.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, said that the displacement of a million people through a densely populated war zone to a place without food, water or shelter, when the entire territory is under siege is "extremely dangerous and, in some cases, simply impossible." Guterres recalled that the hospitals in the south of the Strip are already at the limit of their capacity and will not be able to accept thousands of new patients from the north. "We need immediate humanitarian access throughout Gaza, so that we can get fuel, food and water to everyone in need. Even wars have rules," he said.

The European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs

and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, speaking to news media said, "You cannot move such a volume of people in a short period of time," noting a lack of shelters and transportation. Late the same day the ultimatum was issued, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a brief statement that was televised after the Jewish Sabbath had begun: "We are striking our enemies with unprecedented might. I emphasize that this is only the beginning."

"Despite the occupation's threats to shell; the decision has been made. We have not left and will not leave," the medical organisation Palestinian Red Crescent said in a social media post. "Our medics will carry on their humanitarian duties. We won't leave people to face death alone." A combination of Israeli air raids and an Israeli siege that has cut off access to water, electricity, food and fuel has devastated health facilities in the beleaguered strip, where medical workers now say they face impossible choices under the evacuation orders. The international medical group 'Medecins Sans Frontieres' (MSF), also known as 'Doctors Without Borders', issued a statement on Friday saying Israeli authorities had given it just two hours to evacuate a hospital in northern Gaza. ●



Acid Attacks on *Every year more than 1500 acid attacks occur around the world.*

WOMEN

■ Karunakshim Vatsalam

Acid attack is a form of gender-based violence aimed at silencing and controlling women who are an important part of society. The use of acid as a weapon began to rise in many developing nations, specifically in South Asia. The first recorded acid attack occurred in India in 1982. In many countries, acid attacks constitute a hidden form of violence against women and children that often go unreported and the true number of horrific attacks taking place does not come to light.

In addition to causing psychological trauma, acid attacks result in severe pain, permanent disfigurement, subsequent infections, and often blindness in one or both eyes. According to the National Commission of India, an acid attack is "any act of throwing acid or using acid in any form on the victim with the intention of or with the knowledge that such person is likely to cause to the other person permanent or partial damage or deformity or disfiguration to any part of the body of such person".

Acid attack on women is increasing day by day, basically on girls 11-30 years old. The most common types of acid utilized in



these assaults include sulphuric, nitric, and hydrochloric acid. . Several community awareness programs are being conducted by local authorities and administrative departments, to make people aware of this heinous crime.

Every year more than 1500 acid attacks occur around the world. In the UK attacks are mainly gang-related, while most are gender-based acts in South Asian countries. In India 80% of the attacks are against women, and independent agencies estimate that 60% go unreported. Cases of acid attacks against women have also been recorded in countries like Cambodia, China, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Argentina. But the highest numbers of acid attacks occur in the South Asian subcontinent, especially Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Pakistan, as per 'Carin Benninger-Budel of the Geneva-based World Organization Against Torture', acid attacks in Pakistan tend to occur within the family, thereby reducing the chances of such cases being reported. While estimates of acid attacks in Pakistan are hard to arrive at, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan recorded 56 cases in 2002. By June this year, the Islamabad-based organization recorded 32 acid attacks across the country. In 2001, the Dhaka-based Acid Survivor's Foundation recorded 340 new attacks, a 55 percent increase on the previous year. Experts warn that the actual figures could be higher as cases in remote regions go unreported.

In India according to NCRB data in the last five years, 1,362 acid attacks were reported. In 2021, as per the latest available data, 176 acid attacks were



reported, along with 73 “attempts to acid attack”. West Bengal reported the highest number of acid attacks (34), followed by Uttar Pradesh (22), and Rajasthan (15). However, independent agencies estimate that about 60 per cent of acid attack cases are unreported annually. Often incidences of acid attacks capture the headlines of Indian media. But unfortunately till 2013 there was no separate legislation to deal with acid attacks when The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act. Previously the offense was registered under Sections 320, 322, 325, 326, and 307 of the Indian Penal Code (I.P.C).

One of the primary causes of acid attack cases is the easy availability of acids in the market. People can easily procure it without much effort on their part from pharmacies, open-air markets, goldsmith shops, automobile repair shops, etc. Many people also use it as a common cleaning agent in their homes. It is easily available and inexpensive within the common man's reach. Violence within the home is one of the leading causes

that has attributed to the throwing of acid by family members on vulnerable and browbeaten women. It hardly takes few moments to throw the acid on the victim but the man fails to realise that it not only disfigures the woman's looks but also leaves behind mental scars for the rest of her life.

The physical consequences are, acid burns through skin and flesh, layer by layer, causing tremendous pain and trauma. It eats through the two layers of the skin, into the fat and muscle underneath, and sometimes down to the bone, it may dissolve the bone. The profoundness of injury depends on the brawn of the acid and the duration of the contact with the skin - the burning goes on until the acid is scrupulously washed off with water. Further, if thrown on a person's face, acid speedily eats into eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Eyelids and lips may burn off completely, the nose may melt, closing the nostrils, and ears shrivel up. Acid can rapidly destroy the eye, causing the victim to be blind. Skin and bone of the skull, forehead, cheeks, and chin may melt. According to a study acid attack burns up to 14% of

body surface area, with areas most commonly affected including the face (87% of the victims), head and neck (67%), upper limbs (60%) and chest (54%). Around a third of victims (31%) suffered complete or partial blindness.

The psychological consequences — are equally severe when the victim perceives that her skin is burnt off and after the attack, the defacement and the disabilities they have to bear for the rest of their life. Some of these are insomnia, nightmares, depression, fear of facing the world, headache, tiredness, fear of other acid attacks. Even worse is the feeling that they have become outcasts from society. Every time she looks at the mirror she feels insecure with a dark future ahead.

There are social and economic consequences as well. Unmarried victims feel unsure of ever getting married and leading normal lives, as they suffer from many disabilities like blindness and deafness. Even though qualified they do not get jobs, given the present trends in society. Instead of being helped their lives are made even more miserable by people avoiding looking at their faces for long. This societal mindset needs to change as their suffering is through no fault of theirs but some savage animals' in human form freely roaming around the society. This was very poignantly portrayed in the Hindi film 'Chhapaak' released in 2020.

Of this heinous crime Laxmi Agarwal's case is one of the famous ones. Laxmi, a 27-year-old woman from Delhi is an acid attack survivor. Only 15 while waiting for a bus near Tughlaq road, Delhi in 2005 two men threw acid on her. One of the assailants was rebuffed for marriage by her so he got his revenge leaving her disfigured for life. Her face was severely burned and she had to go through seven surgeries.

Belonging to a poor family such surgeries were beyond their means. Fortunately a God sent benefactor came and bore the medical expenses of around Rs. 2.5 lakhs. She lost all her childhood, lost all friends, and became a school dropout. People mocked her and stared at her, blaming her by saying that she might have done something to earn the man's wrath. She spent eight years hiding her face. But she gathered courage from the outpouring of public anger in the Nirbhaya case of a gang rape on a bus in 2012.

Laxmi can never look the way she used to but she is still an inspiration to all such women who have been victims of acid like her. She began her fight against acid attacks by gathering 27,000 signatures for a petition in the Supreme Court of India to restrain acid sales. Her PIL sought framing of a new law, or amendment to the existing criminal laws like IPC, Indian Evidence Act, and CrPC for

dealing with the offense, besides asking for compensation. She had also pleaded for a total debar on the sale of acid, citing an escalating number of incidents of such attacks on women across the country. It was on her petition that the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgment directing regulations on acid sales. Under the new law, a person convicted of an acid attack faces a minimum of ten (10) years and a maximum life sentence. Laxmi today is the director of Chhanv Foundation, an NGO dedicated to helping the survivors of acid attacks in India. In 2014 Laxmi awarded the International Women of Courage by Michelle Obama, the US First Lady. She was also chosen as the NDTV Indian of the Year.

We may conclude by saying again that acid attacks are heinous crimes directed mostly against women. While acid attacks are reported in many parts of the world, in India such incidents are increasing. Though the new laws are good signs there is still a long way to go, before they are implemented effectively. This needs to be taken up urgently by the authorities concerned, the police as well as the judiciary. Current compensation packages compared to the gravity of the offence are not enough. This crime being premeditated, courts should ensure that punishment should match and that the state should grant adequate compensation to the victim, which would include bearing of full medical expenses.

Another important aspect that requires immediate consideration is formulating new rehabilitation schemes, like better job opportunities, imparting training to the victims, enabling them to meet their day to day needs. . The media too must show greater maturity and sensitivity while reporting such cases, and garner public opinion to help in the rehabilitation process. ●



Recently driving through Gurgaon, India's millennium city, I happened to see window cleaners at work perched high above the smoke dust and din of the traffic below. It reminded me of the days when as a naval cadet under training in 1964 we would, sitting on a Bosun's chair legs dangling over the sea, chip and scrape and paint the shipside with battle grey paint. For safety we wore life jackets had a lifeline tied around our waist. It was hard work under the tropical sun but seeing the ship beautifully painted was our reward. This piece is dedicated to these window cleaners the world over.

In India the first tallest building constructed in 1959 was of 12 floors — the LIC building in Chennai. . Two years later the 25 storey Usha Kiran building came up in Mumbai. After that many taller buildings were constructed in various cities of India. Today World One, 280.2 metres (919 feet) tall, with 76 floors is the tallest completed building in the country. Some more buildings which would be taller are coming up. Of course these in no way can compare to the skyscrapers in cities overseas, e.g. the World's tallest building since 2009 is the Burj Khalifa in Dubai which is 829.8 m (2722 feet)!

Tall buildings with gleaming glass are indeed pleasing to the eye and impressive to look at. Imagine a high rise building with a large number of windows that should be cleaned? So let us spare a thought for those who keep them that way — the high rise window cleaners, who are lowly paid and risk life and limb to give us clear views from our apartments and offices and enhance the city's aesthetic looks. Window cleaning of such tall buildings is definitely a risky business.

Working at such heights

WINDOW CLEANERS of High Rise Buildings

■ Arun Prakash  *Unfortunately despite the risks involved it is a low paying job*

"It's frustrating to see my hard work directly contributing to the company's success, yet my salary remains stagnant." "A low salary inhibits my ability to save for the future and build a stable financial foundation."

requires skilled work and the person needs to have keen instincts (much like those associated with rock climbing) to handle the height with proper mobility and follow the proper safety measures. Besides extreme heights and risk

of falling, wind can affect the stability of the scaffolding and suspended platforms, which increases the chances of accidents. The scorching sun, heavy rain, lightning, and snow in colder countries add to the risks. In the

colder months, window washers use cool or lukewarm water because using hot water in lower temperatures may cause the glass to break and possibly cause serious injury.

The tools required for such work are: Movable platform and Bosun's chair. A high rise window cleaning platform allows window washers to access higher windows while keeping them safe and secure. The platforms can be automatic with an electric motor to power them or they can be moved by hand. This is the most common way for high rise window washers to move about the building. If the window washer is not standing on the platform, they typically use a Bosun's chair. This is a one person-sized platform where the window washer can sit as they are moved along the exterior of the building. Often there are hooks and attachments for the bucket and other tools, so they are easily and safely accessible.

Cleaning accessories are: Tool belt to keep vital tools within easy reach helps window washers stay efficient and also keeps them safe at work. Bucket for holding cleaning solution whether a simple soap-and water mix or an ammonia mixed solution. Sponge or T-bar wand used for wetting the window with the cleaning solution. Squeegee the best friend of a window cleaner, used to wipe the dirty water away—and it is key to a clean, clear, and streak-free window. Glass scraper, a handy tool used for easily removing caked up dirt and grime, such as bird droppings or tree sap. Rags and towels help remove any remaining drops from the squeegee and are useful for buffing and final polishing of the windows. Spares, the bars of the squeegee and other tools can wear away over time, so having a few spares at hand is a must.

Safety tools at work are an important feature for the window



cleaners. They are: Safety belt or harness, this is one of the most critical pieces of gear a window washer can have. If the platform falls, the safety harness is set up to be attached to the building itself to prevent them from falling. Protective gloves, cleaning windows is messy and wet, gloves protect against possible skin irritation from the cleaning materials and from the wear and tear of repetitive movements. Most professional washers also wear gloves that help protect against frostbite when working in cold and windy conditions.

More often than not window cleaners do more than simply cleaning, many of them also work

as frontline inspectors as they work: Carrying out visual checks for damages, checking seals and for wear and tear; painting and metal refinishing; minimal facade repairs to cracks and chips; temporary waterproofing to keep things secure till a permanent solution is found and perform basic penetration testing to check for water and air movement into the building through cracks.

Window cleaning requires focus and distractions of different nature e.g. smart-phones or listen to music while working at the scaffolding are not allowed for safety's sake. Holding a smart-phone or wearing headphones while trying to clean a window at



heights isn't safe. Cleaning the windows of a high-rise building during a windy weather may be a real challenge. Rains make the platforms slippery.

The biggest risk for window cleaners is, of course, falling from a great height due to a failed piece of safety equipment. While they often work hundreds of feet in the air, a fall of 50 or 60 feet is likely to be fatal. If a scaffold disconnects or breaks and a worker falls hundreds of feet, it is almost guaranteed to be fatal. Even if safety equipment works properly, there are still other risks to window washers. At high elevations, winds can become quite strong, especially with the layout of the

city as wind rushes between buildings and down streets. These winds often threaten to pull a window washer from the side of a building. Strong winds not only slow down a cleaning project but it's also bad for the stability of the scaffolding and the suspended platforms which increases the risk of incidents.

Though in such a job risk is an inevitable part of it, but deaths are surprisingly rare in the high-rise window cleaning business. This is because workers are very serious about their personal safety. Before starting they first make sure that all the climbing equipment and safety gear is checked and is not damaged. All the harnesses are

inspected; cables and scaffolding are in good working order. Accidents do happen but fortunately they don't have a fatal end. Data from US researches show that between 2010 and 2014, only one window cleaner of high-rise buildings was killed each year. In comparison to 1932 this is a great improvement and speaks a lot about the safety measures companies take. In 1932 one out of every 200 window cleaners in New York was killed each year on average. But another study by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration over a period of 15 years, there were over 88 window cleaning accidents of which 62 were fatal.

Unfortunately despite the risks involved it is a low paying job. US data reveals that in general window cleaners make \$ 12 to 16 an hour, and the daily wage of window cleaners can reach up to \$ 35, experienced window cleaners can make \$ 50 to 100 an hour. Another aspect of this job is that it is male dominated, but this is changing, number of female workers is increasing. Such details for India are not readily available but it is reasonable to say that they are much lower.

The compensation payable in case of accidents causing death or injury, depends on who is liable, whether the owner due to faulty equipment or the worker due to negligence. In India such cases are governed by the Workmen's Compensation Act 1923. In many countries including such eventualities are covered by worker's compensation insurance. Suffice to say, that this is never enough especially when the sole earning member dies. This profession is not so well known by the general public and therefore exploitation cannot be ruled out. Suitable guidelines and rules must be framed to ensure that adequate compensation is paid to all victims. ●



SOLDIER'S PRIDE IS NATION'S SECURITY

It was post 1971 and the nation was euphoric. Our countrymen were lauding the Indian Armed Forces for a spectacular victory that had changed the geography of the sub-continent. The nation was savoring the victory and more than 97,368 prisoners were in our Prisoners of War Camps. It was the second largest surrender in the Military History; second only to the surrender of Gen Von Paulus, German, 6th Army at Stalingrad in the Second World War. The Armed Forces were feted everywhere for its courage and the people were convinced that it was one instrument that would never let the country down.

Amidst this euphoria there

Lt Gen PG Kamath (Retired)

Post 1971 victory unknown to the soldiers a band of bureaucrats were conspiring on how to cut the Armed Forces down to size.

were 4000 families, who had lost their fathers/sons/husbands in the war. Another 10,000 were wounded and maimed for life. They were picking up the lost threads of life to continue their journey in the forbidding world. However their sorrow was lost amidst the mirth, laughter and jubilation of victory.

Unknown to the services a band of bureaucrats were conspiring as to how to cut the Armed Forces to size. Defence Secretary was Mr K B Lal, who

was literally there for the entire duration of the Third Pay Commission. He was the one, who provided the inputs to the Third Pay Commission. The Commission was constituted a year before the war and concluded two years after the war. Its final recommendation marginalising the Armed Forces was made public two months after Field Marshal Manekshaw relinquished the post of Chief. Indeed it was a clever move as the most popular person in the country was not able to take

cudgels against the government. This Pay Commission cut the Armed Forces to size for winning the war for the country. Even Field Marshal Manekshaw was not spared; more of it later. 'Ingratitude unkind than the winters wind' to adopt Shakespearean phrase to an ungrateful government. How did the Government go about the act?

Firstly they abolished a separate Pay Commission for the Armed Forces and formulated an equivalence between the Armed Forces and Civilians. It was here that the Pay Commission struck its vilest blow when they considered that 'a trained infantry soldier with three years of service is below a skilled labour. Little do they know that it is the infantry soldier who does the actual fighting and charges the enemy with naked bayonet literally on the very front edge of the battle and makes eye and steel contact with the enemy. He is the one who bears the brunt of more than 90% of casualty in all wars and yet he was considered the lowest strata to base their

comparison. It also means that the infantry soldier with less than three years' service was considered an semi-skilled/unskilled labour? Just mark the irony of the sinister and ignorant move? Rest of the soldiers were equated based on this preposterous formulae?

Next step was to reduce the percentage of pension for the Armed Forces. The OROP that was effective till 1972, was annulled after the third pay commission. A soldier then served only for 15 years and went on pension at the ages ranging from 33 years to 36 years of age. In view of this, his pension was 70% of his basic pay and an officers pension was 50% of his basic pay as the bulk of them retired at 50 years of age. The civilian counterparts were getting only 30% of their basic pay as pension. Please note they served till they were 58 years of age (now 60 years) and the soldiers retired a quarter century earlier. The wretched Third Pay Commission did not consider the additional 25 years of service his civilian

counterpart served and raised their pension to 50% and reduced a soldiers pension from 70% to 50% in order to achieve the so-called parity. Further the government put mandatory 33 years of service for full pension fully knowing that the soldier then retired after 15 years of service. They further as a largesse made a seemingly generous gesture to the Armed Forces by pegging the mandatory service for full pension (50%) to 25 years. Just look at the clever move; fully knowing that the soldier retired after 15 years of service. Thus the soldier in effect got only 30% of pay after 15 years of service, as extrapolated from full pension of 50% of pay with 25 years of service. Thus the Government ingeniously cut a soldiers pension from 70% to 30% of pay at the same time enhancing the civilian pension from 30% to 50%. Look at the perfidy; how can possibly a Government run down her own Armed Forces? It is indeed a remarkable feat from a nation that was a slave nation for over two centuries, yet disregards her Armed Forces who ensure her hard earned freedom?

Our Defence Ministry were hand in glove with the proposals. There was not a whimper of protest to set right the injustice. The soldiers had to pay heavily for having won the war for the country. Their travails were not over; more was yet to come!

One would wonder why the soldiers did not protest against the brash injustice perpetrated on them? It would be difficult to believe, as those were the times the officers in particular were told that politics and pay were not to be discussed. They were naïve and had full faith in the government that in the long run; no injustice would be done to them? The disarming naivety of our officers appear incomprehensible now; but it was true then. Hence the entire master stroke of cutting the armed



forces to size by impoverishing them was done with so much of dexterity, it took us couple of decades to realise its negative impact.

Mrs Gandhi was feted and was called 'Durga' and she basked in the limelight of victory and self-adulation. However, she proved to be the daughter of her illustrious father by sharing the same antipathy and disdain towards the Armed Forces. She was a smart woman hence concealed it to a great extent with outer façade of support and derived maximum political mileage of the victory. The running down of the Armed Forces in the Third Pay Commission could not have been done without her active and positive consent?

Their next target was the most popular figure in the country Field

Marshal Manekshaw. He was made a Field Marshall and the appointment is active for life, though ceremonial in nature. A Field Marshall does not retire and continues to wear his five star rank for life. He was entitled to Pay and Allowances for life. The bureaucrats who were literally jealous of his popularity ensured that he did not get his pay and allowances; low and behold! for the next 36 years, and finally a lump sum of 1.60 crore of arrears was released to him on intervention by then President Abdul Kalam. A non-descript bureaucrat gave him his pension dues on his deathbed in Jun 2007 a few days before he breathed his last. Isn't it a national tragedy? Don't you sometimes feel whether the country deserves selfless service from its soldiers? Can any

country on this earth be more ungrateful towards her soldiers than 'Mother India? What a great victory for the MOD for destroying the soldiers pride?

Let us now analyse as to why a soldier fights? Why does he give his life for a cause? What makes him charge through a fusillade of bullets and splinters against sure death and injury overcoming the instinct of self-preservation? Why is he prepared to make his ultimate sacrifice and bid goodbye to the world? Why does he not think of his loving wife, his innocent children, his aged parents and the living world of mirth and bliss; knowing he has not even spent a quarter of his life? Why all his near and dear ones pale in to insignificance and he sees only his mission like Arjuna only seeing the eye of the bird? All these questions can be answered in two words; His Pride.

It is his professional pride that make him a hero. He wants to be a hero before his comrades; before his superiors, in his unit and in his country. He is a hero of his village and hero in front of his parents. He is a hero to his wife and a super hero to his children. He also knows he is the last bastion of the nation and he is the last trump card in the hands of his nation. He knows that if he fails the nation fails. It is this emotion that drives him towards mission accomplishment. It is all the way Pride! Pride! And Pride. It is nothing else but 'Pride'.

Sad to say; it is exactly that the Governments of his own country wants to deprive him of? He has been badgered, humiliated, impoverished and made a laughing stock in all the successive pay commissions. His status has been lowered time and again by an insensitive government. How can noble thoughts like sacrifice, mission, cause, patriotism and pride be ever understood by self-serving, sly and scheming bureaucracy? ●





People left homeless, by the flooding and erosion in the Kashirampur Talla Basti area of Kotdwar, have set up temporary plastic shelters along the road

Flood Damage Highlights ‘Uncontrolled’ Sand Mining in Northern India

The states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh suffered severe damage from floods this monsoon, which has highlighted the effects of illegal sand mining in their river basins

■ ■ Varsha Singh

When a spike of rainfall hit the Indian state of Uttarakhand from early July to late August 2023, the town of Kotdwar experienced a series of disasters. Four rivers – the Khoh, Sukhro, Malan and Paniyali – flow through the town. As the rivers flooded, a bridge over the Malan collapsed on 13 July, as did a bridge over the Paniyali on 28 July. Then on 8 August, the

approach road to the bridge over the Khoh broke apart. Many houses, small bridges, roads, and security walls were damaged as the rivers surged. Across the state of Uttarakhand, almost 100 people were killed in disasters between 15 June and 15 September, with 1,100 landslides recorded in the state in 2023 so far – the highest in eight years.

Dharamveer Prajapati, a

resident of Kotdwar, stands in front of a house that was half washed away in the floods. “There was a cloudburst on 8 August and again on 13 August. The water moved forward destroying everything that came its way,” he says, pointing to the Khoh River. “At least 40-45 houses were destroyed. Now, it doesn’t seem as if any house existed here.”

Role of illegal sand mining highlighted

Part of the reason for the significant destruction seen in Kotdwar was the record rainfall which drove the rivers to flood. But Uttarakhand's rivers have long been plagued by illegal sand mining. In July, a video went viral in which Ritu Khanduri Bhushan, speaker and representative for Kotdwar in the Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly, criticised a senior state bureaucrat over ignoring the condition of bridges, and went on to mention [mining] in this regard.

The mining of sand and boulders from river beds, mostly for production of cement, has the effect of the deepening the river channel and increasing the speed of water flowing through it. This increased flow can lead to more erosion of river banks, and more damage to structures in floods. In 2012, after a case was heard in India's Supreme Court against the destructive effects of sand mining in the country's rivers, the Ministry of Mines framed guidelines for sand mining. Recent reporting reveals that the state of Uttarakhand has

lobbied for loosening such restrictions over the last few years, and ignored the rules.

Bhushan says: "We have continuously raised the issue of illegal mining in Kotdwar. Uncontrolled mining was carried out in Malan, Sukhro and River Khoh. Mining should happen in rivers but we have to understand the way we are doing it." According to Prajapati, illegal mining takes place in the Khoh in the day and at night. "Due to mining, small and big bridges broke at many places. Bridges on River Sukhro and River Malan were also damaged due to the same reason," he says. In August, the Uttarakhand High Court ordered a stop to mining activities in the Malan, Sukhro and Khoh rivers in Kotdwar, while hearing a public interest litigation case regarding bridge breakages due to illegal mining.

Government's own reports cite problems

A 2015 environmental assessment report on sand mining in the Malan by the Uttarakhand Forest Development Corporation, a state government body, specifically mentioned erosion and floods as

outcomes of irregular sand mining in the river basin. While there are supposed to be rules in place pertaining to river dredging and river training, these have been flouted, according to Mujeeb Naithani, a right to information (RTI) activist based in Kotdwar, said "Under the garb of river training, we see illegal mining happening here. In Kotdwar, initially, the banks of the river were weakened by digging. At some places in the river, excavation was done to a depth of 6 metres [when it is only allowed up to 3 metres]. If there was river training, the water would have moved straight ahead and it would have taken a lot of time to [erode] one-fourth of the river banks. But there were no shores left. That is why erosion took place up till houses and other infrastructure."

Mujeeb shared copies of letters written by the Uttarakhand Irrigation Department in 2020 in which illegal mining is confirmed to be occurring in Kotdwar's rivers, and the risk of security walls around the river being breached during the rainy season is also noted.



This bridge over the Malan River collapsed on 13 July 2023 during flooding of the river



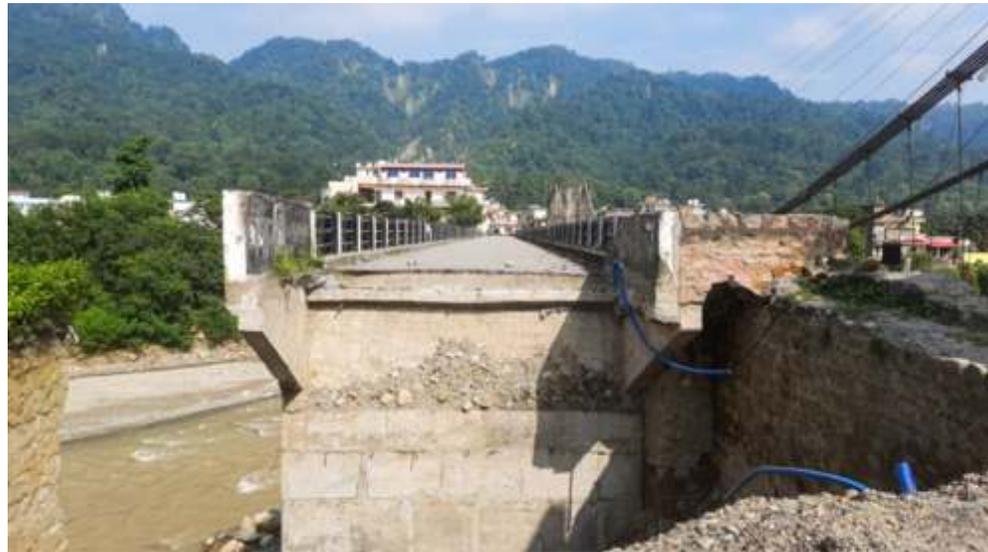
In Uttarakhand, the problem of illegal sand mining is not restricted to Kodtwar. A damning report on illegal sand mining by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) was tabled in the Uttarakhand Assembly this year. It states bluntly that, “All Government agencies like Geology and Mining Unit, District Collector, Police Department, Forest Department and Project proponent and Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Ltd. collectively failed to prevent and detect illegal mining.” It added that the government of Uttarakhand had “failed to implement Government of India’s initiative called Mining Surveillance System for over five years,” and that the state government had itself used 3.7 million tonnes of “illegal mined material” in the state capital, Dehradun.

Kulbhushan Upmanyu, an environmentalist and president of civil society organisation Himalaya Niti Abhiyan says: “Illegal sand mining is a major issue, not only in the plains but also in the rivers in the hilly areas of the Himalayan states. We do not see tractors being used in farming in the mountains but tractors keep roaming on the banks of rivers for mining. This has become a lucrative business because there is no investment in dealing with it. The government also does not take any strict actions.”

The CAG report tabled in the Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly points out that many fines for illegal activity have simply not been collected. “The [Industrial Development] Department, therefore, suffered revenue loss of INR 1.24 crore due to not imposing the required penalty on illegal mining/storage,” it says.

Sand mining and destructive floods in Himachal Pradesh

The neighbouring state of Himachal Pradesh was even worse



The approach road to the bridge over the Khoh River in Kodtwar was damaged in floods on 8 August 2023

hit than Uttarakhand in recent floods. The state government has estimated the damage caused by catastrophic rainfall between 24 June and 31 August 2023 at INR 120 billion (USD 1.44 billion), with more than 360 people killed.

Increased water levels in the Beas River caused floods in Kullu, Mandi, Hamirpur districts in Himachal Pradesh, and downstream in the neighbouring state of Punjab. There have been complaints of illegal mining in the Beas which leading the river to change its course, causing floods. Nearly 12,000 villages in 20 districts across Punjab and 65 lives were lost in the floods. Authorities have largely focused on encroachment on the riverbed as the main reason for the scale of the disaster.

Vikramaditya Singh, minister of public works in the Himachal Pradesh state government, tells The Third Pole: “Along with heavy rains in the state, the condition of the rivers also deteriorated due to illegal mining. This is also an important reason for the suffered loss. The erosion increased because the banks were damaged and the river changed its course. Taking a lesson from these incidents, on August 23, we have stopped all the stone crushers

running on Beas and its tributaries. We will also take similar action against crushers operating on other rivers.”

Anil Kumar, an expert in riverine processes, paleo hydrology and sedimentology at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, saw the floods in the Beas River in person in August. He says that floods reached a height of 8-9 metres near Pandoh Dam in Mandi District.

“Due to mining, huge pits are often formed in the riverbed. When suddenly strong waves of water arrive, the flow is obstructed, resulting into an accumulation of energy,” Kumar tells The Third Pole. “At that mining point, the river changes the direction of flow. This is when erosion takes place.”

Kumar says more research is needed into the effects of sand mining on Himalayan rivers. But so far, the problem looks set to continue. In late August in Kodtwar, tractors were still queuing along the broken approach road to the bridge, with boulders brought from the river lying next to them. Mules, used to transport the mined material away, were standing nearby. ●

All images courtesy the author

The media has been awash with reports of unimaginable brutality committed against animals. 'Dog hanged to death in Ghaziabad', 'Boys burn alive three puppies, another shoots dead a dog', 'Dog clubbed to death by three youths "for sleeping under boat" at Adimalathura Beach', are just some of the many such headlines we have seen in the print and electronic media in recent times. More recently, reports of a heinous act in Delhi shocked us: 'Pregnant street dog beaten to death by Delhi students, dragged across field.' In Bengaluru, a woman flung eight puppies against a rock to kill them, because she didn't want them in her street.

Animal welfare organisations are inundated daily with requests for help in cases ranging from pet neglect, to beating, kicking, killing of animals (owned or stray) and



WILL INDIA FINALLY UPDATE ITS PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT?

■ Alokparna Sengupta and Shreya Paropkari

even cases of bestiality. These instances occurred between 2016–22; while calls for amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, are being made since 2012. Can we now hope that an amendment Bill for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 will finally make its way to the Parliament at the earliest?

Background

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890, India's first legislation for prevention of animal cruelty, was a colonial law made by the British Indian government. The 1890 Act extended its protection to domestic or captured animals and only

prescribed punishments to cruelty in a 'public place'. In *Emperor versus Nasir Wazir* (1919), the Bombay High Court held that there was no provision of prohibition in the law for the abandonment of a (starving) animal and, subsequently, the abandoned animal was not the responsibility of the accused who had no control over the animal after having abandoned it. In another matter, *Emperor versus Ibrahim Meer Shikari* (1917), the Bombay High Court found that stitching up the eyes of five *Saras* cranes (*Sarus* crane birds) for railway travel was not cruelty under Section 3 of the 1890 Act. The reason being that the

act happened prior to travel and not in the way the travel took place, so even if it could be considered cruel, it did not take place in a 'public place' within the definition of the Act.

India's first legislation for prevention of animal cruelty was made in 1890. It extended its protection to domestic or captured animals and only prescribed punishments to cruelty in a 'public place'. Though titled 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', the 1890 Act did nothing to prevent cruelty against animals. It was Rukmini Devi Arundale, the first woman in India to be appointed to *Rajya Sabha*, who introduced a private

member's Bill in the Parliament, to replace the 1890 Act.

While introducing the Bill, she said: *“Do we believe that animals are our slaves? Do we believe that their feelings do not matter? That is the question that we have to answer for ourselves.”* The rousing speech motivated the formation of a joint parliamentary committee, and the law finally came to pass in 1960. Though the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, was wider in its scope—defining 'animal' to be all animals except human beings, and recognising cruelty whether it was committed in a 'public place' or otherwise, it was still limited in its scope.

The then minister of food and agriculture, S.K. Patil, while moving the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill on December 12, 1960 in the Parliament stated: *“I do not claim that this is an ideal Bill. After 70 years, we are making an attempt for the first time to put on the statute at least something that will ultimately lead us on to the ideal Bill, after some years of experience.”*

For decades no steps were taken towards the 'ideal' Bill.

With a minimum penalty of Rs10 and a maximum penalty of Rs50 for offences ranging from

beating an animal to mutilating or even killing it, the objectives of the 1960 Act, and the intention of the Parliament to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering on animals is lost.

A new beginning

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) is a body established under the 1960 Act, whose statutory function includes keeping the law in force for prevention of cruelty to animals under constant study and advising the government of India on amendments to be undertaken in any such law. The AWBI has been recommending an amendment to the 1960 Act for over a decade now.

In 2016, Human Society International (HSI), India and Peoples for Animals (PFA), Uttarakhand launched a joint campaign called 'No more 50' to urge the government of India to amend the 1960 Act to update the penalties such that they serve as a deterrent. The high courts and the Supreme Court in several judgments, including in Animal Welfare Board of India versus A Nagaraja (2014), concurred that the 1960 Act needs to be amended to provide an effective deterrent in the form of adequate penalties and punishment. Since 2016, there

have been two private member's Bills proposing an amendment to the 1960 Act. As of 2022, support for such an amendment has been expressed by over 150 members of the Parliament and by over 0.75 million people.

The Union ministry for animal husbandry, the nodal ministry on the subject of prevention of animal cruelty, conducted a stakeholder meeting in 2021 and invited public comments. Following this, the Draft Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (Amendment) Bill, 2022 has also been formulated, which proposes updated penalties, considering the severity of the cruelty and the inflation rates currently. The same was published for public comments on November 21, 2022, and it received great public support. However, it is yet to be tabled in the Parliament. Certain civil society groups and their elected representatives from across party lines are now appealing to the Prime Minister and Union ministry for animal husbandry to bring this Bill to the Parliament immediately.

While the 1960 law is not perfect, it has evolved from an archaic legislation to at least attempt to balance human interest with the welfare of animals. It has evolved over the years, through its application and through some landmark pronouncements of courts. As any law, this Act too must evolve with time, if society is to progress. The future of this law is now in the hands of the Parliament. We are hopeful that as soon as possible the 1960 Act is amended to serve its purpose, and is saved from the fate of becoming an antiquated law. ●

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I joined a nationalized bank in 1982 and was posted as a probationary officer at the Meerut Cantonment branch.

There were three of us probationary officers posted there—one each from Chennai, Bangalore, and rural Andhra Pradesh.

The day we joined, two events took place. The manager, a six-foot-four guy from Punjab, looked down on us shorties menacingly and allocated departments for us to take charge of. I was given savings bank, the Bangalorean fixed deposits, and the Andhra Pradesh current accounts. The manager then went on to tell us that if we wanted to be confirmed as assistant managers in the services of the bank, we had to double the deposits in our respective departments.

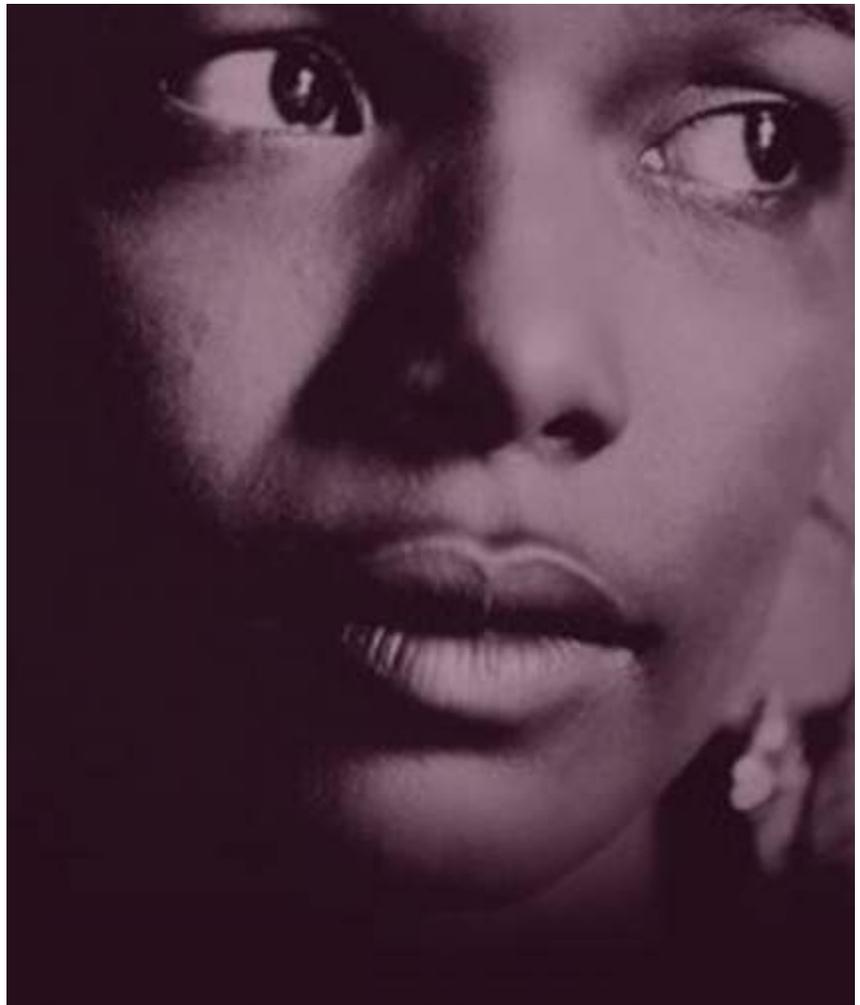
We came out of his air-conditioned cabin, which had tinted glass all around it—he rarely came out of the cabin, except to go to the toilet. The local staff then pounced on us and asked for our names and the typical Indian question “What is your native place?” was thrown at us, of course, in Hindi. For the benefit of non-Indians, “native place” is the Indian way of saying hometown. It was a bit complicated for me having one parent from Kerala and one from Tamil Nadu, but in the end, it boiled down to “where were you born?” I had the advantage over the other two because my name could be pronounced by the locals (although Krishna became Kishan), and when they learned that I was born in Naini Tal, the response was “You are our man! Sit with us when it is time to eat”. Officers generally ate with the manager inside his cabin, but I was the maverick who bucked the trend and ate with the clerical staff and the peon.

WOMAN

with a Heart of Gold

An interesting account of a bank manger who went to a red light area and got sex workers to open bank accounts to save for the future

■ Hari Prahlad



They then wanted to know what the man in the cabin told us. They never used to call him “manager.” They had only contempt for him and used to call him 'damager'. “What did the mad

damager tell you?” So we told them that he asked us to double the deposits, and they all looked at one another and agreed that he was indeed crazy. How is it possible, they asked, to double the deposits

when the customers were all army people who only maintained a minimum balance in their accounts? The peon (or attender as we call them) became pally with me when he came to know that I was born in Naini Tal. He said he was from Dehra Dun, and that made us “pahari” — hills brothers. “We people from the hills ought to stick together!” The lone Sikh in the branch said he was from Hemkunt Sahib (a holy Sikh pilgrim town at 15500feet) and immediately starts calling me “Paaji.” (Elder brother). The Bangalorean and the Andhra Pradeshis were astonished at how the locals gelled with me and wanted to know what I did. I said it was merely the accident of my being born at the right place. I just happened to be born in the right town — at least as far as the locals were concerned.

That evening, after work as I sat down with the peon I told him again about what the “damager” said. The response was predictable. “The manager is mad”. And then he added “Who has money these days? Only sex workers have money! True or false?” And I agreed. That night, I pondered over this profound statement of the peon. Even during the worst of times, they always had ready cash saved. An idea began to form in my head, and the next evening, I again took the peon out and I told him we should open bank accounts for sex workers. He was horrified at first, later said he would take me to the “red light area” but I would have to do all the talking myself.

We took his old Lambretta scooter and went to Kabari Bazaar the “red light area”. We saw women peeping out from windows and inviting us in. The peon and I nonchalantly walked in and one of the sex workers propositioned us. We said we only wanted to talk. She asked what about. We told her we were from a nationalized bank,



and we wanted to talk to them about investing money for their future. A crowd of about 50 collected and they all sat on the ground around us, and I gave them possibly the finest speech I have ever given in all my years of varied work experience. They should save for the rainy day, I told them. They were in this profession because of lack of opportunities elsewhere. Those with kids should educate them. Those with elderly parents should send money to their parents and take care of them. They said nobody had ever approached them so far. I said that I have come now and showed them my ID. All I needed is identification which was a ration card photocopy and a photograph. They all had valid IDs.

The peon was still doubtful. He asked me whether it was against the rules of banking. I asked him that if a person could vote and have a ration card, why couldn't she have a bank account? That clinched it. We pulled out the account opening forms and started collecting cash. The only glitch was that all the names were Rita, Sita, Anita, Sheila, or Gita and none of them gave their husband's name or father's name; one column in the opening form was left blank. The first day we collected 25000, the second day 50000, and the third day it was 100000.

The bank clerical staff members were all aghast when garishly painted women with musical anklets entered the branch. The manager in his AC cabin was blissfully unaware of what was happening outside. The union branch secretary has been informed by the peon, and he says “What have you done, Prahlad?” I told him that nowhere in the rules does it say that a sex worker cannot have a bank account and he had better accept the hard-earned money. For good measure, I threw in the Hindi translation of a Tamil proverb (*Karuvaadu vitha kaasu naaraadu*) which meant that money earned from selling dried fish does not stink. A system was adopted whereby one sex worker would collect the money from all the others and deposit it on their behalf. Unlike politicians, sex workers are honest. Sheila and Gita were selected to deposit the money on alternate days. Sheila had a heart of gold. She would sashay up to my desk and smile at me whenever she came to the bank. Deposits doubled in 45 days. The manager rang his bell one day and the peon went to answer it. The peon came out and said “Boss, the manager is calling you. By that time, most staff members had adopted the honorific “boss” for me, except the Sikh who stuck to “paaji.” I had no problem with it.

The rationale given for calling me “boss” was that this was the first time they had come across somebody who organized sex workers, took money from them, and tried to assist them by investing that money for them.

Manager was very happy. “Great job, Prahlad! I just saw the statements and you have doubled the deposits. You are confirmed in the services of the bank. Try to help the other officers also. Teach them how to achieve their targets.” I murmured an okay and left his cabin.

A couple of months passed. Regular inspection time came up. A Tamilian officer from Chennai

came for inspection. He didn't know a word of Hindi. He asked for the savings bank account opening forms and sure enough discovered that many lady customers had not given their husband's name or father's name. I had, in the meanwhile, been transferred to the fixed deposits department, and the AP man was in charge of savings bank. He immediately said that he was not responsible for this error of omission and that all these accounts were opened by Prahlad. The inspector asked me why the husband's name/father's name column was blank. I said the ladies refused to divulge the details. I said

everything else was there, ID proof, photograph, et al. He was a stickler for detail and said that he would go strictly by the rule book. The Sikh came to my rescue. He told the inspector that some of these customers would come to the bank themselves and that he, the inspector, could ask them for the missing details.

The bank staff members were now eagerly waiting because they knew it was Sheila's time to come to the bank. She walked in and every pen in the bank stopped. The Sikh walked up to the inspector and told him that this was one of the customers who had not given her husband's name. The inspector, who had by then been given a short primer on a few Hindi words and phrases, walked up to the counter and said “Madam Madam, come here. Sheila's eyebrows shot up. Nobody had ever called her “madam” before. She said “One minute, sir. I will deposit the money and then come. She put her hand into her blouse, pulled out a sheaf of notes, and deposited it. She then sashayed up to his desk and says “Okay sir please tell me” He asked “What is your husband's name?” And he pointed to the blank space in the account opening form. Everybody had stopped working by now and the silence was deafening.

The other clients and the bank staff were all waiting to hear the answer. Sheila looks at me, grinned broadly. She then put her hands down on the desk, leaned, and smiled at the inspector. The inspector's lower jaw dropped. She then uttered these unforgettable words, “Babuji, tumhaara naam hi likh lo na!” (Sir, write your own name there!). The branch erupted in cheers and Sheila walked up to my desk, “If you have the time, please come in the evening, there's something we need to talk about”.

She then walked out regally, anklets chiming musically. And the inspector sat frozen with his head in his hands. ●



THE BLUE ZONES

A Prout News Report

We should try to create Blue Zones around the world.

Blue zones are rare areas scattered around the globe where people seem to live considerably longer healthier lives. A famous example of a Blue Zones is the Japanese island of Okinawa. On this island, there live five times more centenarians (people 100 years or older) than in Western countries. This considerable difference in lifespan is not due to genetics, given when people migrate from Okinawa to, for example, the US or Europe, their descendants have life spans that are 17 years shorter on average.



Okinawa Island



Sardinia Island

Other examples of Blue Zones are the Mediterranean island of Sardinia off the coast of Italy, the Greek island of Icaria, or a religious community called the 7th Day Adventists in California. Dan Buettner coined the term Blue Zones. He and many other scientists have studied these Blue Zones, and other similar Longevity Zones, which have similar dietary and life style habits viz.:

1. Mainly plant-based diet, mainly consisting of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, mushrooms. There is no Blue Zone or Longevity Zone in the world where people eat a lot of animal protein. This should be a wake-up call (one of the many) for people still believing that high-animal protein is the best diet in the long term (it's not).
2. Lots of healthy fats, like from olives, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocados. The western diet contains too little healthy fats, and too much unhealthy fats, like the ones found in fast food, pizza, fried food, oils and dressings, and so on.
3. No or very, very little fast food, soda, cookies, chips, but also less bread, pasta and potatoes.
4. Lots of spices, such as turmeric, oregano, parsley, thyme. Spices have many health-promoting effects, like reducing inflammation, protecting the DNA, improving mitochondrial functioning, and so on.
5. Eating less, e.g. in Japan, there's the "80% rule" — stop eating when 80% percent full. In most western countries, people eat until they are completely full.
6. Taking time for rest and tranquility an afternoon nap, meditate or practice tai chi or qigong.
7. Having social contacts, engaging in community activities, having friends who look after one another.
8. Avoiding unhealthy habits like smoking or drinking alcohol.
9. Engaging in natural exercise — getting exercise by their daily living activities, like walking a lot around their farm, tending to their crops or animals, living on hilly terrain, or do a lot of walking because they don't have a car or public transport.
10. No retirement: often these people do not retire but keep working until a very old age, so that they stay engaged and keep feeling useful and have goals and purpose in life.
11. These people have a positive attitude towards aging and life in general. They are often upbeat people with a positive disposition. ●

HUMAN EXPRESSIONS

- Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

Each and every living entity expresses something from its central point. Human expressions are, in that respect, many in the physical stratum: you sing, you laugh, you work, you do so many things. But all these expressions come from a single entity and a single controlling point. There are several sub-stations, but the controlling station is the same.

The controlling one is called the noumenal entity and the expressed ones are the phenomenal entities. You are one boy, Liilananda – Liilananda speaks, he dances, he jumps, he swims, he rolls on the ground – all those expressions are his phenomenal expressions. But his entity, the controlling entity, the entity from which so many actional waves emanate, is what? In this respect, in the small world of Liilananda, Liilananda is the noumenal entity.

In the sphere of criminology the noumenal entity is falsehood, and all other corrupt practices, all other criminal activities, are phenomenal expressions.

In the case of falsehood [as the noumenal entity], sin and crime coincide. In all other [cases] there are two different entities. That which is not supported by the law of the land is called crime, and that which is not supported by cardinal human principles is sin. But you know, the law of the land is a creation of certain persons of the land, that is, of those who are elected or selected, representative or king. There are so many people who create the law of the land. Their decision may or may not be correct, but the definition of crime varies from country to country, locality to locality. In America, in the USA, the definition of crime varies from state to state, even in the same country.

In Japan, to commit suicide is neither a sin nor a crime. In India to commit suicide is a sin under certain circumstances, not always: when one commits suicide for the welfare of a large number of the populace, then it is not treated as sin; when it is a personal issue, it is treated as sin. And so far as crime is concerned in India, it is a crime to try to commit suicide, but it is not a crime to commit suicide. If one is trying to commit suicide, he or she [can be punished] by the government. In Britain [if one tries] to commit suicide, it is a crime, and if one commits suicide, even then it is a crime, and in that case also the person will be punished – his or her property will be forfeited. Do you follow?

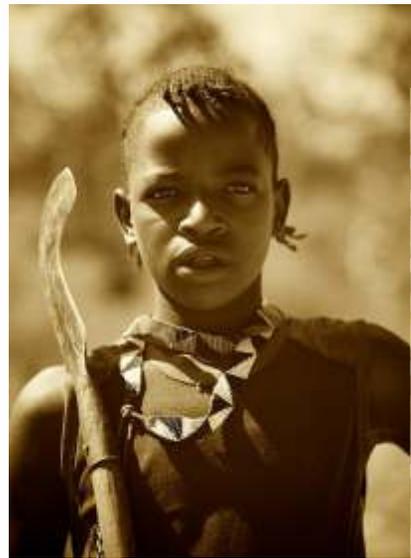
The definition of crime varies from land to land, but the cardinal human values are the same, not only for this planet but everywhere in the universe.

Just now I said that it is falsehood [a noumenal cause] where sin and crime coincide. Now in the case of human expressions, a single entity, a person, is the noumenal cause, and there are so many phenomenal expressions. All those phenomenal expressions depend on the single noumenal entity and on the standard of the noumenal entity. If a person is good, his or her expressions are also good. So what we require is that the standard of each and every human being be raised. If all the bricks of the room are strong, the room will also be strong; so if all the individuals are strong, if at least they are moralists, all humanity will be benefited by it. ●



Eternal Song of the Proutists

Morality is the demand of the day.
'Prout' the cry of the suffering humanity.
Wise you be, may not or may,
If sincere, success a certainty.
Fee Fy Fo Fum.
Expel the demons from physical stratum.
Fee Fy Fo Fum.
Expel the exploiters from economic stratum.
Fee Fy Fo Fum.
Expel the brutes from psychic stratum.
Fee Fy Fo Fum.
Expel the parasites from spiritual stratum.
Human body is to serve one and all,
Human mind to attend Cosmic Call,
Human spirit at the altar Supreme,
Surrender and be Supreme.





PBI Demands Justice for all Sections of Society



In commemoration of the birth anniversaries of Gandhiji and former Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, a peaceful demonstration unfolded on October 2, organized by Proutist Bloc, India (PBI).

PBI's Vidarbha Convenor Madhukar Nistane, the driving force behind this initiative, emphasized PBI's commitment to national-level protests across various states, advocating for justice for all segments of society, drawing inspiration from freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhiji himself.

Through this program, PBI conveyed a message to the President of India, envisioning a nation free from drugs, hunger, corruption, unemployment, and equitable wealth distribution in society. The demands included reservations for economically disadvantaged individuals from all castes and religions, industry status to agriculture, universal access to education and healthcare, and gender equality in all spheres. PBI urged the central government to enact legislation to ensure these rights. A memorandum of demands was also submitted to the President through the Tehsildar.

In an exclusive statement to a PROUT correspondent, Madhukar Nistane emphasized faulty economic system as one of the major causes of the existing societal turbulence, and said, "An economic system based on PROUT is the only solution to the problems."

The program featured speakers, such as Anant Chaudhary, Moreshwar Vatile, Bobde Patil, Pandurang Keernapure, Sandeep Matre, Narendra Dhanre, Sachin Kanewar, Manoj Rathod, Vadhveji, Anil Thackeray, and Prakash Thackeray. A number of activists and PBI office-bearers joined to make the event a success. Mohan Pawar moderated the program, and gave vote of thanks.



RSSM Demands Nationwide Ban on Liquor



On October 2, 2023, in a bold move to safeguard the nation's well-being and honour the legacy of Gandhiji, the Rashtriya Sharabbandi Sanyukt Morcha (RSSM), in collaboration with Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), launched a public awareness campaign in Agra, advocating for a complete ban on liquor.

Under the slogan of "Ban Liquor, Save the Country," the campaign's primary objective is to promote national prohibition, declaring the consumption of alcohol as an insult to life itself. The organization is taking inspiration from Gandhiji's principle of purity.

The campaign's launch event in Agra saw an enthusiastic gathering of supporters, activists, and community leaders, all sharing a common vision of creating an alcohol-free India.

Speaking to a Prout correspondent, RSSM's spokesman Giriraj Dhakre articulated the harmful consequences of alcohol consumption on individuals, families, and society as a whole. He said RSSM demands that the government ban the sale, purchase and consumption of liquor in India.

With Gandhiji's birthday as its starting point, the campaign to ban liquor is set to become a significant social and political force in India in the coming days.

PBI Announces Participation in Upcoming State Elections

Proutist Bloc, India (PBI) has expressed its intent to partake in the upcoming assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Mizoram, and Chhattisgarh.

National Convenor of PBI, Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta, shared the party's electoral aspirations in an interview with a PROUT correspondent, stating, "PBI is determined to field a substantial number of candidates, with a particular focus on Madhya Pradesh." He confirmed that the party is actively engaging with state-level leadership and evaluating potential candidates before finalizing the names, a process expected to conclude within the next 15 to 20 days.

PBI's participation in these forthcoming elections is anticipated to be a significant development in the political landscape of the mentioned states. The party's decision reflects its commitment to contributing to the democratic process and shaping the future of these regions through the electoral platform.

ACTIVITY



AMURT/AMURTEL Extends Aid to Landslide Victims in Sikkim

AMURT & AMURTEL, along with the Asha Para Medical and Nursing Institute, are providing crucial assistance to the victims of the recent devastating landslides in Sikkim, which have left thousands homeless, and claimed hundreds of lives.

Responding to the urgent needs of those affected, the relief teams swiftly deployed personnel to the disaster-stricken areas, providing hot meals, blankets, hygiene essentials, and other vital supplies. Notably, Acharya Karmeshananda Avadhuta, Acharya Vrajkrishnanda Avadhuta, and Abhijeet from Siliguri are at the forefront of these relief efforts.

Their compassionate response has garnered recognition in esteemed publications like Morning India, Ei Samay (TOI GROUP), Prabhat Khabar, Bartaman, Pratidin, and Dainik Statesman, highlighting their selfless dedication to aiding those in distress during this critical time. ●



Proutists in Gorakhpur Rally behind PBI



On October 17, Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta, the National Convener of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), engaged with Proutists in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, discussing the historical significance of PBI.

Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta emphasized the unique position of PBI as a sole political party in India capable of challenging the capitalistic exploitative socio-

economic system, which is the underlying cause of various issues in the country and across the world.

He explained that most political parties in India are working to serve the exploitative machinery of capital, behind the facade of democracy or socialism.

He shed light on the party's mission to bring about transformative change in the socio-

economic landscape. He called for greater awareness and action in the face of systemic challenges.

Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta's presence and the ensuing discussion among the proutists served to galvanize PBI supporters in the region, reaffirming the party's dedication to the cause of implementing Prout for the good and happiness of all.

PBI to Hold Prout Training Program in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur District committee of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI) has announced a comprehensive day-long Prout Training Program, scheduled to take place in Gorakhpur on November 19, 2023, from 10 am to 5 pm.

National convener of PBI Acharya Santosanand Avadhuta, Ravindra Singh, PRS and proutist Nidhi Sati will be present there as trainers.

This initiative is expected to draw a large number of people, and provide the participants with valuable insights into the principles and objectives of Prout, a socio-economic philosophy at the core of PBI's mission.

Shri Prabhakar Ranjan Sarkar



TODAY I REMEMBER

ÁJ MANE PAÁRE, HÁRÁNO DINETE
JIVANER SHUBHA PRÁTE

KRANDANE PARICAY
O GO, MOR ANUMAY

KATAI DIVAS ÁSE ÁRO JÁY
KATA VIBHÁVARII ÁLOKE LUKÁY
ÁLO ÁNDHÁRERA ÚRDDHVA LOKETE
RAYECHO JYOTIRMAY
OGO, MOR, RÚPA MAY

JÁNÁ AJÁNÁR ANUBHÚTI PARE
BHÁVER MÁDHURII CIR KÁL TARE
RAYECHE TOMÁR PADA JUG GHIRE
MÁYÁTIITA MADHUMAYA
O GO MOR GIITIMAY

Today in tears I remember
Of days gone by

This auspicious dawn of life
O friend of tiny me.

How many days come and go,
How many nights hide in the light,
In these lofty worlds
Of light and darkness
You live in effulgence bright
O beautiful one mine.

Beyond feelings known and unknown,
Sweetness of ideation lasts forever.
Beyond all illusions
The pair of thy lotus feet
Surrounds with sweetness
O song of mine.



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