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# PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



*Refugees in Sudan*

## PROBLEMS OF THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES



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# Fundamental Principles of PROUT

In a collective economic system benevolent use of science will bring about human welfare. Not always being preoccupied with problems of acquiring food, clothing, etc., people's psychic and spiritual potentialities will no longer be wasted.

– 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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Ácárya Santosánanda Avadhúta

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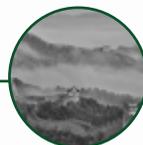
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# Parliamentary Decorum

**P**arliamentary decorum refers to the rules, etiquette, and orderly conduct required of members within a legislative body to maintain dignity and facilitate business. It includes addressing the Chair, and adhering to rules of debate without using unparliamentary language or actions. Maintaining decorum is essential for the effective functioning and prestige of democratic institutions.

But what happened on February 4, in the Lok Sabha shocked the nation. Prime Minister Modi was to reply to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, but chaos and sloganeering inside Parliament forced the Speaker to adjourn the House as a slugfest continued between the Opposition and the BJP. Proceedings began at 11 am but were halted within ten minutes due to repeated disruptions and disorder. The House resumed at 12 pm but was adjourned once again shortly after. Following another adjournment amid chaos, proceedings were scheduled to resume at 5 pm, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to speak. However, the Speaker later adjourned the Lok Sabha for the day, pushing proceedings to the next day.

Amid this chaos, several women MPs moved aggressively towards the seat of the Prime Minister, forming a virtual cordon around it. Disturbingly, certain women Members further crossed over to the Treasury Benches carrying banners and placards, adopting an openly confrontational posture. They not only laid siege to the Prime Minister's seat but also advanced deep into the Treasury Benches, encroaching upon the space where senior Ministers were seated, thereby heightening the sense of disorder and insecurity within the Chamber. Later opposition Members visited the Speaker's Chamber, where they used unparliamentary language and made threatening remarks. Such conduct was wholly unbecoming of MPs and further underscored the volatility of the situation prevailing that day.

In view of this disturbing sequence of events the Speaker having concerns regarding the safety of the Prime Minister and maintenance of order in the House, advised him not to enter the Chamber. Opposition's subsequent claims that there was no imminent threat to the Prime Minister stood contradicted by the day's events on the floor of the House. The Speaker's action was well founded and responsible conscientious discharge of his duty to protect Parliament and all its members.

This was a new low in India's parliamentary democracy and lack of decorum in the House. Such disruptions have evolved from rare, issue based protests in the 1950s-60s to a recurring, systemic issue, particularly intense since the 1990s coalition era, and it became a standard opposition tool. From 2010s-2020s disruptions became endemic, mainly to stall government agendas. Between 2019 and 2023, nearly 80% of the Union Budget was passed without debate. The 15th and 16th Lok Sabhas saw high levels of disruption, with fluctuating use of parliamentary committee referrals. The average number of sitting days has dropped from around 130 in the 1950s to about 60-70.

Disruptions now frequently cause significant loss of legislative time, resulting in crucial bills passing without adequate debate. And there's less accountability and reduced scrutiny during debates, or, conversely, increased scrutiny from the media, which shows disruptions are sometimes for public visibility rather than legislative function. Also an increasing number of MPs have been suspended — 139 between August 2015 and August 2022 compared to 51 between 2006 and 2014.

This trend is mainly due to increased political polarization, the use of disruption as a strategic tool, and a decline in parliamentary, deliberative, and consensus-seeking culture. Unfortunately institutional enforcement is weak and presiding officers are reluctant to act without consensus. This erodes discipline and effective functioning. And this has cascading effect all over India in the state Legislative Assemblies as well.

The way forward is to adopt a mutually agreed framework of all party code of conduct: specifying acceptable protests and proportionate disciplinary measures. There should be fixed Parliamentary Calendar with a legally mandated annual schedule to ensure adequate sitting days. And Accountability Mechanisms and Parliamentary Procedures should be strengthened using technology for transparent tracking of attendance, debates, and Bills: Safeguard Question Hour and Zero Hour from disruption and require mandatory discussion of Demands for Grants during the Budget. Such measures should be applied to the parliament and to all the state assemblies.

In this context the words that Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar said in 1967 assumes significance: "If only educated people instead of all adults were given the right to vote in any country, the governmental structure of most democratic countries would change. And if sadvipras alone had the right to vote, there would be no difference between the real world and the heaven people imagine". ●





### West Bengal Politics New Low

The editorial highlights the level that the politics of polarization in India has gone down today. Politics is supposedly meant for service but it is not; it is unabashedly for winning elections at all costs to remain in power. The West Bengal Chief Minister a constitutional authority (and a lawyer herself) took it to an extreme by arguing in person before the Supreme Court, another constitutional authority, her petition against the Chief Election Commissioner another constitutional authority, alleging that the latter's exercise for Special Intensive Revision of Electoral rolls was for deletion of voters and not for publishing genuine electoral rolls. She didn't get what she wanted from the SC, (which she knew she wouldn't) but being a street smart politician, this act of arguing personally got many eyeballs on TV and social media, getting lots of publicity for votes. She wasn't averse to using even the SC as a platform for her election campaign! This was similar to 5 years back when just before the elections she paraded on the streets of Kolkata in a wheelchair leg cast in plaster due to an accident of doubtful origins?

- *Tarun Sharma, New Delhi*

### Renaissance in All Strata of Life

This is exactly what the world needs — a new renaissance based on rationality to free the society from oppression, repression and suppression.

- *Stacy Batcombe, Ireland*

### Iran in Throes of a New Revolution

It's a sad state of affairs in Iran. People there are reeling under hyper inflation and sanctions from the West, but the brutal orthodox regime still remains in power? Many were killed in the protests, many more injured in clashes with the security forces and thousands detained.

Though the government has yet again contained the protests, it is in no position to rectify the causes that led to these protests. The international community needs to reach out to the hapless citizens of Iran who continue to suffer. A peaceful transition from the present regime to another more benevolent one is most urgently needed.

- *Srinivas Sastry, Chennai*

### Abduction of President of Venezuela

It is an unprecedented situation that a sitting President is abducted from the country after an invasion (couched in legal justifications) by US Special Forces. Such actions justify the immediate installation of World Government that's fair and protects the rights of all citizens all over the world.

- *Sarojini Sen, Kolkata*

### Developments in Indian Education, Refurbishing or Transforming

A well researched article on education in India in today's age of Artificial Intelligence. The quote by Prout's Founder on page 22 is very apt.

- *Himadri Nautiyal, Dehra Dun*

### India and China, Complementary Cosmologies

An excellent article that reexamines the deep cosmological foundations of India and China and helps explain the renewed cultural confidence visible in both countries today. These two ancient civilizations which are the future leaders of the new world order in the not too distant future, should work in coordinated cooperation and not confrontation.

- *Win Tao, Taiwan*

### India's Vibrant Legacy

A very informative article tracing India's legacy covering all civilizational aspects from religion and philosophy, science and mathematics, literature and arts and political thoughts, from ancient times to the present day. All these form a rich kaleidoscopic pattern of deep spirituality and culture.

- *Madioma Bhada, Mumbai*

### Why Doctors Go Overseas

The answer is simple, it's for money. Even though India is a very big source of trained doctors, very few serve in the

country and opt to serve in high income countries.

- *Manickam Nair, Kochi*

### Truck Drivers Moving India's Economy

Yes it is very true, Indian truck drivers are real backbone of India's transport system, even with hard life, less rest, and tough roads, they keep India's trade alive. The country is number three in the world in terms of road freight and with huge infrastructure development of road and highways across the length and breadth of the country and the future is very bright.

- *Pritam Singh, Ludhiana*

### E-Waste Environmental Hazards

A well researched article. This shows the extent of the problem and how such technological wastes on earth burden the environments as unused and defunct satellites do in space. The measures suggested in the article should be taken up for implementation without delay.

- *Laxmi Verma, Rohtak*

### World Inequality Report 2026

The article is an eye opener for concerned citizenry of the world. For far too long this continued disparity as a result of sustained capitalism, and it should be rectified by creating an economic base on the principles of Prout.

- *Prakash Sandhya, Gwalior*

### Himalayas, Aravalis Mindless Development

The article very rightly highlights the ruthless degradation of the environment in the name of development. Any sensible person would know that this comes at a cost, and the cost is grave in terms of loss of human lives and property by way of floods, earthquakes, landslides extremes of weather. Sooner this is realised by the authorities the better.

- *Diviya Sukul, Pune*

### Activities

Very good work is being done viz., AMURT Mass Feeding and Winter Relief Programme with PBI distributing winter clothing in Odisha, and Proutist Leaders Meet to Strategize National Expansion. Today relatively unknown, PBI would one day become a moving political force in India and spread to the world. ●

- *Hella D'Costa, Goa*

## THE INDOMITABLE ANGEL

RPF Inspector Chandana Sinha the quiet indomitable angel says, “Young children who are trafficked usually come from poor homes. They are lured with promises of work as farm hands or servants for Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000 and think they can help support their families. There is a risk of these children being exploited or their organs being removed. Our task is to stop this”. She herself is mother of a young daughter.

She spent her childhood in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh, a Naxalite-infested area. Her father was a government employee. Inspired by the famous 1988 television series *Udaan* based on IPS officer Kalyani Singh, seeing her wear boots and cap Chandana wanted to be a police officer. She then moved to Bilaspur where she grew up and Bhilai from where after years of preparation she appeared for RPF examinations and joined the force in 2010.

Over the past three years, Chandana has led Operation '*Nanhe Farishtey*' rescuing more than 1,500 vulnerable children from exploitation, abandonment or trafficking across the railway network. In 2024 alone her team intercepted 494 children including 41 trafficked for labour. Of them 152 were rescued by her personally. In 2025 her team rescued 1032 children including 39 trafficked for labour. Her work goes beyond routine duty, building a sensitive system of observation, trust-building and rapid response that intercepts children often just moments before they fall into danger. Working largely from Lucknow's Charbagh station, she has trained officers, built community networks and developed protocols that make busy platforms safer for children. Her efforts show that vigilance and empathy can save lives even in the busiest public spaces.

On January 9, Inspector Chandana Sinha was awarded the Indian Railways highest service award -- the Ati Vishisht Sewa Puruskar -- by the railway minister in New Delhi. The award includes a silver medal and a certificate.

The award recognised not a single act but a system she had built. “A railway station stands out as a symbol of refuge to runaway children. They think they can find shelter, food and perhaps a way out. The train station is also a transit spot for child traffickers and units like Inspector Sinha's are tasked to prevent such illegal acts” says Chandana.

Leading the Railway's Child Rescue Unit, she has led a committed team and set up an effective system to rescue illegally trafficked or runaway minors on the rail network. Some of them in uniform and others in plainclothes scour the platforms and trains, looking out for vulnerable children accompanied by adults who look or behave suspiciously or whose presence makes the child uncomfortable. They also look out for children travelling alone. Her team is assisted by child welfare NGOs and government child helpline bodies.



*Inspector Chandana Sinha being awarded the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.*

Sometimes they find children who have run away from home or teenage girls making the journey in the pursuit of an online romance. “It is very difficult to win their trust because they feel the whole world is against them. So they are given counseling sessions through 'Child Helpline'. The parents are also counseled”. Once they found a girl who had fled home two days before her wedding. Another underage girl left home to meet a man who was twice her age. “We spent hours making her understand and were finally able to send her home. Once a mentally challenged child made her way to the station thinking this was an outing. We found her and reunited her with her family. Imagine what would have happened if she found her way into the wrong hands. She just sat with her arms wrapped around me till her parents arrived”.

In spite the long duty hours spent in between the station and office, she practices the violin, listens to music and enjoys cooking in her free time. “The award is recognition of our work, it has recharged us to even do better to save our children from harm”.

Prout salutes this indomitable angel of rescue in uniform, working quietly, efficiently and ceaselessly for a better safer world for children. ●

# Marching Ahead Towards Sadvipra Society

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



*If Sadvipras alone had the right to vote, there'd be no difference between the real world and the heaven people - imagine.*

The inevitable consequence of vaeshya exploitation is shudra revolution. When the vaeshyas, maddened with excessive greed, lose their common sense completely and forsake their humanity totally, then for shudra revolution the opportune time has come. However, it cannot be said that shudra revolution will automatically occur just because an opportune time has come. Proper conditions relating to place and person will bear much of the responsibility.

Revolution takes place when, from the economic perspective, only two classes remain in society: the exploiting vaeshyas and the exploited shudras. But if there are

no vipras and ksatriyas from a mental standpoint – in other words if there are no people who, though shudras from an economic standpoint, are vipras or ksatriyas from a mental standpoint – shudra revolution will not be possible. It is not the work of people who have a shudra mentality to bring about revolution. They avoid struggle; they are playthings of the vaeshyas.

At the high point of the Vaeshya Age, the vaeshyas easily manipulate the shudra-minded shudras. If the ksatriya- and vipra-minded shudras lack spirit, they will also be bought by the vaeshyas' money. Thus shudra revolution ultimately depends on shudras who have sufficient spirit

and are mentally vipras or ksatriyas.

## Obstacles to Revolution

Those who want to bring about proletariat revolution with the help of manual labourers only will not succeed unless they take into consideration the mentality of the people involved. Shudra-minded people do not understand their own problems; they do not even have the courage to dream about solving them. No matter how well labour leaders explain the problems to them or how fiery their lectures on the need for struggle be, it will not have any influence over their minds. They will spend their time eating, drinking, and getting violently drunk. They cannot think

about who in their families is eating properly or getting an education or not. If their bosses increase their wages, they will merely spend more on their addiction; their standard of living will not be raised. That is why I say that such people do not and cannot bring about a shūdra revolution. It is not only undesirable but also foolish for those who want to bring about revolution to depend on such people; their static nature will thwart its movement, their cowardice will prematurely extinguish the fire of revolution.

Besides this type of mentality, national and religious traditions also often thwart revolution. It is extremely difficult for ksatriya- and vipra-minded shūdras to go against such traditions, let alone shūdra-minded shūdras. People become averse to revolution due to the following ideas: “Whatever is fated will happen; does fighting accomplish anything?”; “Our days are somehow passing by, so why should we trouble ourselves?”; or incorrect interpretations of the niskāma karmavāda [doctrine of desireless action] of the Gīitā or other scriptures.

In fact, a subtle analysis will reveal that the policy of establishing a welfare state on a democratic base is also an obstacle to revolution; as are the ideals of Gandhism and the high-sounding theory of democratic socialism.

The Bhudān movement is also a reactionary movement in this way. Although I have high regard for the founders of Gandhism and the Bhudān movement – as men they are second to none – their philosophies are extremely harmful for poor people.

Some of the philosophical interpretations of janmāntaravāda [the doctrine of transmigration of souls, or reincarnation] also oppose revolution; that is, they argue, “You are starving in this life because you committed many sins in your last life, so what is the point of launching a movement? Destiny cannot be changed.”

That is why I have said that ksatriya- and vipra-minded shūdras will bring about the people's revolution. For this, these shūdras will have to be thoroughly prepared, suffer a lot and make great sacrifices. They will have to fight against opposing groups and doctrines.

## The Pioneers of Revolution

It is very easy to talk big about revolution. Audiences may be awestruck and applaud, but to actually bring about a revolution is not at all easy.

Those ksatriya- or vipra-minded shūdras who are the pioneers of revolution will have to learn to be disciplined, take proper revolutionary training, build their character, be moralists; in a word, they will have to become what I call sadvipras. A sadvipra will not launch a movement against honest people, even if he or she does not like them. But a sadvipra will definitely take action against dishonest people, even if he or she likes them. In such matters it will not do to indulge any kind of mental weakness.

Such strict, ideological sadvipras will be the messengers of the revolution. They will carry the message of revolution to every home in the world, to every vein and capillary of human existence. The banner of victorious revolution will be carried by them alone.

Moralists and spiritualists can be found among all types of



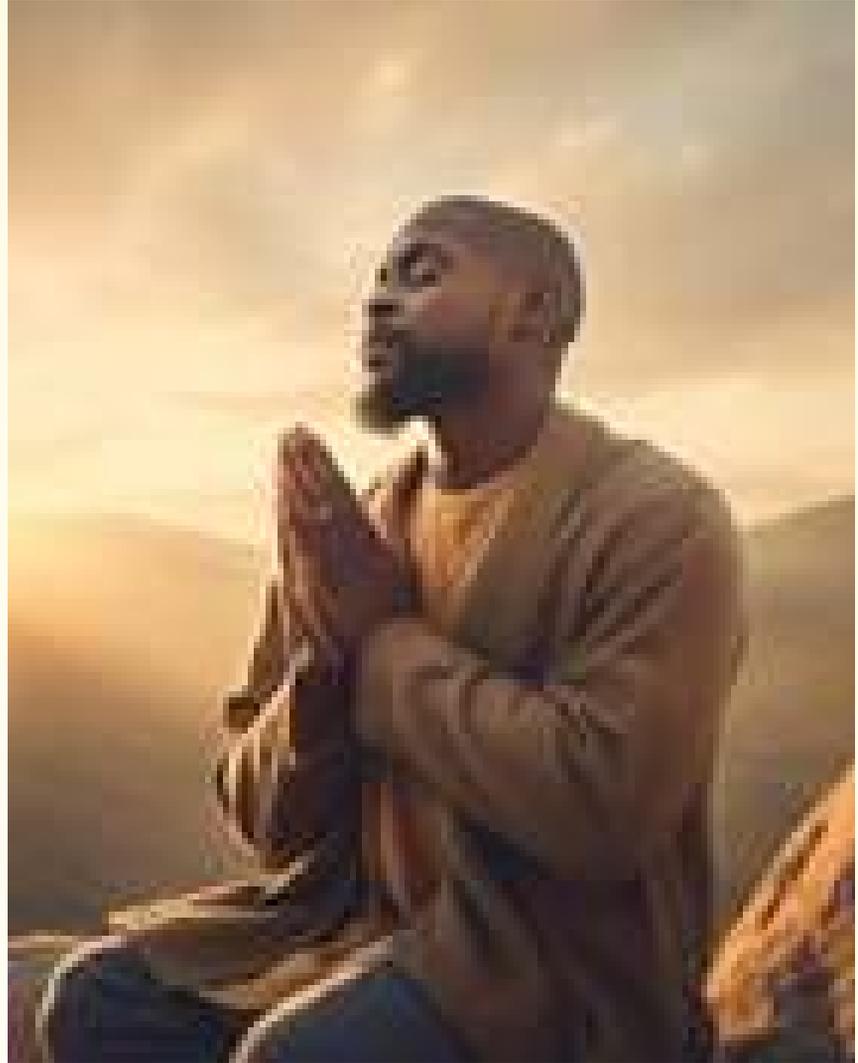
people, regardless of whether they are rich or poor. Everyone knows that the idea that rich means honest is completely false. But most sadvipras will come from the middle class. By “middle class” I mean the vipra- and ksatriya-minded shúdras.

One may ask whether rich people who are moral and spiritual can be sadvipras or not. In reply I will say yes, they can be. But in order to be sadvipras they will have to come down to the level of the middle class, because they cannot live in indolent luxury on capital acquired by sinful means. In order to follow the principles of Prout, they will have to fight against sin and injustice, and in order to conduct such a fight properly, they will not be able to keep their wealth – they will have to become middle-class.

The meaning of the word sadvipra is “a person who is a moralist and a spiritualist and who fights against immorality”. Earning money in a sinful way or accumulating great wealth is against the fundamental principles of Prout. It will be quite impossible for people who are not following the fundamental principles of Prout to bring about shúdra revolution.

One may also ask whether poor people can be sadvipras. In reply I will say that yes, they can be. But only poor people who have the minds of ksatriyas or vipras can bring about a revolution, and such poor people I call the middle class. That is how I explain the term madhyavitta samája [“middle class”].

I do not agree with those who are of the opinion that people who do not work physically but intellectually are middle-class. I do not agree either with those who believe that those whose income is neither high nor low are middle-class. If we were to accept this second interpretation of “middle-class”, I would have to point out



that the income of many shúdra-minded shúdras who perform manual labour in society is higher than that of many ksatriya- or vipra-minded shúdras.

If anybody objects to the use of the term “middle class”, or if anybody says that “middle class” refers to those who have an average amount of wealth and that therefore the pioneers of the revolution – the ksatriya- or vipra-minded shúdras – may or may not be middle-class, I am prepared to use the term viksubdha [disgruntled], instead of “middle-class”, to describe the revolutionary shúdras. The viksubdha shúdras are a constant source of uneasiness for the tyrannical vaeshyas. The capitalists are not afraid of labour unrest, but they are afraid of the labour leaders, the viksubdha shúdras.

The capitalists like democracy as a system of government because in the democratic system they can easily purchase the shúdra-minded shúdras who constitute the majority. It is easy to sail through the elections by delivering high-sounding speeches. No difficulties arise if election promises are not kept later on, because the shúdra-minded shúdras quickly forget them.

It can be unequivocally stated that if only educated people instead of all adults were given the right to vote in any country, the governmental structure of most democratic countries would change. And if sadvipras alone had the right to vote, there would be no difference between the real world and the heaven people imagine. ●

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL Problems and Reforms For DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Ac. Dhanjoo Ghista



*It is more dignified and natural for human beings to live and work in coordinated cooperation than in competition*

## Problems Facing the World Today

Today, in many countries, human society is plunged into grim people-debilitating societal problems, caused by (i) cheating of human society by vantage groups, and (ii) a defective socio-economic-political system.

There are many people-debilitating societal problems: (i) Poverty and hunger, (ii) Unemployment, (iii) Lack of the necessities of living, (iv) No state subsidized healthcare, (v) Discrimination and social out casting of groups (based on dogmas and prejudices), due to their race, caste, ethnic background and social status, (vi) Illiteracy due to inaccessibility to affordable education, (vii) Lack of community services: water supply and electric power, (viii) Migrant workers permanently displaced and homeless, (ix) Refugees and displaced people, (x) No social security, (xi) Lack of human rights, (xii) Victims of natural calamities.

Human society has been cheated and polluted

in many counties (especially developing counties) by vantage groups: (i) ruthless government leaders forcing their citizens to become refugees, to avoid ethnic and racial killings, (ii) cruel noncaring government heads, ignoring their social obligations to provide equity-based healthcare delivery system, (iii) corporations using their capital to support the election campaigns of undeserving political leaders in return for public policies favorable to them but unfavorable to the public, (iv) capitalists inducing people (in the garb of free enterprise for providing opportunities to become rich) to make investments in unethically maneuvered over-inflated corporate stocks, (v) unethical business dealings and tactics on the part of capitalist banks, with disregard to protection of their clients bank accounts, (vi) political leaders infusing narrow sentimentality among people to maintain their popularity, and misusing people's trust to promote their self-interests and become super rich.

## Root Cause of Societal Problems and Their Solutions

Defective Socio-Economic-Political Systems are: 1. Socio-religious sentimentality, causing polarization within society, 2. Social System, favoring upper socio-economic classes, 3. Financial Banking system, controlled by capitalists to benefit the rich people, 4. Capitalist Economic system, controlled by capitalists to nurture their money-making self-interests, 5. Political Democratic system controlled by Political parties to propagate their own prejudicial political agendas.

Solutions: Neohumanism Social Culture, Corporate Capitalism to Cooperative Capitalism, Political Democracy to Socio-Economic Democracy, and Enterprise Banking to People's Cooperative Banking.

Clearly, our disabled society needs rehabilitation. To address the above mentioned problems and causes, and to promote societal rehabilitation and renaissance, we are advocating: 1. Neohumanism as the basic social outlook and culture within a society, to transform narrow sentimentality into a universal outlook, 2. Formation of functionally sustainable communities (FSCs) with governance autonomy to shape their own destinies, 3. Economic empowerment of the people within FSC, in the form of cooperatives (based on Prout), socio-economic democracy (SED) and distributive justice, 4. Political party-less governance of FSCs, by competent persons elected by members of professional societies representing various sectors of

the community, 5. People-controlled cooperative banking system (within FSCs), managed by the financial sector of the community, with emphasis on promoting and protecting people's assets, 6. Cooperative organization of all collective human activities involving work livelihood, so that all workers can be partners in a fair sharing of revenue, commensurate to their input in business development and/or revenue generation, 7. Enlightened living (in FSCs), to be provided by public policies conducive to constitutionally legislated human rights, so that all people have equal opportunities to share the glory of contributing to societal progress.

Alongside the high-rise buildings (housing wealthy people) are these slum dwellings in Mumbai, the financial capital of India. For solution, we need a paradigm shift from corporate capitalism to cooperative capitalism with civilian community sector's involvement in community governance.

Definitely, our People-centric democratic governance system will be more responsive to people's needs and sufferings. We need to educate these sweet smiling children, and to enable them to be a part of economic development and governance.

## Social, Economic and Political Reforms for Developing Countries

Problematic economic-political systems need to be replaced. What is the justification for a new economic-political system? What have been the drawbacks of this last century's political-economic systems? If we



*Dharavi one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai*

need a new system, how can it be based on the inherent basis, tendencies and needs of the people. The answers to these queries and issues are provided herein.

As regards corporate capitalism (involving subjugated cooperation), there is something inherently wrong and unethical about a system that promulgates a mundane materialist psychology to get richer, by competing for a living, by promoting strategies of annihilating competitions, and in which:

1. There is an incessant drive to over-promote products to create a deceptive consumer psychology of grossly inflated demand for products, to thereby augment staffing to cope with the heightened market demand, and then carry out massive retrenching when the consumer demand falls to realistic levels;
2. Bigger and bigger profits constitute a measure of performance and standing;
3. Big profits are faked by CEOs of corporations to induce people to buy their over-inflated shares, and risk getting bankrupted when the shares plummet to reflect the real worth of the corporation;
4. Real-estate prices are allowed to escalate far beyond the real value, and force people to generations of debt;
5. Manufacturing companies move from one country to another, to unabashedly take advantage of the cheaper labor force;
6. Gimmicks like globalization are conceived to enter and capture new markets of Third World countries;
7. Corporations can file for bankruptcy to avoid paying pensions to retired employees;
8. Recessions and depressions are intrinsic to capitalist economy dynamics;
9. Developing countries are resources feeders for developed countries and depend on them for their economy, so that Hegemonism is inevitable.

So the Developing countries need to come out of this depressing spiral of “third world” label, and collectively operate and trade as regional economic blocs. We want to discard the political party based democratic (governance and electoral) infrastructure

and machinery, in which: (i) the aspiring politicians are not interested in providing good governance for societal advancement, but to merely get re-elected at any cost, (ii) incompetent and incapable, ignorant and insolent, unscrupulous and incorrigible people get to be in charge of governance portfolios.

We are hence proposing People's participatory economic system (PPES) in which corporations are structured as cooperatives, Socio-economic democratic system (SEDS) and Professional governance system (PGS) system, entailing: (i) collective capitalism or cooperatives capitalism, (ii) democracy sans political parties and their self-interests (above people's welfare), (iii) professional governance system by the most qualified people in their respective fields (in place of loyal incompetent party members being given governance of various portfolios), and (iv) political structuring of FSCs into self-reliant economic blocs and federations (to provide economic buffer and parity to the G-7 nations).

This combined PPES, SEDS, and PGS can constitute the only viable way for all nations, and especially the developing countries, to develop and function with dignity, while inculcating a universal outlook and a spirit of one for all and all for one.

### **Third World Development and Indigenous People's Empowerment (through FSCs & Master Units)**

The primary lesson for the economic development of Third World communities is to never allow your natural resources and industries (such as oil, electric power, minerals and forest resources) to be privatized, because this is verily the shortcut to economic bankruptcy of the country.

The second lesson is to resist being forced to take loans from (so-called) international agencies who are themselves friends of capitalist cartels. It must be





recognized that pressure for privatization is a backdoor attempt at piracy of resource-rich developing countries by capitalist cartels, which can plunge the developing country into bigger debt.

The third lesson is recognition of the primary rights of the native people of the land to ownership of their land resources. If these resources have to be cultivated and developed, then the community (FSC) governance should form cooperative industries in which the native people can be employed. For maximum benefit to the indigenous people, all natural resources should be converted into industrial products locally, and then only exported out of the community.

The basic need and concept of Third World development is not just sustainable development but also grassroots socio-economic development and governance by and for the local people within the FSCs. For this purpose, within each FSC, a number of Master Units (MAUs) can be formed to function as model mini communities of cooperative living and working. Master units will have (i) cooperatively managed farms, industries, small business enterprises and banking, as well as (ii) schools and medical centers. They will thus be designed to provide security to the residents in all realms of living; housing and food security, social and healthcare security, employment and financial security.

Union of Developing Countries—a new concept. For Third-World development, we are also proposing a unique Union of progressive Developing countries (to be labeled as UD-20 developing nations), by which (i) the developing countries will form a free-trade union; (ii) interact and assist one another, to develop their natural resources, educational and healthcare systems, scientific and technological base, and agricultural and industrial capacities; (iii) develop their own monetary fund;

(iv) the developing countries can progress to be able to compete on par with developed countries.

This Union of Developing countries will: (i) free them from dependency on developed countries; (ii) prevent developing countries from being economically colonized; (iii) will enable several developing countries to form an economically self-reliant bloc, which will buffer them from exploitation by the developed countries and from being affected by economic downturns in the industrial capitalist bloc of developed countries; and (iv) will enable developing countries to become on par with the industrialized nations.

### **From Master Units for Dignified Cooperative Living to Global Cooperative.**

It is more dignified (and akin to natural phenomena) for human beings to live and work in coordinated cooperation than in competition. Our economic system of work and living cooperatives will elevate both work and living conditions. 2. The concept of having a salaried job in a corporation (as practiced under today's capitalism) is not as satisfying and dignified as working in a cooperatively organized corporation, and being remunerated for the level and importance of one's services under our proposed collective capitalism system.

In such a work setup, the welfare of all people is interlinked. 3. They are “smart” persons who can corner and accumulate a lot of capital. However, wiser persons can accumulate a lot of friends and goodwill by practicing “collective capitalism,” which is the basis of economic democracy.

In this system, sectorial representation in the legislative assembly leads to professional governance and democratic political system. 4. Neohumanists can even go a step further, while walking on the road to a progressive society. They can in fact stay to give a helping hand to those in distress, wait for them to recover, and only then move forward collectively. This concept of moving forward in unison constitutes the spirit of an enlightened society. 5. It is good for people and nations to be engaged in business, but more elevating to be engaged in providing services to one another. In fact, trading services and know-how can also be financially remunerative, but in a more dignified way.

Master Units can constitute model Proutist and neohumanist communities, for living and working cooperatively. Further, Master units will interact with one another to provide social, food, work, healthcare, financial and living security to all residents of Master units. This spirit of Collective Welfare will permeate into the society. Then, in this spirit of concern for mutual welfare, all the nations and regions of the world can constitute one Global Cooperative! ●

# The Trumpcard of VUCA in the Emerging World Order

*Only psychic and spiritual education can create sadvipras*

Prof. R.P. Singh

acting President of all the countries of the world under his dominance is creating heavy upheavals in the world economy. Of this the immediate victim are the stock, commodity and labour markets.

If the people of the world do not successfully establish a real world government soon on the lines of Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam the behaviour of Donald Trump as 'the whole world is mine and at my mercy' will dominate with interests and risks, all turns and U-turns. It is sure to provide immense benefits to Trump and his relatives and associates.

People may think that Mr Trump is erroneous and erratic in behaviour and nature but I don't think so. If the President of the most powerful country of the world makes positive statement on one day and just opposite statement on the other day it is bound to create heavy fluctuations in the market. It is very easy to let his associate and relatives be benefited from such market upheavals just by hinting them about when he is going to make a positive statement and when just the opposite version.

Donald Trump, speaking in Davos, boasted that he was making America great and rich



VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. It is an acronym used to describe the unpredictable and challenging conditions in the post-Cold War world—a term first coined by the U.S. Army War College in 1987. It was later adopted in business and management to reflect rapidly changing environments. It signifies a landscape where change is fast (Volatility), the future is hard to predict (Uncertainty), many interconnected factors exist (Complexity),

and meaning is unclear (Ambiguity).

This VUCA phenomenon has become more prominent in the world with the apparently contradictory & shrewd policies and pronouncements declared day by day by the US President Donald Trump leading to uncertainty in every sector whether it be polity, economy, defence, health, immigration or else.

His startling statements as President of the most advanced country and his behaviour as

again. However, the richest US President so far seems to be pursuing a 'Make Trump Richer' agenda. According to an NYT report, the real estate mogul amassed around \$1.4 billion (₹ 12,800 crores since taking office a year ago). It is 16,720 times the US household income. His Board of Peace concept is also exposed now as an entity for garnering more and more wealth by himself, his son-in-law Mr. Jared Corey Kushner and other related persons and institutions. In this every country was offered to contribute 1 billion dollar to become a member of the board. It amounts to ₹ 9000 crores for rupees for India, i.e., ₹ 350 by every household of 5 members in India. The wealth ventures of his family in Pakistan including cryptocurrency ventures put a compulsion on him to support this most terrorist country of the world whereas he has no problem in attacking Greenland, Venezuela or Iran.

The international organisations like UNO, WHO, even NATO have been badly proven as meaningless for Trump. A true universal ideology treats the whole earth as a cosmic patrimony equitably shared by all of us as our home whereas Trump is treating the whole universe as his subject to real estate dealing—a materialist, capitalist, imperialist and dogmatist mentality. The effective solution lies in a true world government overpowering all the nationalistic, regional and sectarian boundaries.

### Indispensability of World Government

Prounder of PROUT Sri P. R. Sarkar raises an interesting question, 'Is it possible to establish the world government *without (bloody) struggle?*' In reply he says, "Yes." The greatest social welfare for the human race will be accomplished if those who aspire to establish the world government and blissful global family engage themselves only in constructive

activities and selfless service, instead of wasting their vital energy in the vortex of politics, or in political conflicts. They will have to go on rendering social service with steadfast commitment, without any ulterior motive in their minds. Sarkar's assertion is more positive than Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience—a real revolution through the outside the box of outmoded institutions.

Those states which cooperate with such missionaries in their social service activities will be considered to be desirous of establishing the world government. The common people of those states which do not cooperate will become agitated, and these agitated people will form the world government through revolution. For this, the missionaries need not enter the dirty arena of party politics.

Only psychic and spiritual

education can create *sadvipras*. Only those who are established in Yama and Niyama—who are imbued with Cosmic ideation can be called *sadvipras*. Yama and Niyama are the cardinal principles of human morality.

Sarkar further feels that political leaders cannot create *sadvipras* by haranguing people from public platforms—this demands righteousness and the practice of self-purification in personal life. Furthermore, what type of people come to deliver lectures from these platforms? Are they not the ones resorting to mud-slinging for the sake of party politics? Most of them are blinded by their obsession for power, so what can they teach others? They are just like the blind leading the blind. Merely by delivering high—sounding speeches from political platforms, it will not be possible to raise the collective standard of living.

#### Five Yama (Guidelines to Conduct Oneself in the External World)

- (i) Causing as little harm as possible – by thought, word or action (Ahim'sa).
- (ii) Benevolent use of words and thinking (Satya).
- (iii) Non-stealing – giving up the desire to acquire or retain the possessions or wealth of others (Asteya).
- (iv) Seeing the oneness in everything external – keeping the mind absorbed in the idea of an all pervading consciousness – (Brahmacarya).
- (v) Living according to your needs – not chasing after non-essential luxuries (Aparigraha).

#### Five Niyama (Guidelines to Self-Regulate Oneself Internally)

- (i) Maintaining cleanliness of both mind and body – mental cleanliness involves kindness towards all creatures, charity, working for the welfare of others and being dutiful (Shaoca).
- (ii) Being content with what one has and trying to stay cheerful (Santosha).
- (iii) Doing regular service to others in need – undergoing some hardship or sacrifice to help others (Tapah).
- (iv) Keeping good company of both people and books/media – studying/watching good media and literature with proper reflective understanding (Sva'dhya'ya). Sva'dhya'ya is also done by doing group meditation regularly and keeping spiritual company.
- (v) Maintaining faith in the guidance of Infinite Consciousness (Iishvara) in pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity. Considering oneself as the instrument, and not the wielder of the instrument. (Iishvara pran'idha'na)

### *Charter of Rights*

The formation of a World Government will require a world constitution. A charter of principles or bill of rights should be included in such a constitution and encompass at least the following *four areas*.

- Complete security should be guaranteed to all the plants and animals on the planet.
- Each country must guarantee purchasing power to all its citizens.
- The constitution should guarantee four fundamental rights – spiritual practice or Dharma; cultural legacy; education; and indigenous linguistic expression.
- Finally, if the practice of any of these rights conflicts with cardinal human values then that practice should be immediately curtailed. That is, cardinal human values must take precedence over all other rights.

There are three cardinal socio-political principles which should never be violated. First, people should not be retrenched from their occupations unless alternative employment has been arranged for them. Secondly, people should not be forcibly converted from one religion to another. Thirdly, no mother tongue

should be suppressed. Occupation, spiritual practice and mother tongue are very important to human beings. If the sentiments associated with them are hurt, human beings will be deeply affected. There are many instances where these three cardinal principles have been violated, causing much suffering and disturbance in individual and collective life.

All the constitutions of the world suffer from numerous defects. The above points may be adopted by the framers of different constitutions to overcome these defects.

The Cosmic Patrimony and Cosmic Brotherhood—the Indispensable Base of World Governance

That which leads to broadness of unison alone should be accepted. Spiritual philosophy does not recognize any distinctions and differentiations unnaturally made between one human being and another, and stands for universal fraternity. All fissiparous tendencies and group or clan philosophies which tend to create the shackles of narrow-mindedness are in no way connected with spirituality and should be discouraged. Spirituality stands for evolution and elevation, and not for superstition in action or

pessimism.

The approach of spirituality should be *psychological and rational*, and should offer a touching appeal to the deepest psychic sentiments of human beings. Human beings should appreciate by a rational analysis their relationship with the Cosmic Entity and recognize the most benevolent kindness of the most beloved Entity. Spirituality should lead human beings to the One Cosmic truth from which they have derived their selves and which is the ultimate destiny. That ultimate and absolute ideal is the Cosmic ideal – an ideal beyond the scope of time, place and person. It is the Absolute, without and beyond relativity. It stands with its own lustre for all times and for every factor of the Cosmos, may it be a human being or a less-evolved animal. The Cosmic ideal alone can be the unifying force which shall strengthen humanity to smash the bondages and abolish all narrow domestic walls of fissiparous tendencies.

All the sentiment-provoking ideas should be firmly opposed. This does not mean an attack on those sentiments, traditions and habits which are innate in human beings and which do not hamper their Cosmic development. For example, the movement for uniformity in dress for all people will be but a ridiculous and irrational approach. Different selections of dress are the result of climatic factors and corporal necessities. Moreover, dissimilarity in dress is not detrimental to world fraternity.

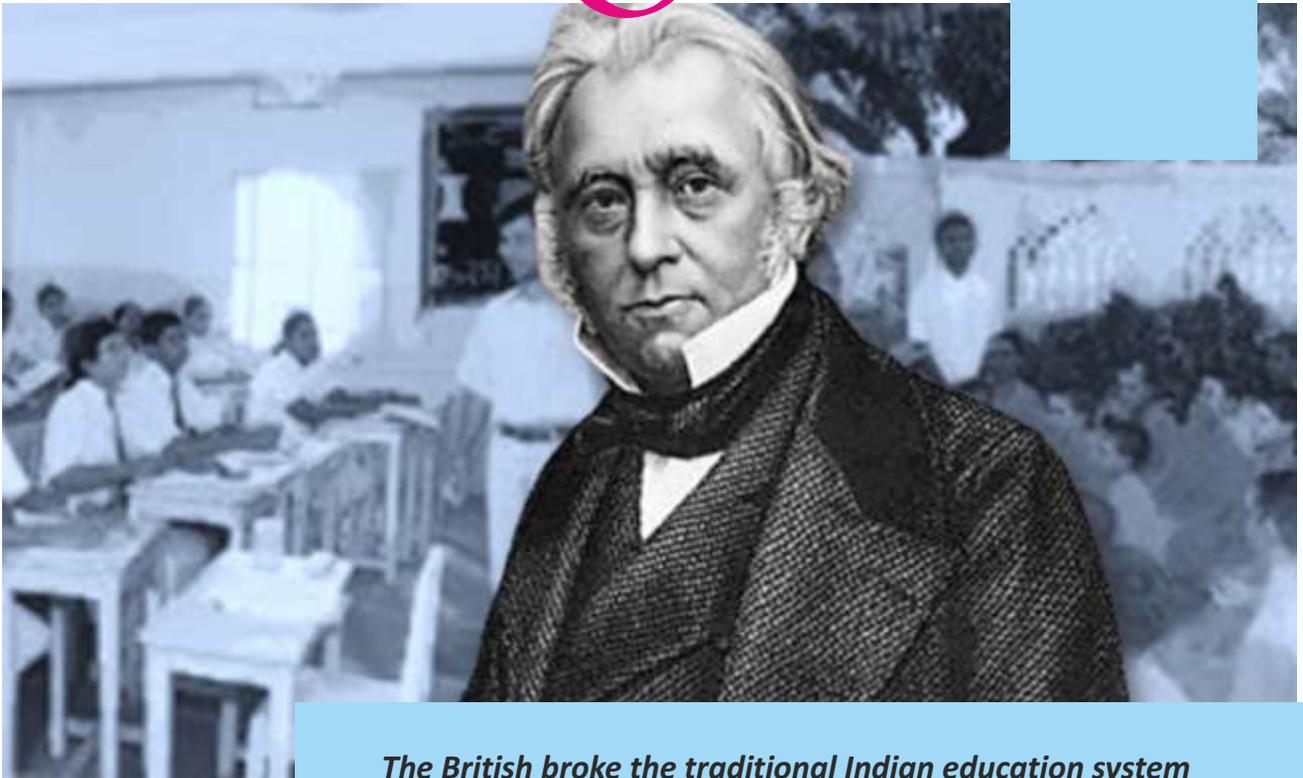
There will also be many zonal or regional differences as regards other traditions and customs. These should be appreciated and encouraged for the indigenous development of society. But under no circumstances should there be a compromise in principle or yielding to tendencies detrimental to the inculcation of Cosmic sentiment. ●



# Macaulayism

## AND NEP

Ganesh Bhat



***The British broke the traditional Indian education system but also infused inferiority among those people who could not study English***

Macaulay's system of education is again in the news due to the comments by the Prime Minister of India against it, and the claim that the NEP is being implemented to overcome its defects and negative impacts. Supporters of opposition parties are countering this claim, and the issue has turned into a political controversy instead of discussing the merits and demerits of these systems and

looking for an education system that ensures the holistic development of individuals.

Macaulayism refers to the policy of introducing the English education system to British colonies. The term is derived from the name of British politician Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), who was appointed in 1834 as an inaugural member of a governing Supreme Council of India. Macaulay spent the next

four years in India, where he devoted his efforts to establishing an educational system based upon the British model and destroying ancient Indian teaching methods. He advocated the shutting down of all educational institutions where only Eastern philosophy and subjects were taught.

In his 1835 "Minute on Indian Education," Macaulay argued for promoting English as the medium of instruction and

Western sciences in India, advocating that all funds be spent on it and not on traditional Indian learning (Oriental subjects like Sanskrit/Arabic). He opined, “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”

### Impact

The British government implemented Macaulay's proposal in letter and spirit, which not only broke the traditional Indian education system but also infused inferiority among those people who could not study English.

- It created a class of English-educated Indians Anglicized Elite, who became stooges of the British and distanced themselves from the masses.
- The result was the production of loyal clerks and administrators who could support British rule. This tendency continues even today, where the educated class and the government employees think that it is their duty to support the ruling class.
- Became a foundational text for modern Indian education,

though heavily criticized for its colonial bias and dismissal of indigenous culture.

- Established English as the language of administration and higher learning in India, significantly shaping India's future intellectual and political landscape.
- Led to the establishment of English-medium schools that created a divide between the Western-educated elite and the masses.

Macaulay's system of education is being accused of cultural imperialism and devaluing indigenous knowledge, a sentiment echoed by later leaders calling for the revival of traditional systems.

### Gurukula System

The first education system in India was the Gurukula system, which dates back to ancient times (around 5000 BC). This residential system involved students (shishya) living with their teachers (Guru) to learn a wide range of subjects, like philosophy, science, math, medicine, and statecraft, along with religious and spiritual texts, with a focus on holistic development of the student in physical, mental, cognitive, and spiritual spheres, practical skills, and moral values. Human values such as empathy,

self-reliance, creativity, and strong morals and ethics were given importance.

It was replaced by the modern, Macaulay-influenced education system introduced by the British, which emphasised classroom learning, English, and a more utilitarian approach.

### National Education Policy 2020

After revealing NEP 2020 on Wednesday, 29 July, the central government and its supporters are creating a big hype and trumpeting it as a novel idea and a great achievement. It is claimed that the NEP 2020 seeks to revive the traditional education system of India by introducing and implementing a sea of changes across all levels of education.

The NEP 2020 policy document says that it “aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society”. The NEP policy is claimed to be based on the pillars of “access, equity, quality, affordability, accountability” and will transform India into a “vibrant knowledge hub” and NEP would transform India into a “global knowledge superpower.” This will result in creating manpower to serve greedy capitalists.





NEP intends to invite the top 200 global universities to establish 500 high quality educational institutions in the country by 2030. This is not only a pro-rich move, but also exposes the hollowness of the slogan 'revival of the Indian system of education.' The economic policy of the early 1990s that brought in liberalisation-privatisation-globalisation has led to extreme inequity; NEP will add fuel to this.

In an ideal society, education should be free at all levels; education is one of the minimum essentials of existence and should be guaranteed. NEP allows private players in the field of education, and hence, it is not possible to get access to free education for everyone. The failed RTE scheme is no solution. Under these circumstances, “affordability” becomes superfluous.

### Spirituality and Education:

The ancient Indian definition of education is “Sá vidyá yá vimuktaye” = Education is that which liberates.

The real meaning of education is trilateral development – simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. The sense of universalism should be awakened in the child with etiquette and refined behaviour.

Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation. In this background, NEP gets exposed to its limited concept of education.

In the educational system of ancient India, the cultivation of spiritual knowledge was primary, and this instilled in the students a high standard of behaviour, reverence and modesty. Shri Prabhát Ranjan Sarkár, propounder of the Neohumanistic system of education, says, “For spiritual practice, you are to create a spiritual urge. Therefore, education should be imparted in a spiritual and psychic style. When students get proper education, a proper spiritual urge is created, and then

they will start Sádhaná (spiritual practice).”

“The practice of morality should be the most important subject in the syllabus at all levels. We must develop the physico-psychic aspect of the students through proper physical culture, which will include Yoga Ásanas, proper diet, games and sports, etc. And to develop the psychospiritual aspect, the practices of Astáunġa Yoga must be incorporated into the curriculum in all grades. The guiding philosophy should be: “This universe is ours” – and “we” means humans, animals and plants.”

Religion and Dharma are not



the same; religion refers to the set of rituals and observances, whereas Dharma is the natural characteristic of a human being. NEP contains no ideas or policy regarding introducing spirituality; hence, the claim that it is reviving the ancient Indian system of education is a big hoax.

### Prana Dharma and Education

PROUT says, "Prāṇa Dharma means the cardinal characteristic of a person which differentiates one person from another. Just as each human being has his or her own traits, similarly, an entire race living within a particular geographical, historical and cultural environment will also inhere some traits which distinguish that particular race from others. These traits or specialities are inseparably embedded in the internal behaviour of the entire population, and they help to form a particular bent of mind, expression of external behaviour, attitude

towards life and society, and on the whole a different outlook."

It is said that the best way of enmity against a person or a race is to deprive the person or the race of the freedom to cultivate their prāṇa dharma, and to prevent them from channelizing their potentiality accordingly. British rulers did it by introducing their system of education; the present rulers are doing it in the name of NEP.

### Fulfilment of

#### Basic Needs and Education

In the past the question of fulfilling the basic needs of life was not a major problem; but presently it is. Hence, it is necessary to guarantee the fulfilment of the essentials of life to everyone so that students of every age can pursue their studies with peace of mind.

NEP's vision of ensuring Universal Access to Education at all levels is not based on the ground reality. Poverty is the main cause for the drop out of students, and not because of the defects in the

present education system. Many children are forced to work to maintain their families. It is impractical thinking that just by providing mid-day meals or breakfast, all the dropout students will start attending the schools. What is required is a changed socio-economic system where everyone is guaranteed the basic needs of life by providing adequate purchasing power and not by doles. This is possible only when decentralized economic system is implemented and not in a capitalistic system.

### Role of Teachers

If teachers are to be held responsible for building ideal men and women, they must also be given the right to formulate educational policies, instead of being mere teaching machines. They should always keep higher ideals before them as they work. According to PROUT, those who are not teachers should not be allowed to interfere in educational matters that come within the jurisdiction of a school. The NEP has no proposals or intention to avoid the interference of politicians and non-academicians in the field of education.

### Proposed Treatment

#### Worse Than the Disease

The modern system, introduced in 1830, shifted the emphasis from holistic development to a more utilitarian, knowledge-based curriculum; NEP follows a similar path. Macaulayism created clerks loyal to British rulers; NEP creates manpower loyal to capitalism.

Detailed study of NEP 2020 leads to the opinion that it is a typical example of a hypocrite's psychology. Hypocrites formulate theories and policies without the least intention of materialising them. By propagating religion as Dharma and geo-patriotism as Nationalism, the present rulers are trying to hoodwink the people to gain political mileage to retain power and serve their group. ●





# Pensions for Financial Security

*Pensions play a crucial role in providing economic security and supporting well-being in later life*

■ Srikant Sharma

Nearly one eighth of world's elderly population lives in India. The vast majority of this population is not covered by any formal pension scheme. Instead, they are dependent on their own lifetime savings and transfers from their children or extended families.

These informal systems of old-age income security are imperfect and are becoming strained, especially in light of increasing labor mobility, improving life expectancy, and an increasing old-age dependency ratio. The population older than 60 grew at an annual rate of 3.8 percent between 1991 and 2001, from 55.3 million to 75.9 million,

as compared with annual growth of 1.8 percent for the general population. By 2015, India's elderly population was estimated more than 113 million, and it is likely to nearly double during the following two decades.

The Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, in 1881, first awarded pension benefits to government employees. The Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 made further provisions. The pension system was introduced in 1952 in independent India under the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme with the expectation that after retirement the government would ensure a progressive guarantee of minimum

requirements (contained in both these maxims) and it did happen. The average age then was 32 years which is now 70.

Pension systems play a crucial role in providing economic security and supporting well-being in later life. As population ages and governments confront fiscal constraints, pension reform is rapidly becoming a defining policy issue of the 21st century. However, as governments implement reforms to ensure financial sustainability—such as raising the retirement age, reducing benefits, and shifting to defined-contribution schemes—these

measures often overlook their psychological and social consequences. Pension insecurity has been linked to heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as increased social isolation, particularly among vulnerable populations, including those in physically demanding jobs, low-income workers, and individuals with existing health conditions.

Pension systems constitute a foundational instrument of social protection, ensuring economic security and quality of life for individuals as they transition out of the workforce due to age or other reasons. However, in response to increasing longevity, declining fertility rates, and mounting fiscal pressures, governments worldwide have introduced a series of pension reforms to cut costs.

These policy shifts—ranging from raising the retirement age to reducing state-funded benefits and shifting from defined-benefit to defined-contribution schemes are often framed as necessary adaptations to contemporary economic and demographic challenges. Often part of broader neoliberal economic policy shifts

promoted by international financial institutions, which prioritise fiscal consolidation and market driven models of welfare provision, these reforms frequently fail to acknowledge the profound implications of pension reforms on mental health.

Extensive research has established the intricate relationship between financial stability and psychological wellbeing in later life. Pension insecurity has been shown to exacerbate stress, anxiety, and depression, while also increasing the risk of social isolation, a key determinant of mental health decline.

Policies that delay retirement or reduce pension adequacy disproportionately affect individuals engaged in physically demanding labour, those with limited employment alternatives, and those already experiencing health vulnerabilities. Despite these effects, mainstream pension reform discourse remains primarily preoccupied with fiscal sustainability, often treating social and psychological considerations as secondary or extraneous concerns.

The right to social security,

including pensions, is enshrined in international human rights law and forms a cornerstone of social protection systems worldwide. Legal instruments, such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), explicitly recognise the obligation of states to ensure financial security for older adults.

These covenants establish pensions not as discretionary welfare benefits but as fundamental entitlements that states must protect to ensure dignity, equality, and social inclusion. However, as governments introduce pension reforms in response to economic pressures, concerns arise that these changes are eroding protections that states are legally bound to uphold. Judicial bodies and human rights institutions have reinforced these obligations in various judgements. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) further strengthens the legal framework for pension rights. The *Social Protection Floors Recommendation* (No. 202) establishes that states should ensure “older persons have income security at least at a nationally defined minimum level”.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), for example, has ruled in multiple cases that pension rights, while subject to state regulation, must not be arbitrarily reduced in a way that disproportionately affects individuals' standard of living. Regional human rights instruments further reinforce these principles. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) recognises the right to social security as essential for economic and social well-being.

Governments implementing pension reforms must also ensure transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making. Taken together, these legal





decisions and treaties establish a human rights basis for pension policies not just to be reformed to be financially sustainable but to require that states pursue reforms that do not erode protections that guarantee dignity for older people. When pension reforms reduce coverage, adequacy, or accessibility, states may violate human rights obligations.

Economic security is a fundamental determinant of mental health in later life, yet pension reforms often generate financial instability not through reductions in nominal entitlements, but through uncertainty around the adequacy of inflation indexation.

When pensions are fixed in nominal terms at retirement, their real value depends on future price levels, making insufficient or uncertain indexation a key driver of anxiety and psychological distress among pensioners, particularly in inflationary contexts where purchasing power can erode substantially over time. Financial insecurity is a significant stressor, particularly for older individuals who lack alternative sources of income.

Extended working life, a

policy response to economic pressures, also imposes significant mental health burdens on older workers. Raising the retirement age is often justified by increases in life expectancy, yet this rationale fails to account for disparities in health, job roles, and conditions of employment. While some individuals with prolonged working lives appear to age more successfully, others, particularly those in stressful, precarious, or physically demanding jobs, face heightened levels of social isolation and depression during retirement.

The psychological consequences of pension insecurity extend beyond financial concerns to encompass broader issues of identity and social integration. Retirement represents a significant life transition, and sudden pension reforms can disrupt an individual's sense of purpose, leading to feelings of worthlessness and social withdrawal. A more flexible approach to retirement could also mitigate some of the adverse effects of pension insecurity. Phased retirement models, which allow workers to transition gradually from full-time to part-

time work before fully retiring, have reduced stress levels while ensuring greater financial stability. Countries that successfully implement phased retirement systems, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, provide helpful case studies for future policy development.

Let us now take a look at pension policy in India which has traditionally been based on financing through employer and employee participation. As a result, coverage has been restricted to the organized sector, and the vast majority of the workforce in the unorganized sector has no access to formal channels of old-age financial support.

Of the more than 300 million employed Indians in the working-age population, fewer than 12 percent are covered by some form of retirement benefit scheme. Besides the problem of limited coverage, the existing mandatory and voluntary private pension system is characterized by limitations such as ineffective regulatory framework and lack of individual choice and portability. High incidence of administrative costs and low real rates of return are endemic in the existing system, which has become unsustainable.

Since the early 2000s, a marked shift has taken place in pension policy in India through the introduction of a new pension system. The government's objective was to design a defined contribution (DC) scheme for new entrants in central government services without the need for extra pension infrastructure. The scheme was also intended to serve other groups such as state government employees, middle-class self employed people, and low-income workers in the unorganized sectors.

The National Pension Scheme (NPS) became operational in late 2003. Participation has been mandatory for new central

government employees (except the armed forces) since 2004. The NPS marked a radical shift from the defined benefit (DB) system to a DC regime. As on date nearly 6.25 crore are covered under the NPS and contribute 10 percent of their salary and so-called dearness allowance<sup>4</sup> toward their pensions with a matching contribution from the relevant governments. Since 2004, 26 states have also established DC pension systems for their own new employees. The NPS holds a corpus of nearly US\$ 4 billion and has more than US\$5.40 billion in assets under management.

Besides NPS, there are many other schemes. These include the DB civil services pension schemes and employees' provident and pension funds managed by the Employees' Provident Fund Organization and other employer-managed funds under which another 15 million workers are estimated to be covered

The Civil Servants' Pension (CSP) is a pay as you go, DB scheme for employees of the central government who were hired up to December 31, 2003, and for employees of state

governments hired up to the effective date mentioned in notifications issued by those governments. A modified one rank one wage principle applies wherein all retired employees of a certain rank receive the same pension. Pension payments are revised periodically to reflect growth in wages and the consumer price index. Growth in pension benefits in old age is typically higher than inflation.

Pension benefits of other employees in the organized private sector are governed by the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, under which the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) were established. The provisions of this act are applicable to all businesses employing more than 20 workers. The schemes are administered by the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO): except fund management all functions and processes of the EPF and the EPS are handled by the EPFO

Future challenges are, existing pension system, leaving more than 88 percent of the Indian

workforce uncovered, which is unlikely to act as a social security umbrella for aging Indians. Even for those covered by the system, the defined benefit is not guaranteed given that the DB schemes are unfunded or underfunded.

Improvements in health care leading to increases in life expectancy, the evolution of nuclear family structures, and rising expectations resulting from increases in per capita income, education, and the like are some of the factors which may compound the problem in future.

The new pension system, based on defined contributions and funded liabilities is a significant step toward addressing this problem. The spread of the NPS is seen by many as the direction in which pension reform needs to move to find a viable and sustainable solution to the problem of old-age income security because it is felt that neither the existing system nor any antipoverty drive by the government is likely to solve the problem.

However pension funds in banks are increasingly under threat from governments for long term capital investments as they have grown in size as populations worldwide have aged and their assets have consequently grown. The demographic consequences of these will be more widespread.

What is required as pension systems evolve is a rights-based approach prioritising economic security, mental health, and social inclusion which will be fundamental to ensuring fairness and sustainability. Future pension reforms can move beyond a narrow fiscal focus by integrating legal protections, mental health impact assessments, flexible retirement options, and international collaboration, fostering inclusive, resilient, and socially responsible approaches to ageing and retirement security. ●



# Poorly Paid Jewellery Artisans

Arjun Prakash

Jewellery isn't just about adornment; it's a reflection of who we are, where we come from, and what we value. In India especially, gold jewellery is also household treasure for women to be worn with pride and is considered wealth safely kept for a rainy day. Indian households are estimated to hold around 34,000 to 35,000 tonnes of gold, with the total value estimated between \$3.8 trillion and \$5.3 trillion as of early 2026. This massive private stockpile accounts for roughly 16% of the world's total above-ground gold, making it one of the largest private repositories of the metal globally.

And when we see shiny jewellery worn by women and on window displays or in brightly lit stores in cities, or in not so well lit small shops, the dazzle of gold and precious stones take the breath away. But little do we think of the persons whose minds and fingers produce such gems of creation. This piece is dedicated to those unknown unsung artisans who sadly are poorly paid totally incommensurate with their skills and labour. There are around 35 to 45 lakh (3.5 - 4.5 million) artisans in India working in the organized and unorganized gold jewelry sector.

While they form the backbone of this industry, many face challenges, including poor working conditions, with some forced to leave the trade by age 40-45.

Let's go back to time before written history that's when the first pieces of jewellery were born. The earliest known jewellery dates back over 150,000 years, with archaeologists discovering shell beads in a cave in Morocco, worn by ancient humans as a form of personal adornment. These simple beads were likely used for decoration, but they also served as early symbols of status, identity, and possibly even spirituality. As humans evolved, so did their jewellery. Early jewellery was crafted from nature —stones,





shells, and later, metals like copper and bronze. These items were not just decorative; they held significant meaning, often used in rituals or as talismans believed to protect the wearer. Jewellery quickly became a universal part of human culture, with every civilisation developing its own unique styles and techniques.

In the heart of India's cultural tapestry lies a treasure trove of timeless beauty – the traditional Bengali jewellery. Steeped in history and adorned with intricate craftsmanship, these handcrafted vintage jewelry pieces tell their stories of heritage, tradition, and unparalleled elegance. Bengal where jewellery was integral to culture, worn by all classes, with designs seen in sculptures and texts, a rich history going back to ancient times.

Gold's association with wealth and power goes back to around 3000 BCE when ancient Egyptians were using gold extensively in their jewellery, creating elaborate pieces that were often buried with their owners to accompany them into the afterlife. Gold's natural beauty, resistance to tarnish, and rarity made it the perfect material for creating symbols of power and divinity. The Egyptians weren't the only ones enamoured with gold. Civilisations across the world,

from the Incas in South America to the early kingdoms of India, revered gold for its beauty and value. In ancient India, gold was not just a symbol of wealth but also an integral part of religious ceremonies and social status.

Use of gold in Indian jewellery dates back thousands of years, with references found in ancient texts and archaeological sites, showcasing its deep-rooted significance in Indian culture. The Mauryas, Guptas, Palas (8th-12th C), and Senas (11th-12th C) shaped early Bengali jewellery traditions. Mughal rule (16th -18th C) brought Persian and Islamic designs, blending with indigenous motifs to create opulent pieces. Kolkata emerged as a major centre for handcrafted gold jewellery, especially for its skilled



goldsmiths (swarnakars, becoming renowned for intricate gold filigree (naksha), minakari (enamelling), and unique regional styles like Dokra a tribal craft using lost-wax casting to create rustic, earthy metal figures and ornaments.

Indian jewellery has always been renowned for its intricate designs, craftsmanship, and the cultural stories it tells. From the Mughal courts to the temples of South India, Indian jewellery is a blend of history, tradition, and artistry.

Over the centuries, as India engaged in trade and cultural exchanges with the rest of the world, its jewellery began to influence global trends. One of the most significant periods of influence was during the Mughal era when India's gems and jewellery captivated European royalty. Indian jewellery, particularly pieces featuring intricate Kundan and Meenakari work, became highly sought after. With their lavish lifestyles, the Maharajas of India showcased the country's wealth and craftsmanship to the world, inspiring jewellery trends in Europe and beyond.

Gold is a prominent feature in Bengali jewelry, with many pieces featuring 22k or 24k gold. The gold is often embellished with precious stones, beads, and

intricate carvings. Popular gemstones include diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, and semi-precious stones. These gemstones are often set in gold, enhancing the beauty and value of the jewelry. Taki, rural Bengal's delicate, nature-inspired pieces featuring floral/bird motifs and fine detailing, and cultural jewellery iconic bridal sets like Shankha Pola (conch shell and coral bangles) all hold deep symbolic meaning. These artisans passed skills generationally so that techniques survive and create culturally significant pieces for rituals, weddings, and daily wear, embedding stories and traditions in metalwork. Bengali jewellery remains central to rituals, festivals and family heirlooms,



Bengali jewellery, especially vintage necklaces, often carries profound cultural and religious symbolism.

From motifs inspired by nature to intricate patterns reflecting mythological stories, each piece has a deeper meaning.



representing cultural identity.

70% of all the artisans who are in the business of handmade jewellery manufacturing in India hail from the state of West Bengal. Bengali jewellery is synonymous with craftsmanship of the highest order. Each piece is a testament to the skill and dedication of artisans who have passed down their knowledge through generations. Handcrafted with precision, the vintage jewellery from Bengal is a celebration of time-honored techniques, reflecting the region's rich cultural heritage.

These necklaces are not just accessories; they are heirlooms passed down through generations, embodying the essence of familial bonds and cultural pride.

Bengali jewellery, with its handcrafted vintage charm, is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region. The traditional vintage necklaces, in particular, tell a story of craftsmanship, symbolism, and enduring beauty. As we embrace these pieces, we not only celebrate our own sense of style but also become part of a legacy that has

been carved in gold and silver over centuries.

It is crucial to preserve this rich cultural legacy. Initiatives to support local artisans and promote traditional craftsmanship play a pivotal role in ensuring that these age-old techniques endure. By investing in handcrafted vintage jewellery, we not only adorn ourselves with beauty but also contribute to the preservation of a cultural legacy. And this also helps in bettering the artisan's lives.

Indian jewellery has continued to captivate the world. Its vibrant colours, intricate designs, and cultural significance make it a favourite for weddings, special occasions, and even mainstream fashion. International designers often draw inspiration from Indian motifs, and Indian movies, with their global reach, and have played a significant role in popularising Indian jewellery styles worldwide. And Bengali artisans are all over India. The major hubs are Mumbai, Kolkata, Rajkot, Coimbatore, Ahmedabad, Thrissur, Junagadh, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi. Meerut recently has become a large gold manufacturing hub with 2,000 jewelers and 3,500 suppliers. Over 25,000 artisans form the backbone of the industry. Of them, 20,000 are from West Bengal.

The traditionally manufactured jewellery is supplied to all the

states and overseas, mostly to Dubai, Singapore, Taiwan, the US, Spain, etc. Even 70% of jewellery supply to Delhi is from Meerut. They all suffered terribly during the lockdown. Like other sectors this market also took a massive hit.

While artisans form the backbone of the Indian gem and jewellery industry, many particularly those in the unorganised sector in India, are poorly paid and work in poor conditions despite their crucial role in creating intricate pieces. This issue is often linked to the low valuation of craftsmanship compared to the material (gold/gems) value and a fragmented industry structure.

The National Institute of Labour and Economic Research and Development (NILERD) under the aegis of NITI Aayog published a paper in 2020 called 'Socio-economic and working conditions of workers in the Indian gold industry'. The report highlighted some startling facts. Most artisans working in the industry are employed on a contractual basis with very little access to healthcare or proper working conditions. Moreover, a large proportion is underpaid, earning between Rs15, 000 - 16,000 per month, much lower

than many other industries.

The report mentioned that 71% of workers do not have social security benefits such as an Employee Provident Fund (EPF). Artisans are often the first to be affected by market changes, such as soaring gold prices which reduce demand for new jewellery and lead to job losses or reduced work hours. Jewellery is priced primarily on the weight of the gold, with "making charges" (labour charges) being highly variable and not always adequately reflecting the skill and time involved in handcrafted pieces.

And their working environment is below, with reports of extreme stress and financial hardship, with some even migrating back to their villages to find alternative work, such as farming or driving auto-rickshaws. Thankfully some manufacturers and major brands are increasingly adopting practices that ensure fair wages and better working conditions to ensure the longevity of the intricate art of handcrafted Indian jewellery.

India's gold market is steeped in tradition and still highly fragmented. However, over the last few years the industry has become more organised and regulated. Although small independent

retailers still dominate the landscape, the market share of chain stores (national and regional) has increased steadily during the last decade. In contrast to the retail jewellery trade, changes at the manufacturing level have been much slower.

While manufacturers are becoming more organised, driven by growing demand from chain stores and tighter regulatory requirements (such as pollution licences), artisans still dominate Indian gold jewellery fabrication. But as the gold market continues to develop, organised retail and manufacturing operations will see their market share grow.

The Rs 2,000 crore turnover gold industry is integral to the Indian economy, contributing 1.3% to Indian GDP. But still remains fragmented – dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Over the last decade, the retail jewellery market has undergone a notable shift, driven by changes in consumer behaviour and government regulations designed to encourage the industry to become more organised. Importantly these problems faced by such skilled artisans need to be addressed immediately. ●



# WHY DOCTORS LEAVE FOR FOREIGN SHORES

## While Cuba's Serve Their Poorest

*Continued from previous issue*

### The Case of Cuba

Cuba's accomplishments in medical education would place Cuba at the other end of the spectrum from India. Perhaps more than any other country in the world, Cuba has accomplished significantly equity-driven medical education. It has paved innovative pathways to building a massive health workforce equipped with not just the skills, but also the dedication and values of public service.

This skilled and devoted workforce has enabled Cuba to secure, despite being a middle-income country, health outcomes that are comparable or better than those of rich countries. Cuba's health workers are reported to be the soul of Cuba's accomplishment of extending free quality health care to the entire population.

Accounts of Cuba's remarkable accomplishments in medical education reveal that its first feat is in numbers. Before the revolution in 1959, Cuba had a single medical school and 6,300 doctors. Half these doctors left the country. Today, Cuba has the highest doctor to population ratio in the world.

But its achievements are much more than its incredible accretion of numbers. Cuba's greater triumph is that Cuban doctors are widely acknowledged to stand out among their peers around the world for their

**Cuba has accomplished significantly equity-driven medical education.**

Harsh Mander



*Cubans living in South Africa welcome a group of Cuban doctors who arrived amid in Pretoria, South Africa, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, in April 2020.*

willingness, even eagerness, to live among and serve disadvantaged populations, within Cuba and the rest of the world. Although it was not compulsory, almost all graduates have volunteered to serve in rural areas.

What in Cuba's medical education policies made these singular, accomplishments possible? One significant difference from medical education around the world was that the basis for

selection of medical students for entry into medical school was altered to prioritise the mettle of character over of the mind. Academic qualifications were not the sole or paramount criteria for admission to medical schools. Selectors gave weight to their sense of vocation, responsibility and commitment to solidarity.

Next, the students, unlike in most medical schools, spend a much smaller time in tertiary



*A nurse talks with a man in a street in Havana in February 2024. Credit: AFP.*

hospitals. A lot of their training is decentralised to health institutions located in communities. This is linked to three major innovations in the Cuban health system. The first of these was to extend health services to rural areas and develop a nationwide primary health care network.

Then in 1965, Cuba created a network of 498 “comprehensive” polyclinics that initially covered 45,000 persons each, and then in the 1970s, 25,000-30,000 persons. These combined primary care, specialist services, diagnostics and health education.

The third institutional innovation from the 1980s was the Family Doctor Programme. Family Medicine Clinics with a doctor and a nurse each covered neighbourhoods of 120-150 families, with curative services but also health education, epidemiologic surveys, linkages with social institutions like homes for the elderly and teaching.

This called for a new medical curriculum to train doctors who would “understand, integrate, coordinate and administer the treatment of each patient's health needs, as well as the community at

large”. Students learned to understand patient needs “holistically rather than as fragmented 'organ/systems' diagnosed and treated by different hospital specialists”. In 2003, this coalesced into a new medical training model that shifted further from medical schools and teaching hospitals to community polyclinic and clinics as the central sites for teaching general medicine.

Students studied in diverse settings, ranging from traditional classrooms, doctors' surgeries, primary health care centres, polyclinics and hospitals. Approximately 75%-80% of the teaching occurred in community primary care facilities with an accredited polyclinic as the central teaching unit.

The curriculum was designed to integrate clinical practice with public health principles, equipping students with the skills to address diverse health care challenges. Interdisciplinary approaches, such as combining biomedical sciences with psychology and sociology, ensured that graduates were prepared for the complexities of modern health care delivery. The emphasis on active learning and community engagement also

fostered a sense of responsibility among future doctors.

Cuba's focus on primary care and health promotion, designed to prevent 90% of health problems, was central to its medical education. A student spoke to *The Lancet* about how inspired he was by the focus on preventive medicine and public health. “The doctors actually take time to educate the community,” he said, such as going to a patient's home to show them how to cook with less salt, or demonstrating proper hand-washing to mitigate infectious diseases such as cholera.

Evaluations revealed that the clinical skills of these doctors were no way less than those more conventionally trained. But they had a much higher average level of public spiritedness and willingness to serve in difficult areas, not just in Cuba but around the world.

The remarkable success of the Cuban health system deeply rooted in neighbourhood communities is widely acknowledged even by outside observers. A visiting American team of pharmacy college staff, for instance, applauded Cuba's universal health care delivery system. This, they said,

“exemplified home health” in which “doctors and nurses live within the communities and open their doors to all-hour care for their neighbours”. The Cuban health staff “devote considerable human resources to providing care and doctors are basically embedded in the neighbourhoods. When something is wrong, they can react quickly. They have achieved a high quality of life for their patients for the most part, which wasn't a surprise”. “They have much better access to physicians for primary care than we have” in the United States, a team member opined. This gives a sound foundation to the focus of Cuban medical education on equity and service.

The Cuban government maintains that the spirit of service and solidarity that Cuban medical education has fostered has benefited not only less advantaged populations within Cuba. From the 1960s onward.

Cuba dispatched medical brigades to provide disaster relief and long-term health care support in underserved regions worldwide. Cuban doctors have reached underserved and disaster-hit populations in the poorest regions of the world and also offered medical training to students from other Latin American and African

countries. Stirred by this singular spirit of humanitarianism, Cuba has sent 325,000 of its health workers to 158 countries in over five decades since the revolution. A total of 49,000 Cuban health care workers are working in 65 countries around the world.

This is often presented as glowing demonstrations of Cuba's unparalleled international medical solidarity through its medical internationalism programmes. Time magazine, however, underlines that this is not all about altruism. “When you have a very well-educated population but also shortages of cash and goods, you want to find a way to monetize it,” a Cuba expert told them.

Cuba's “army of white coats” leased to foreign governments brings in remittances of around 11 billion dollars a year, making this a higher revenue earner for the country even than the tourism industry.

In 1998, Cuba started an international medical school offering free medical education to people from low-income communities from around the world. It has trained, with full scholarships, free room and board and some spending money, more than 26,000 students drawn from more than 123 countries. Several

students are Latin American and from sub-Saharan Africa. Many return to work with disadvantaged communities in their countries.

What still sets Cuban medical education apart from conventional models is its integration of social responsibility, equity and public health into the curriculum. Cuban medical training emphasises a broader skill set, including roles as caregivers, managers, community leaders and educators.

Right from 1965, a tradition grew in Cuban medical schools that medical graduates would pledge to renounce private practice.

Cuban medical education teaches not only primary care, but also the ethics and obligations of the medical profession. The ideology of solidarity is an inherent part of the curriculum. If there is a crisis anywhere in the world, a student said proudly to *The Lancet*, “I just pack some underwear and I'm ready to go.”

It is the “right of every citizen to have free and quality care” that is also accessible and equitable, declares another student. “To be able to have a health system like we have, you need the political will.” ●

*Concluded*

*The author is a peace and justice worker, writer, teacher*

**Doctors are of three types – superior, mediocre and inferior. What do the inferior doctors do? They administer medicine and then forget about the patients. What do the mediocre doctors do? They give medicine and also ask their patients at intervals whether they are using the medicine. And the superior doctors also ask their patients whether they are taking the medicine or not; and when they say that the medicine is sour and unpalatable, this type of doctor administers the medicine forcibly.**

**- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar**

# India and China

## Complementary Cosmologies

*Continued from previous issue*

Confucian thinkers extended this symbolic structure to human life. They linked the Eight Trigrams with the family, i.e., parents and six children. This embedded society itself within the cosmic order conceptualized by the I Ching.

While the I Ching illuminates the dynamics of the polarities in nature and the cosmos, Confucianism articulates their ethical expression in human affairs: the search for harmony between individual and community, parent and child, ruler and subject.

In Confucianism, ethical life was not understood as a path of withdrawal or transcendence from

***Neither the histories of India nor China are fully monolithic, seamless, and continuous.***

Jan Krikke

the world (as in the Indian ideal of mokṣa), but as a disciplined practice of cultivating balance within the world.

Confucianism guided conduct at every social level, from the household to the state. It linked Heaven, Earth, and humanity in a unified moral framework that shaped Chinese intellectual and political culture for centuries.

Whereas Indian thought frequently grounds moral meaning in the cosmic causality of karma across lifetimes, Chinese thought anchors ethics in the relational

networks, ritual propriety, and social harmony of the present world.

In contemporary China, echoes of this ancient idea persist in the government's emphasis on harmonious governance, social stability, and adaptive leadership as proof of its ongoing mandate. It reinforces the civilizational revival by linking modern governance to ancient cosmological principles.

### **Buddhism and Daoism**

Buddhism reached China from

Dimension	I Ching (Yijing)	Mandate of Heaven	Confucianism
<b>Historical Role</b>	Earliest cosmological text (pre-philosophical)	Zhou-era political doctrine	Ethical–social system (from Confucius onward)
<b>Primary Function</b>	Describes the structure and dynamics of reality	Legitimizes political authority	Regulates social order and moral conduct
<b>Core Question Addressed</b>	<i>How does change occur?</i>	<i>Why do rulers gain or lose legitimacy?</i>	<i>How should humans live together?</i>
<b>Political Implication</b>	No fixed order; adaptability is essential	Rule is conditional, not absolute	Authority is justified by virtue, not force
<b>Continuity Across Time</b>	Timeless cosmological grammar	Dynastic cycle logic	Long-term cultural governance model

*Fig. 4. The I Ching as source of Chinese cosmology, political legitimacy, and social ethics. It forms a continuous civilizational framework, from an understanding of change in the cosmos to the everyday moral and social order.*

India around the first century CE, roughly five centuries after the death of Confucius. Its rapid spread unsettled Chinese philosophers and officials. They worried that Buddhism's emphasis on renunciation and transcendence would draw people away from family responsibility, social ethics, and the grounded harmony of the Dao that underpinned Chinese life.

Partly in response to this new presence, Daoism began to transform. What had earlier been a largely philosophical current gradually developed more formal institutional and ritual dimensions. Daoism selectively adopted elements of Buddhism — monasteries, ritual structures, and meditative techniques — while reshaping them to reflect distinctly Chinese aesthetics of balance, beauty, and cosmological harmony.

Early translators rendered Buddhist concepts through Daoist vocabulary: *wu wei* (non-forcing) was used to express aspects of non-attachment, and *dao* (the Way) was adopted to convey the Buddhist path (*dharma*). This linguistic bridge helped present Buddhism not as an import, but as a tradition that could be read as continuous

with China's own philosophical inheritance.

From this encounter emerged Chan (Zen) Buddhism, a synthesis that absorbed Daoist themes, including *ziran* (natural, uncontrived spontaneity). Chan shifted emphasis toward sudden insight, direct transmission between teacher and student, and instilling a disciplined awareness anchored in the present moment.

### Western Decontextualization

In the twentieth century, Western philosophers, writers, and psychologists introduced Eastern thought to broader Western audiences. Their work exposed millions of people to meditation, yoga, and new ways of thinking.

However, some features of Asian thought were lost in translation. Ideas originally rooted in holistic cosmologies, with visions of the universe, ethics, ritual, and community, were often reframed to align with Western priorities, such as personal psychology, self-discovery, and individual growth.

Carl Jung, who wrote the foreword to the first German translation of the I Ching, compared yin-yang and non-

duality to reflections of inner psychic balance and archetypal integration.

British-American writer Alan Watts, who helped popularize Western reinterpretations of Asian philosophies in the 1950s and 1960s, presented Zen as an invitation to spontaneity and existential freedom, themes that became part of the hippie ethos.

Other interpreters wove Eastern concepts into narratives of spiritual evolution: Theosophists and New Age movements portrayed karma and rebirth as stages in a journey of soul development.

In the work of Integral theorist Ken Wilber, Asian terms such as *mokṣa* and *ātman* were reframed as phases of psychological maturation. Wilber's interpretation of “nondual awareness” draws on Advaita Vedānta and Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings about the dissolution of the ego-self.

Despite selective reinterpretation, Asian concepts such as mindfulness have had beneficial influences on modern psychotherapy. They helped shape approaches to stress reduction, emotional regulation, and awareness-based therapies by encouraging patients to observe thoughts and feelings without immediate reaction or judgment.

In this adapted form, mindfulness was recast less as a spiritual discipline and more as a practical method for cultivating attention, resilience, and psychological well-being within everyday life.

Similarly, yoga was largely detached from its original sociocosmic and devotional setting. In its classical context, yoga (“union”) referred to aligning one's inner life with a morally ordered cosmos and the long arc of spiritual liberation.

In its modern, globalized form, yoga evolved into a practice oriented toward physical vitality,



stress reduction, and mental clarity. While still meaningful in its own right, it reflects a different set of cultural aims and interpretations.

### Complimentarity

Neither the histories of India nor China are fully monolithic, seamless, and continuous. India engaged in internal debates about the varna framework, and China's Legalists challenged Confucianism.

Similarly, the cyclical/transcendent visions of India and the relational/this-worldly perspectives of China are not black and white. Hindu traditions emphasized *loka-saṅgraha* (worldly welfare), while Chinese Daoist thought had transcendent aspirations.

However, the different cosmologies of India and China help explain both their deep civilizational divergence and their complementarity.

For the ancient sages of India, the yuga-varna concept was a psychological and spiritual schema embedded in a prophetic vision of cyclical time and renewal after long epochs of decline. It placed moral causality at the heart of the universe: actions carry consequences across lifetimes, and

the chain of karma binds ethical behavior to cosmic order.

This worldview cultivates a strong sense of responsibility and continuity, but it can also slip into moral fatalism. Social position or suffering may be interpreted as deserved rather than contingent or unjust.

For the authors of the I Ching, the Eight Trigrams were not a hierarchical social construct. They represented a symbolic grammar of nature that highlighted the tension (qi) between the polarities of existence. The I Ching provided guidance on aligning human existence with these polar dynamics.

The Confucian classics emphasized relational obligation in the present world. What matters is not earlier incarnations, but how one acts within webs of family, community, and the social hierarchy. This construct has its own shadow: it can reinforce conformity and make dissent or individual deviation harder to justify.

But the sense of continuity remains alive in India and China today. The resurgent confidence of the two countries has an economic and political dimension; it is civilizational in character. It

reflects a conscious effort to anchor modern development, power, and identity in older understandings of cosmic order and moral purpose.

### Quiet assumption

As both countries assume a larger role in shaping the 21st-century world, their cosmological traditions are likely to influence how they approach shared global challenges. Their cosmologies do not function as policy doctrines, but as quiet assumptions about ethics, responsibility, and humanity's place in a larger order.

The Indian perspective, rooted in the cyclical yugas, understands decline as a prelude to renewal. Environmental and social crises, viewed through this lens, become phases within a regenerative arc rather than terminal breakdowns, encouraging long-range resilience and ethical responsibility across generations.

By contrast, the Chinese emphasis on relational harmony and the balance of polarities points toward a sensibility that favors adaptive equilibrium over confrontation and pragmatic accommodation over ideological rigidity. The preferred approach is coordination, stability, and incremental adjustment rather than zero-sum rivalry.

Neither tradition has all the answers, and both continually negotiate the realities of modern political and economic power. But their enduring orientations — cyclical renewal on one side, harmonious interdependence on the other — offer meaningful additions to the dominant Western imagination of history as a linear project of individual achievement and advancement.

At a time when the global system is seeking new sources of stability and purpose, these ancient cosmologies reappear as creative resources for imagining alternative futures. ●

**Concluded**



An Indian soldier guards a bunker at the Ladakh border region during the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

# Film Stars and Film Extras Disparity

Karunakshim Vatsalam



6

*Extras often struggle for better working conditions, their roles are frequently misunderstood or disregarded*

The Indian film industry going back to 1913 is the world's largest in terms of annual film production (1,500–2,000+ films) and ticket sales, with a diverse landscape spanning multiple languages, including Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali and others. It generates significant revenue, exceeding Rs. 13,800 crore annually, and has evolved into a major global entertainment force with deep cultural impact.

While Hindi films are Mumbai based, Bengali films are from Kolkata which lead in ticket sales, South Indian cinema (Telugu and Tamil) holds a massive market share, often rivaling or exceeding Hindi cinema in box office. The industry has undergone a digital revolution in production and distribution. Recent years have seen the rise of "pan-Indian" films, which are produced for a national audience across language barriers. Indian films are popular worldwide, particularly in Australia, the UK, the USA, and Southeast Asia.

The industry operates in a complex regulatory environment, requiring

numerous approvals, but is actively working on streamlining procedures. Major production houses play a key role, and the industry is characterized by a mix of commercial "Masala" films and increasing investment in varied, high-quality content.

There's however an issue that is the subject of this piece of the vast inequality between film stars and film extras often referred to as background actors. Typical background work does not require acting auditions. There are walk-in casting calls / street hires: low-budget shoots which sometimes hire people on location without prior registration.

This spans economic, professional, and on-set treatment dimensions. While stars are often compensated with millions of rupees, extras are treated as replaceable "human set dressing", earning low and at times daily wages. This hierarchy is ingrained in the production structure, where stars enjoy luxury, while extras may face long hours in poor conditions.

The film Industry has its hierarchy which everyone fights to get to the top. Once most actors, directors, producers make it Big or to a higher position, they look down on the persons below. Of course this can't be said for everyone. After all, it's built on the

little guys, like extras, PAs, grips and other crew who should receive more respect and higher pay.

While the industry works according to shifts, independent films having no studios of their own and have their own budget constraints. The pay gap is extreme. While top actors earn in lakhs and crores, background performers earn very little in comparison.

Roughly for feature films and mainstream TV shoots, baseline daily wages commonly range from Rs 600–2,500 (as of info up to May 2024), depending upon the role and film set, with little to no job security or benefits. Extras with specialties viz. dancers, trained actors, athletes, or recognizable faces are often auditioned and paid at higher categories.

Production sets are heavily stratified. Stars often have private trailers and catering, while extras are confined to separate, often inferior, holding areas. Extras may be prohibited from interacting with stars, taking photos, or even looking at them directly.

Extras often struggle for better working conditions, and their roles are frequently misunderstood or disregarded by production, with some actors or crew looking down on them. During the pandemic, the number of background actors was

significantly reduced, increasing their vulnerability. They are often the last to be considered for safe working conditions or adequate breaks.

Industry professionals often define stars as "artists" and extras as "human set dressing" who are employed simply for their look or ability to walk in the background. While some professionals respect all crew, a common culture of treating extras as disposable commodities exists.

This structural inequality often overlaps with other industry biases. For instance, in Indian cinema, a similar hierarchy exists where even veteran actors might face unfair treatment compared to younger, "star-kid" actors. Additionally, gender and ageism inequalities mean female actors often face shorter careers and lower pay compared to their male counterparts.

Films require dozens of extras. They are cheap and easily replaceable. If you're not a terrible actor, you'll make a fine extra. Even below average actors are fine. Any commodity, no matter how necessary, is looked down on if it is plentiful and easy to replace. Being a background performer requires setting one's ego aside. The scene/shot is, by definition, not about you. The actors are the focus. We tell the story. Background performers help create the world of the story.

Extras perform indispensable, specialized work: they create scale, mood, authenticity and continuity. Yet the industry's social hierarchies, economics and psychology produce visible snobbery from some higher-profile performers. That snobbery isn't about the work's objective value; it's produced by structural incentives, social signaling and occupational cultures.

They are indispensable and have creative impact who establish geography, crowd



reactions, period authenticity, and continuity. Scenes with empty or poorly staged backgrounds read as fake or cheap. Background actors influence camera blocking, extras' movement informs pacing and rhythm, and crowd energy can elevate principal performances. There's also the economic reality — Productions rely on background performers to achieve scale without massive additional cost; omitting them would fundamentally change the project. And many principals began as extras or worked closely with background actors; networking and goodwill on set affect working conditions and reputations.

However there are many industry actions that mitigate the divide, to begin with professional courtesy and protocol. Well-run sets maintain clear roles and respect for everyone's contribution; many top actors treat extras courteously as standard professional practice. Also their services are acknowledged, some stars thank background performers publicly, sign autographs, or invite key background performers to premieres; producers sometimes recognize background cast in credits or give them gifts.

Some organizations overseas set rules for pay, safety and treatment, reducing opportunities for outright mistreatment. This has yet to be formalised in India. Indian cinema lacks strong national extras union; local artists' associations in Mumbai, Delhi and regional centers sometimes negotiate minimums and organize hires, which can improve pay and conditions.

There's a silver lining — social media and transparency have increased scrutiny; viral incidents of bad behavior damage reputations quickly, incentivizing better conduct. Film industry professionals offer some practical advice for extras and production crew. For Extras: professionalism,



punctuality, and taking direction well are the best on-set reputational tools; small acts of courtesy to principals go far. For Productions: build rituals that promote respect (introductory notes, signed thank-you cards, clear crediting, crew-inclusive gift presentation events. For the Principals: small public gestures of appreciation a thank-you on-set, visible credit preserve morale and public image.

The hierarchy, not just gender, dictates treatment on film sets. 'Star' status allowed unreasonable demands, while basic rights like adequate meal breaks are denied to crew members like spot-boys and light-boys.

The star asking for most obnoxious demand might get it as their birthright, but for someone who is not only asking for the basic rights might not be entertained. The gaps between the people in the film set are based on hierarchy. While stars may get enough meal breaks, when everybody else waits till the star gets time to eat, the spot boys and light boys do not even though they travel to the sets from long distances. These people are working for food; the money they

earn is to feed their families and themselves.

Low budget shoots and regional productions may pay less; big-budget films, ads or branded shoots can pay substantially more. Some productions offer half-day rates; most pay a flat daily rate for an agreed call time (commonly 8–12 hours), with overtime paid extra when union rules or production policies apply. Productions usually provide meals and travel reimbursement at times. Overtime, if incurred, is occasionally compensated but practices vary. Background artists hired for multiple days or recurring scenes may negotiate higher daily rates or a small per-project contract.

Overall the gap between film stars and extras is not merely about money; it is a rigid, often disrespectful and exploitative hierarchical system. The contempt some famous actors show toward extras is mostly because of status, economics and set culture, not a rational assessment of value. In reality extras are essential to film and television; successful productions and reputations rely on acknowledging and respecting that contribution. ●

# GOLD Smuggling IN INDIA

The recent Hindi TV series 'Taskaree: The Smuggler's Web' showed in graphic detail about how gold is smuggled into India and also how the government agencies try to tackle and contain them. A dedicated team of Indian Customs Service officers at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai battle an international gold smuggling syndicate. The show is based on real-life incidents and offers a detailed look into the inner workings of airport smuggling operations.

India is the second largest consumer of gold in the world gold markets. Gold import is treated as legitimate, when the shipments arrive with the certificate of mining origin.

Gold enters into the country without the proper record of origin and not through the authorized agencies and 22 nominated banks called "Grey" importing. This illicit trade represented over \$1 billion in value and at least \$20 million in lost tax revenue to governments. The World Gold

*Nearly one fourth of the total volume of gold entering India arrives here through illicit trade.*

■ Nand Varma

Council (WGC) estimates 65-75% of smuggled gold comes by air, 20-25% by sea, and 5-10% by land.

Gold smuggling is a significant and ongoing criminal activity in India, primarily driven by high domestic demand, substantial import duties, and the price difference between local and international gold markets. The illegal trade has a major impact on government revenue and the formal bullion industry.

The main incentive for smuggling is the significant profit margin gained by avoiding the high Indian customs duties and taxes (which can total over 18% on refined gold). This is further fueled by India's continuous, culturally driven demand for gold, especially during festivals like Diwali and Dhanteras, and the use of gold as a safe investment.

It is estimated that up to one-fourth of the total volume of gold entering India arrives here through illicit trade. India imports around

800-900 tonnes of gold every year while the annual consumption is around 1,000 tonnes. This suggests that up to 200 tonnes of gold is being smuggled into the country. Gold is smuggled into India via air, land, and sea routes. Flights from the Gulf and Southeast Asian countries (like the UAE, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand) are major sources.

Smugglers often use international airports in major Indian cities such as Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and those in Kerala. Porous land borders, particularly with Bangladesh and Myanmar, are crucial smuggling points, with illicit gold often transported to northeastern states and then to major cities.

Smugglers employ ingenious and constantly evolving methods to evade detection. Hiding gold in body cavities, clothing, wigs, and personal belongings (e.g., in torch batteries, belt buckles, or sewing machines). Melting gold and

mixing it into a paste with other chemicals, hiding it in items like shampoo bottles, or food packets, and extracting the gold later. Stashing gold in aircraft lavatories, cabin panels, or air conditioner compressors, sometimes involve corrupt airline or airport staff. There's also barter trade of smuggled gold in exchange for food and other items.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Customs officials are the primary agencies combating gold smuggling. Smuggling is a serious offense prosecuted under the Customs Act, 1962, and other laws like the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), 1974. Enforcement agencies use intelligence, passenger profiling, and advanced scanning technologies to intercept illicit shipments.

Smuggling causes significant tax revenue losses for the government. While it contributes to the domestic gold supply, it distorts the formal market and can be linked to criminal networks, posing economic and security threats.

Data shared by the finance ministry showed that in the last

three financial years, the maximum amount of smuggled gold was seized from international airports in Chennai, Kozhikode and Kochi, Mumbai, Delhi. Further, it shows that out of the top 10 airports where the maximum quantity of smuggled gold was seized, the top three international airports are from Kerala.

Dubai is still the number one place from where gold gets in and Singapore is slowly emerging. Sri Lanka has become a staging point. With one third of the world's gold passing through its borders, India has established itself not only as one of the leading gold manufacturing centres, but also one of the world's largest smuggling hubs. UAE is its primary source of smuggled refined bullion.

Region wise analysis shows that West Bengal, Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu states account most of the gold smuggling in India. Smuggled gold shows a negative relationship with the domestic and international gold prices as well as its exchange rates with the major currencies. Smuggled gold maintains a high and positive relationship with the gold demand of countries such as USA, Middle East and Hongkong, where most of

India's jewellery export takes place. It is also found that gold smuggling in India is caused by India's Gold import, India's Jewellery export, GDP, domestic and international gold price, and exchange rate of rupees against USD and Yen.

India's customs duty on gold import encourages its smuggling activity in the long run. Its customs duty on gold import causes its exchange rate against major currencies, domestic and international prices. Smuggled gold causes India's GDP, its jewellery demand and its domestic price as well. Number of auspicious days in a month in India significantly causes domestic and international gold prices. Finally, all the stock indices, exchange rate of rupee against USD and smuggled gold significantly causes India's jewellery export.

A recent study suggests that though gold smuggling produces tax loss for the government, it is negligible. At the same time, it is positively affecting India's GDP, India's jewellery export and gold demand and supply.

Smugglers try to take the advantage of price arbitrage to make more profit. Government may pay attention to the price spread between domestic and international prices. If the price spread is less, then there is a less chance for making money by taking the advantage of price arbitrage through smuggling. The price spread may be caused due to the customs duty and exchange rate of India rupees.

The customs duty can be minimized to encourage more gold import in the formal process. This loss can be compensated when they are re-exported as jewellery to other countries, as there is a greater demand for Indian jewelers in other countries. With these recommendations by the study, gold smuggling can be significantly reduced and controlled ●



# TECHNOLOGY AND CHILDREN

The growing presence of technology in children's lives, from their first year through their teens, is a double-edged sword. While technologies are neutral, how they are applied and how children are exposed to them can be either positive or negative.

The impact of children and technology becomes increasingly difficult to gauge as the pace of technological innovation speeds up. This guide presents a snapshot of the many roles that technology products and services play in the lives of children. It balances the pluses and minuses of the effects of technology use by children on their development, social interactions, and prospects for the future.

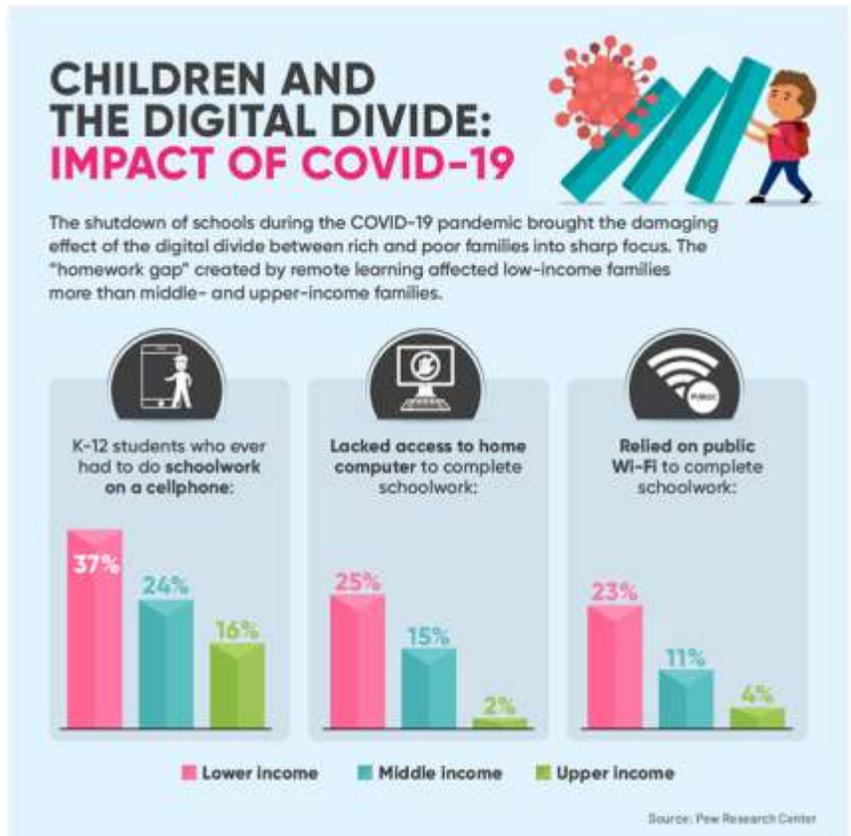
From the earliest electric model trains in the early 20th century through the first home video game systems and remote-controlled gadgets, children's introduction to technology has been through their toys. What were marvels of technology three, two, or even one generation ago seem almost quaint by today's standards.

Children have been interacting with digital technology since the earliest days of Personal Computers. One of the first electronic educational toys was Speak & Spell, released in the late 1970s.

This relatively simple device was a precursor to the first PCs designed for children in the 1980s. It also presaged the growth of computer-assisted instruction hardware and software in the pre-World Wide Web era. The arrival of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s changed that nature of tech toys and education hardware and software.

*From smartphones and social media to TV and tablet based toys, children today are constantly interacting with technology*

■ Ranjan Dasgupta



*The shutdown of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic caused damaging effects.*

One of the causes of this malady was the pandemic and lockdown. A recent study published in *Children and Youth Services Review* identified problematic smartphone use. One of them was daytime sleepiness. The *Italian Journal of Pediatrics* found that 66.3% of the children and adolescents surveyed used their smartphone for more than four hours a day, 56% of the children and adolescents used their smartphone after midnight at least three times each week.

Children can benefit from technology by gaining new

learning opportunities; it's especially important for children who are physically or developmentally challenged. However, technology use has also been found to contribute to poor self-esteem and isolation in some children.

As digital technologies becomes available everywhere, parents struggle to find a balance in their children's lives. Technology allows children to connect with their family, friends, and others in ways that enrich their relationships, especially when using video chat and other real-time interactions.

Parents are learning to slow down and tone down the applications, games, and other content children use to avoid overloading their senses. This teaches children how to moderate their own use of technology. Rather than trying to eliminate all risk to children when using technology, it may be better to reduce the risk and adapting when problems arise, such as preventing children from accessing devices at specific times of the day.

Many parents hesitate to allow their preschool-age children to use technology products and services due to concerns about how it'll impact their well-being and development. However, the children are surrounded by technology, much of which offers many benefits.

Positive effects are: technology helps children become independent learners more quickly. Once they learn how to access digital information sources safely,

they're able to explore the topics that interest them on their own. Children learn the importance of building communities and how to interact with people in social situations. When circumstances prevent children from establishing physical bonds with family members, friends, and others, they're able to use technology to create "virtual bonds." Early access to technology teaches the digital literacy skills that children will need for their future success in school and as adults.

Many negative effects are there too that link level of a child's use of technology to various developmental and behavior problems: (1) lack of attention, aggressive behaviors, (2) obesity, physical inactivity, sleep problems; (3) musculoskeletal problems related to a sedentary lifestyle; (4) greater risk of lifetime obesity and cardiovascular disease and (4) sleep disturbances and poor-quality sleep for children who

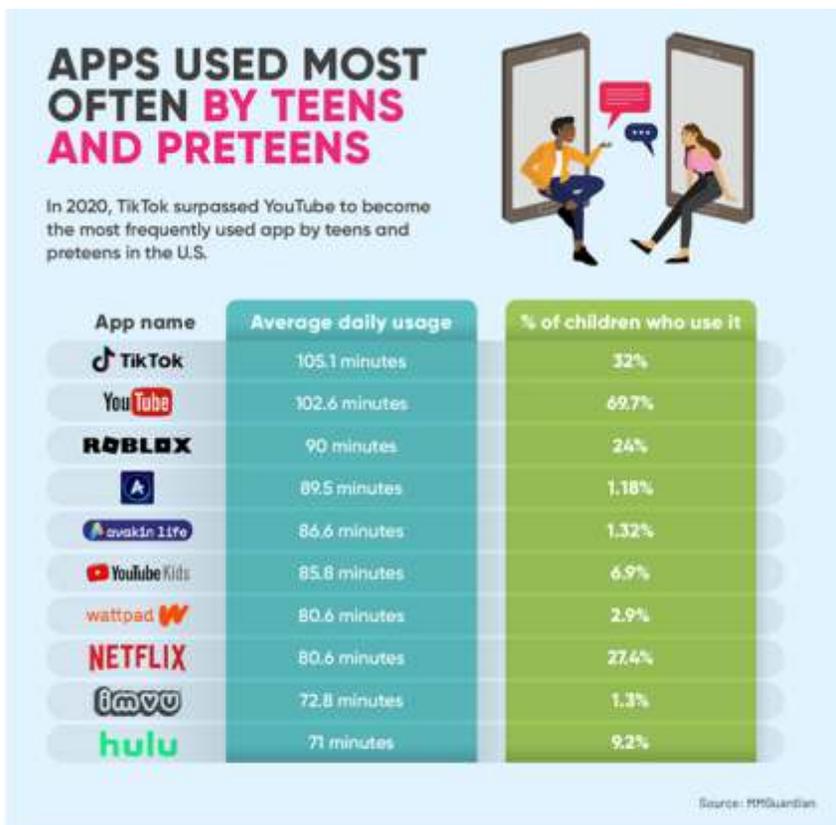
overuse social media or keep mobile devices in their bedroom

Children are especially susceptible to technology overuse. So parents should set limits e.g. to one hour per day of high-quality programming for children ages 2 to 5. For children ages 6 and up, it's most important to set consistent limits on various types of media, such as gaming devices and smartphones. But there's a problem it may become difficult to control or restrict, with both parents working especially in poor or developing countries.

Other problems are (1) Exposure to harmful online content and sexual exploitation bringing children into direct contact with potential dangers in social media apps such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. Cyber bullying incidents are most prevalent at ages 12 to 15.

A recent survey of 13- to 17-year-olds found that 23.7% of girls, 21.9% of boys, and 35.4% of transgender teens had experienced being bullied. And children develop low self-esteem and increased anxiety: Teens and adolescents use image filters on Instagram to enhance their appearance even though the result looks nothing like them. "Self-esteem addiction" can make young people feel inadequate. As children spend more time on social media, they become withdrawn or find themselves obsessively checking their social media feeds.

A primary concern among parents about their children's use of technology is the amount of time children spend in front of a television, computer, smartphone, or another screen. Researchers have established a link between the amount of time adolescents spend looking at smartphone or TV screens and the amount of sleep they get. Screen time delays bedtime and that interrupt sleep with digital notifications. The



In 2020, TikTok surpassed YouTube to become the most frequently used app by teens and preteens.

result is an increased risk of children becoming overweight or obese, as well as more sleepiness during the day and lower academic achievement. Meeting the recommendation for screen time and one of the other two factors, led to better academic outcomes.

But studies have also established a link between excessive screen time and children's levels of attention deficit symptoms; impaired emotional and social intelligence; social isolation; phantom vibration syndrome; and diagnosable mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and technology addiction.

Also many activities that benefit children can become dangerous if used too much. A recent study showed that adolescents were spending an average of 7.7 hours a day in front of a screen early in the pandemic, compared with 3.8 hours per day before the pandemic, and this trend appears to be likely to persist.

Determining the optimal amount of screen time for children has become challenging for parents because of the potential problems arising related to children's vision, posture, and other physical development concerns.

While the standard recommendation of experts remains that children under the age of 8 spend less than two hours per day in front of a screen, many factors must be considered when setting a limit for children viz: (1) Allow more screen time for positive educational activities. (2) Encourage children to take breaks from the screen that involve outdoor activities. (3) Avoid using screens as "babysitters" that keep children occupied. Find other non-screen activities, such as creative toys, coloring books, and storybooks. (3) Don't let children's use of electronics cut into their sleep time. (4) Make sure that children take short breaks from the screen every 20 minutes or so to protect

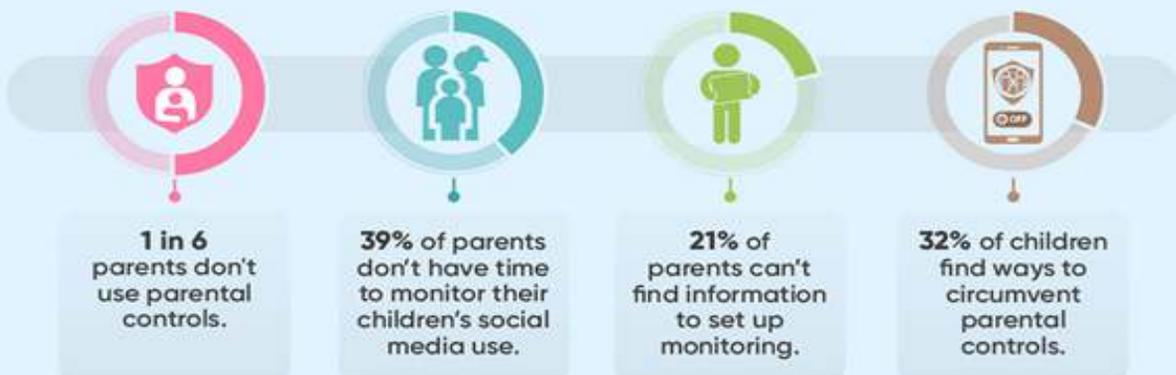
their vision and (5) Check the area of the screen activity to ensure that the lighting is neither too dark nor too bright.

From smartphones and social media to TV and tablet-based toys, today's kids are constantly interacting with technology. Today many children use social media to help with homework? Most children will use computers their whole lives, but too much technology use can have detrimental health and physical effects.

Parents need to monitor child's social media use and be aware of the types of websites they're visiting and the games they're playing online. In addition to monitoring child's screen time, it's also important to make sure they engage in social activities, like playing with friends and encourage social habits of interacting with others and get them to play games that will allow them to exercise and mix with children their age. ●

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL MEDIA USE CHALLENGES PARENTS

Half of children ages 10 to 12 and one-third ages 7 to 9 use social media. A recent poll of parents with children ages 7 to 12 identified the areas of children's social media use that parents struggle to control.



Source: Mott Poll

Half of children ages 10 to 12 and one-third ages 7 to 9 use social media

# Aesthetics and Mysticism

- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti



*Stellar nursery N159 in the Large Magellanic Cloud, 160 000 light-years away, ESA/Hubble picture taken 29.12.2025*

**D**harma should be understood properly by all. And that's why I said that there should be an immediate Tamil rendering [of the author's previous discourse] – there should be renderings in all people's languages. Let people understand it properly and do accordingly. Last night I said that above the – “beyond the”, not “above” – beyond the periphery of material mobility, there is the world of aesthetics; and above it, beyond it, there is the world of mystics. The world of mystics and the world of aesthetics are for human beings. And each and every human being should get a proper chance, should get adequate chance, to move into those worlds.

So you boys, you girls, you intellectuals, this should be your duty – so that common men's worldly burdens are minimized, so that they may get ample chance to move into higher worlds and utilize their energy for higher and subtler pursuits. The entire aesthetics is the only charming entity in human life. Had there been no aesthetics, human life would have been just like a desert. A slight touch of aesthetics in this anxiety-[ridden] life of human beings is just like an oasis in a desert. Art, architecture, literature, music – everything – had its origin, had its starting point – where? Just at the common point of aesthetics and mystics. That's why in ancient India, both in Āryavarta music and Dakṣinatya music (commonly known as Karnataka music), music was devotional. Music used to get its inspiration from mysticism.

You should revive all these subtler expressions of humanity. You should remember that human life is not like a flower, it is like a collection of so many flowers, and that collection of so many flowers is the charm of human life. Human life is not like a flower; it is like a beautiful garden of so many flowers. Let all those flowers develop, and let the final movement of all those expressions of charm and fascination be goaded unto Parama Puruṣa. Whatever I do, whatever we do, whatever we will be doing, just to please the supreme charmer, just to please the supreme source, just to please the Supreme Progenitor – there cannot be any other aim of human life. ●



## PBI Conducts Winter Relief Work in Bihar



Amidst a severe cold wave and biting chill, Proutist Bloc, India (PBI) set an example of serving humanity by distributing more than 100 blankets on December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026, in Amwan and surrounding rural areas of the Vikram Block in Patna district of Bihar.

This distribution drive was organized with the aim of providing relief to the needy and helpless people from the extreme cold. PBI activists went from village to village distributing these blankets among poor families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Local residents highly praised this effort of the organization, stating that this service reveals the noble intentions and true humanity of PBI. Officials of PBI informed that the organization will continue to organize similar socially beneficial programs in the coming days.



## VSS Hosts Successful Yoga Camp in Bihar



Under the aegis of Volunteers Social Service (VSS), a three-day Yoga camp was successfully held from September 27 to 29, 2025, in Bali, Madhepura, Bihar. The objective of this camp was to make people aware of yoga and meditation and to teach them the art of living a healthy life.

Acharya Sadbuddhananda Avadhuta, the coordinator of the program, informed that a large number of local residents participated in this camp. Yoga asanas, pranayama, and meditation sessions were organized every morning, in which experts provided training in various forms of yoga.

Acharya Sadbuddhananda said, "Yoga is not just an exercise, but a way of life. It is the simplest way to keep the body and mind balanced." He further explained that a stress-free life can be lived through regular yoga and meditation.

On the last day of the camp, the participants demonstrated various yoga asanas and took a pledge to make yoga a part of their daily life. This camp organized by the VSS organization received considerable appreciation in the region.





## 'Stress Management' Workshop for Lawyers Held in Delhi



On February 11, 2026, a special workshop on 'Stress Management' for advocates was organized in the conference hall of the Dwarka Court Bar Association in Delhi by 'Vidhi Sahayakam India', a proutist non-governmental organization operating at the all-India level.

Approximately 100 lawyers enthusiastically participated in this event, which was held from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM. The program commenced with a welcome address by advocate Tarun Kant Samantrey. Following this, Acharya Deepanjanananda Avadhuta gave a lively presentation using a projector, shedding light in detail on the subject of 'Bio-Psychology' as propounded by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar.

He explained how an individual's stress can be controlled and minimized through Bio-Psychology, and how one can live a healthy and stress-free life. This presentation was highly appreciated by the lawyers.

At the end of the program, a question-and-answer session was held, in which the lawyers participated eagerly. Acharya Ji resolved all the doubts of the participants by answering their questions in detail.

The vote of thanks was jointly given by advocates Baidyanath Sah and Tarun Kant Samantrey.

On this occasion, along with Acharya Deepanjanananda Avadhuta, Acharya Rudrashishananda Avadhuta, Avadhutika Anand Sarita Acharya, and Avadhutika Anand Visha Acharya were also present.

Considering the deep interest and positive response of the lawyers towards the program, 'Vidhi Sahayakam, India' has decided to organize similar programs in Delhi and other courts across the country. ●



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9212199658

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



# His Light Only

Se je eseche mor hridaye gunjáriá  
sudhá bhariyá madhu jhariá,  
alakh devatá maner májháre  
sab kichu álokit kariyá,  
madhu jhariyá, jhariá.

Eman mohan sáje se keno áse,  
parán mátáno hási se keno háse,  
tári álo tári álo mor vedanár meghe  
rámdhanu raunga dilo bhariá.

Jagater jata gán, jata sur, jata tán,  
mane práne táke nilo bariá.

*O He has come buzzing  
nectar filled dripping honey,  
the unseen illuminated  
everything in the mind,  
dripping honey, dripping.*

*Why He comes in such enchanting robes  
why He smiles in such soul stirring ways  
His light only His light  
fills with rainbow colours.*

*All songs of the universe, all melodies  
Heart and soul performed oblations to Him.*



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