

PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



BUDGET 2015

SERIOUS QUESTIONS ON GOVERNMENT'S WILL TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES



Words like 'development' and 'infrastructure' paint a rosy picture. Infrastructure such as the roads, highways, railways benefits corporates much more than the poor. No highway or industrial corridor is of use to them as much as a road constructed in their village.



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Let Us Move Forward

EGIYE CALO BANDHURÁ SAB
SAMAY HOYECHÉ ÁJ,
PÁPA SHAKTIR HOBE PARÁBHAVA, SARIBE
DURNITIR RÁJ
SAMAY HOYECHÉ ÁJ,
EGIYE CALO BANDHURÁ SAB
ASIR JHANATKÁR THÁMIYÁ JÁBE,
ÁÁ

ASIR JHANATKÁR THÁMIYÁ JÁBE, DOŚIIDER
HUNKÁR NÁHI RAHIBE DÁNAVER CHITKÁR
STABDHA HOBE AKÁRAÑE VILAMBE NÁHI KONO
KÁJ, SAMAY HOYECHÉ ÁJ,
EGIYE CALO BANDHURÁ SAB
ÁLASYE BAHUKÁL KÁTIYÁ GECHÉ,
ÁÁ

ÁLASYE BAHUKÁL KÁTIYÁ GECHÉ,
NIDRÁ TANDRÁ BAHU NISHÁ NIYECHÉ VITARKE
BAHU BALÁ KŚAYA HOYECHÉ SHUYE BASE NÁ
THÁKIYÁ PARO RAÑA SÁJ SAMAY HOYECHÉ ÁJ,
EGIYE CALO BANDHURÁ SAB,
SAMAY HOYECHÉ ÁJ,

Let us move forward
All friends of mine
Today the time has come.
The power of sin and vice
Must be defeated,
This rule, this kingdom
Of corruption and immorality
Must be removed, abolished.
Today the time has come.
O all my friends, let us move forward

The clattering sound of swords
Must be stopped.
The battle cry of the criminals
Must no longer be heard.
The roars of the demons in human form
Must be silenced.
No work can be done
If we delay without any reason.
Today the time has come.
O all my friends, let us move forward

So much time has been spent in laziness.
In sleep and drowsiness
So many nights have gone by.
In arguments so much energy is lost.
Oh don't keep on
Sleeping and sitting.
Do not remain sleeping,
Put on your war uniform.
Today the time has come.
O all my friends, let us move forward

(Translated from Bengali original)

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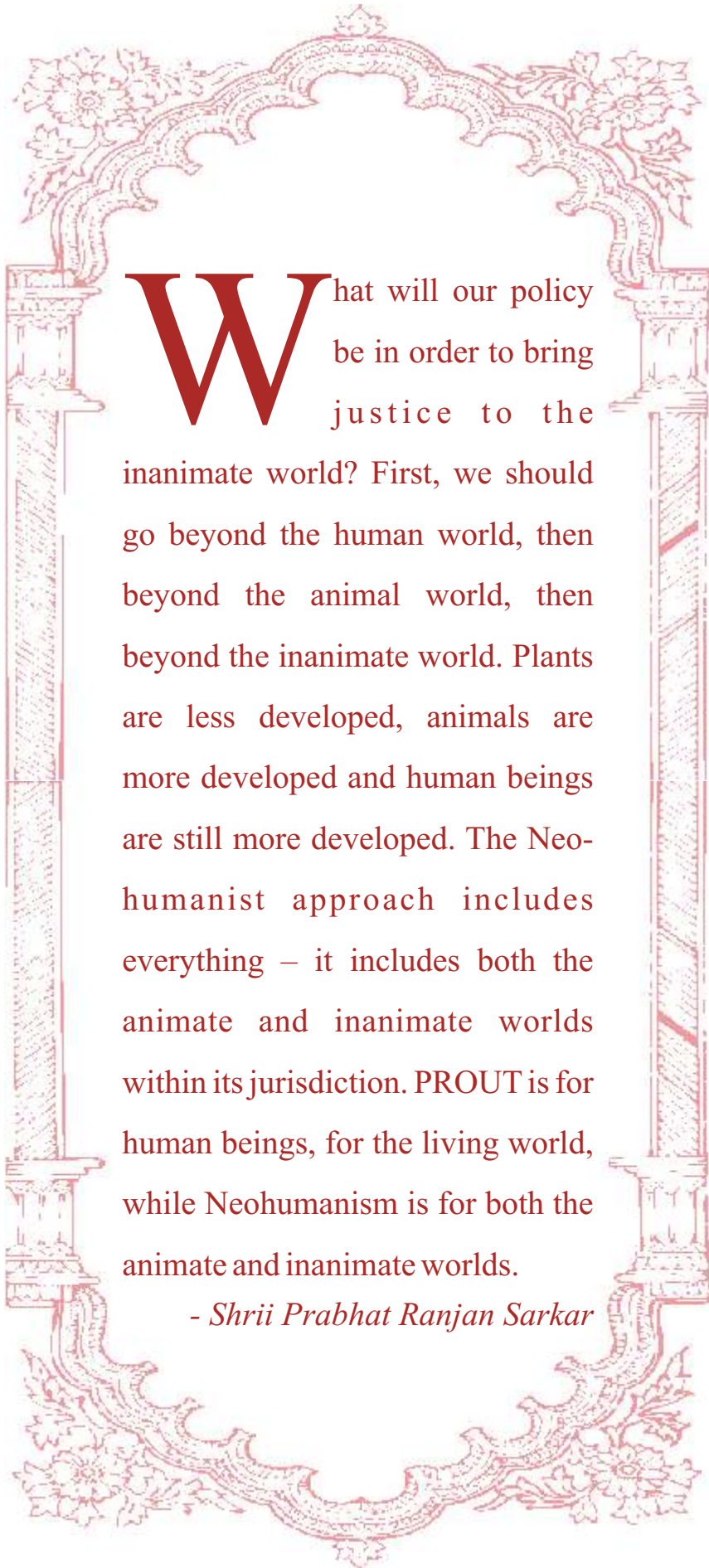
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Fundamental Principles :

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.



What will our policy be in order to bring justice to the inanimate world? First, we should go beyond the human world, then beyond the animal world, then beyond the inanimate world. Plants are less developed, animals are more developed and human beings are still more developed. The Neo-humanist approach includes everything – it includes both the animate and inanimate worlds within its jurisdiction. PROUT is for human beings, for the living world, while Neohumanism is for both the animate and inanimate worlds.

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

MAINTAIN THE HONOUR OF WOMEN

A United Nations statistical report compiled from government sources of 65 countries showed that more than 250,000 cases of rape or attempted rape were recorded by police annually. In many parts of the world, rape is very rarely reported, due to the extreme social stigma cast on women who have been raped, or the fear of being disowned by their families, or subjected to violence, including honour killings. The recent horrific incident in Dimapur of the lynching to death on March 5, of a man who had allegedly raped a young girl has shaken the nation's legal system and shocked its conscience. The fact that the accused was lodged in high security Dimapur jail and the jail authorities faced with mob fury succumbed and handed over to the mob the person (who was initially thought to be an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant but actually was very much an Indian whose father had served in the Military Engineer Services and whose two brothers were infantrymen of the Assam Regiment), made this episode even more gruesome. And a similar incident at Agra on March 14 where a 22 year old man was beaten to death by neighbours for drunken misbehaviour in front of a girl casts further darkness on these matters.

While rape is a horrific social crime and every effort should be made to bring its perpetrators to justice, a disturbing trend of filing of false rape cases has come to the fore, mocking stringent laws adopted by the parliament in 2014 to prevent crime against women. The Delhi Commission of Women (DCW) has come out with startling statistics showing that 53.2% of the rape cases filed between April 2013 and July 2014 in the capital were found 'false' - of the 2,753 complaints of rape, only 1,287 cases were found to be true, and the remaining 1,464 cases were found to be false. The report further revealed that between June 2013 and December 2013, the number of cases found to be untrue were 525. And in between, January 2014 and July 2014, the numbers of false rape cases were 900. In September 2015, the Jaipur police busted an extortion racket run by a woman who threatened men to pay her or face a rape complaint. All this points to the necessity to reinforce the present judicial system it should not be forgotten that no innocent person should be punished. In 2014, a Delhi court while acquitting the four of a family accused in the case remarked that it was "becoming a very difficult job, now-a-days, for the courts to differentiate the genuine rape cases from the false ones". In the light of the above it is worthwhile to recall the words of PROUT's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, "By nature human beings are not wicked; rather most people are peace-loving and thus inclined towards personal purity. Today men should consider the needs of women and gradually restore to women the rights which women once entrusted to men out of feelings of helplessness or in response to their heartfelt sentiments. Only then women will develop a sense of self-respect and be like other spirited creatures, and cast aside the burkas and veils of servitude ... and be enabled to expand their role in serving society in a balanced and consolidated way." So men should always strive to maintain the honour of women, without considering whether a woman belongs to a particular caste or religion, unless the condition of women is improved there is no chance for the welfare of the world as it is not possible for a bird to fly with a single wing.



COASTAL ECONOMIC PLANNING

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's discourse on "Contai Basin Planning" an area rich with resources and also struck by severe cyclonic storms year after year was a pleasure to read. This practical planning would benefit the people of the area immensely and solve their socio economic problems. One way to counter the effects of cyclones as recommended by Shrii Sarkar is to have extensive afforestation along the coastal belt one mile wide. He has even recommended the types of trees which are in fact cash rich crops that would generate economic activities. Planners involved in the development of the region should pay heed.

Aarti Ghose, Hooghly

ECOLOGICAL DISASTER AT POLAVARAM

Vidya Bhushan Rawat has done well to bring to light the inherent dangers to environment in the area after construction of the Polavaram Dam. This besides others would cause massive displacement of people whose livelihood is closely linked to the environment. Moot questions are if impact assessment was done at all and if so was it done properly. And to

make matters worse, displaced people from submerged areas of Andhra Pradesh, Seemandhara, Odisha and Chattisgarh have not been rehabilitated.

**Laxman Rao,
Vishakhapatnam**

NATIONALISM VS CIVILIZATION

A fascinating historical treatise by the great Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore. I look forward to the second part.

Prakash Mohanta, Tezpur

RIGHT TO WATER RECOGNIZED

Water is a fundamental right for human beings and all creatures like air and light. How can it ever be stopped? That is going against human nature. Sitaram Shelar has rightly exposed the concerned authorities who indulge in such inhuman acts and issue such orders as stopping water supply.

Ram Singh, Navi Mumbai

SOCIAL BOARDS THE POWERFUL POWERLESS

Trond Overland has hit the nail on the head. A morally conscious electorate will go a long way to elect

suitable leaders who will have genuine love for the people. The concept of partyless democracy and social boards are steps in the right direction.

**Sarah Fernandez,
Mexico City, by email**

COLONIALISM IN WAYANAD

An excellent but long article, explaining the problems of the region that, significantly amounts to modern day colonialism of sorts. Such a situation should be corrected at the earliest by the authorities concerned. Prout Journal should have articles short and sweet. But who is the author?

Jose Cyriac, Kottayam

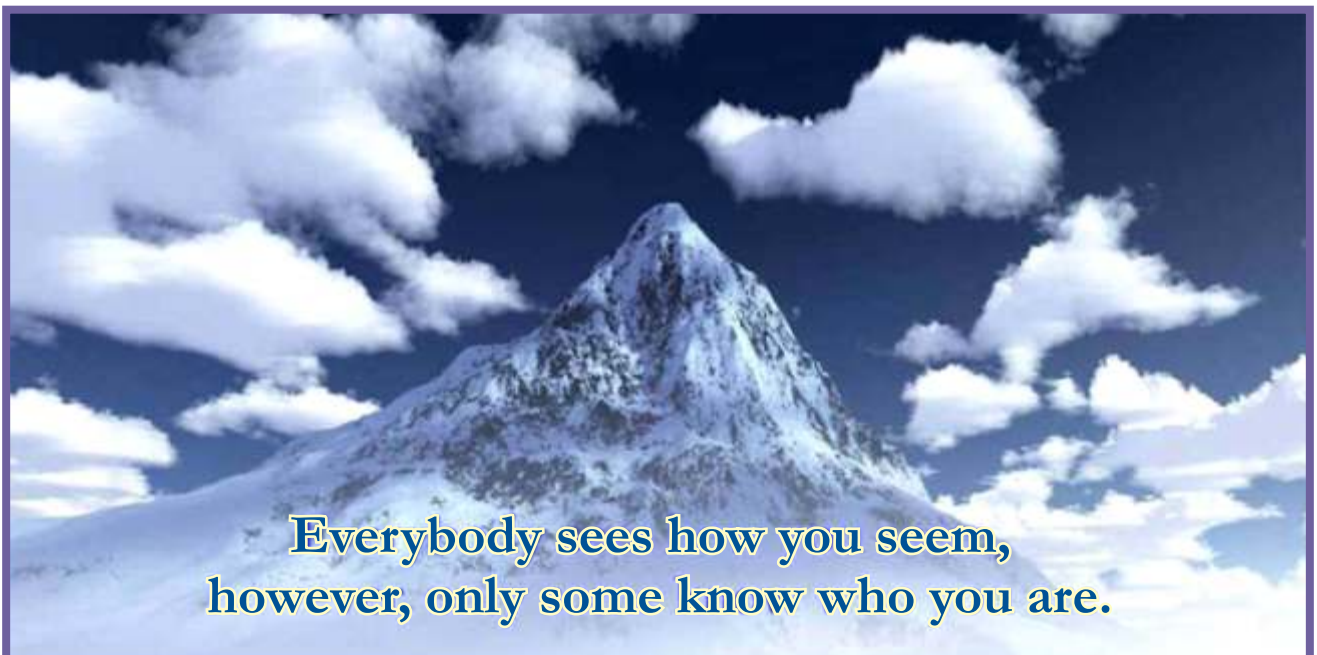
The author of the article is Leena Abraham. It has been inadvertently omitted. This is deeply regretted.

Eds

IMMORTAL DADHIICIS

Arun Prakash's article is a real eye opener. I agree that a proper memorial should be built for these noble souls who sacrificed their lives for ideology. There are many military memorials in India, which may be seen for guidance in building the memorial.

Tasleem Siddique, Lucknow



**Everybody sees how you seem,
however, only some know who you are.**

Determining Your True Path



A master was strolling through a field of wheat when a disciple came up to him and asked, “I can’t tell which is the true path. What’s the secret?”

“What does that ring on your right hand mean?” – asked the master.

“My father gave it to me before dying.”

“Well, give it to me.”

The disciple obeyed, and the master tossed the ring into the middle of the field of wheat.

“Now what?” – shouted the disciple and exclaimed “Now I have to stop doing everything I was doing to look for the ring! It’s important to me!”

“When you find it, remember this: You yourself answered the question you asked me. That is how you tell the true path: It is more important than all the rest.”

-Author Unknown



GEO- SENTIMENT

SHRII PRABHAT RANJAN SARKAR

Those who are motivated by sentiment may earn temporary applause, but ultimately people realize, “No, they committed a mistake, they did not follow the path of rationality. So those who once earned the highest positions of respect in different fields of life, later find that their thrones of glory lie shattered in the dust. This is the lesson which history teaches us.

Humanism...is a very deep and intricate theory of philosophy. Devotion [bhakti] and love for God, the most valuable treasures of the present humanity, are repeatedly endangered by onslaughts from the external world; people should acquire sufficient resources to resist them. I [have] discussed how to resist these onslaughts; how these geo-sentiments, socio-sentiments, and other sentiments are to be counteracted; and how to safeguard the sacred inner assets of the human heart.

Rationality vs. Sentiment

Now let us examine various sentiments, such as socio-sentiment, geo-sentiment, and even so-called human sentiment.

Human existence is more psychic than physical. The existence of animals is

primarily physical, but human existence is mainly psychic. Suppose someone wounds your feelings and then offers you delicious food and drink – you will not





be inclined to accept it. You will be more afflicted when someone speaks ill of you or reproaches you than when someone beats you, because you are a predominantly psychic being. The word “manu” came into existence meaning “mind-predominant being” [in Sanskrit man, “contemplate”, plus suffix in equals manu]. And “manu” + “sna” = mānava [human being].

Now, the mind performs various activities like thinking, remembering, etc. In addition, the mind works in three different ways.

Discrimination: One of these is the way of discrimination. What is its nature? “I should do this! No, I should not do this!” – to do or not to do. When, in judging and discriminating between proper and improper, human beings select the proper path, this is called *viveka* [conscience]. And the path of discrimination is called “rationality”. When one is moving forward, guided by conscience, these alternatives exist side by side: propriety and impropriety, dos and don'ts. There is movement involved and its speed may be increased, but not by much. One must examine both the propriety and impropriety of an issue; then when one takes a decision on the side of propriety, it is called “conscience”. When I examine first this side and then that side – analysing and then taking a step – naturally it is rather difficult to move quickly in this process.

There is advancement, but the degree of speed is comparatively less.

Sentiment: The second way of psychic movement is sentimental. One is not discriminating between the just and the unjust; one merely has a liking for something and allows the mind to run after it. In this process of letting the mind run after something, perhaps what I did, from start to finish, was proper or desirable. On the other hand I may have acted improperly or undesirably from start to finish. But this is a very risky path, because if there is impropriety in the beginning, middle and end, not only will a particular individual be destroyed, but he or she may lead a whole family, a whole social group, a whole state or a whole society towards utter destruction. A great danger! This running blindly without discriminating between the proper and the improper is called “sentiment”. One races after the idea that has come into one's mind like an unbridled horse, without considering its good or bad consequences. The horse may move along the right path, or it may fall into a chasm. One cannot be certain.

Now, human beings are capable of judging between right and wrong because their minds are somewhat developed, but the minds of creatures other than humans are not so developed. Because of their undeveloped minds, they cannot follow the path of rationality, the path of discrimination, which almost



nor are they guided by sentiment – they do not possess these things at all. In the case of developed animals, sentiment exceeds inborn instinct. And more-developed beings, such as human beings, possess sentiment and rationality and the faculty of discrimination as well.

If someone moves along the path of sentiment instead of the path of rationality, there is a hundred percent probability of great danger. Those who move along the path of sentiment do not

every human being can. Those who say that there is no need of study – “Leave your books aside!” – are incorrect. Study is essential, knowledge is essential, and association with learned and enlightened people is essential. Listening to learned discourses, studying and understanding the scriptures, all have their importance.

But animals less-evolved than humans are incapable of this. They cannot follow the path of rationality or conscience. The more-developed animals merely follow the path of sentiment. When an animal likes something, it runs after it; when it does not like it, it does not run after it. For instance, a dog runs toward a piece of bread without looking to either side. Or, for example, some grains of rice are spread under a net. Suddenly a bird catches sight of the grains and alights on the ground. It thinks: “Let me go down and eat them!” So it is caught in the net. But had it pursued the path of rationality, it would have thought: “Hmmm, rice is strewn in such a remote woodland! This is unnatural. There is neither a village nor rice fields nearby – so this is indeed strange. Let me think this over for a while... Aha! A net has been spread and ropes are laid on all sides. I must not alight there!” This is the way of logic. But if it follows the path of sentiment it will alight and be caught in the net.

Instinct: Undeveloped creatures are devoid even of this sentiment. They act according to inborn instinct only; they act with the limited minds which they have inherited at birth. An octopus catches a crab with the help of its limited mind. A mosquito, guided by inborn instinct, sucks blood whenever it sits on another's body. We cannot judge their actions as good or bad,

discriminate between the proper and the improper, but merely silently accept all superstitions surrounding the goal towards which they have been running. Even the least question regarding propriety or impropriety does not arise in their minds, because they are moving along the path of sentiment.

Now as a human being, what should one do? One should follow the path of rationality. Rationality is a treasure of humanity that no animal possesses. And those who possess the inner asset of devotion within their hearts and follow the path of rationality in dealing with the external world, must be victorious. They alone can accomplish worthy deeds in this world.

Those who are motivated by sentiment may earn temporary applause, but ultimately people realize, “No, they committed a mistake, they did not follow the path of rationality. They themselves were caught in the current of sentiment, and they drifted the society also in that current. As a result society has been destroyed.” From then on, people start forming bad opinions about them. So those who once earned the highest positions of respect in different fields of life, later find that their thrones of glory lie shattered in the dust. This is the lesson which history teaches us. At a particular time, people treat someone with great respect, give him or her great importance, and elevate him or her to a throne of glory; but a time comes when the same people drag him or her down to the dust, saying, “Your days are finished. You have done much harm.” Those who follow the path of rational judgement may perform great and glorious deeds, or mediocre deeds, or perhaps they do not even do anything worthy of mention at all – but at least they do

no harm to society. So whatever degree of respect they have earned, remains unaffected, because they did not injure society at all.

Geo-Sentiment and Superstition

What is that geo-sentiment which inflicts the first blow on the inner asset of humans? It is to let one's sentiment flow towards a particular territory. One does not consider whether what one is doing is right or wrong, logical or illogical. In this situation, sentiment is substituted for logic; and in the next phase, superstition is substituted for logic. All those religious, economic, political or social theories which are based on geo-sentiment, yield to superstition from their very inception. The so-called religions which have mouthed high-sounding ideals but are essentially motivated by geo-sentiment, become converted into reservoirs of superstition, into oceans of blind faith. They submerge humanity in a quagmire of superstitions, and people struggle in that filth for ages. Their progress is checked forever.

Geo-Economic Sentiment

I have already said that when people move along the path of a particular geo-sentiment in the social sphere – even worse than in the case of geo-sentiment in the religious sphere – they do not think at all of others. They thrive on the lifeblood of others, thinking this to be natural. In practical life, fascism is born from such a mentality – and also imperialism, capitalism, oligarchy and bureaucracy. Thus you can easily understand how dangerous this mentality is, and how detrimental to the progress of humanity.

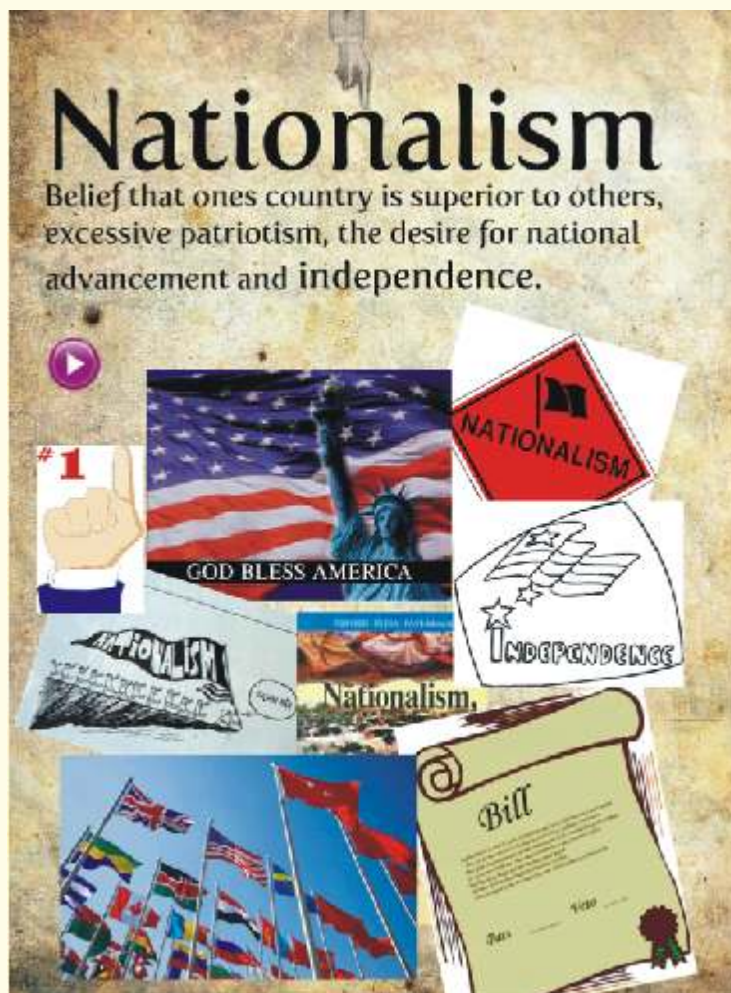
This is regarding geo-sentiment in social life; the same is the case in economic life. “Although there is no iron ore or cheap electricity, we must have a steel plant in our area.” This is nothing but an expression of geo-economic sentiment. “Although crude oil and cheap electricity are not available, we must have oil refineries in our area!” – another expression of geo-economic sentiment.

Let me give another example in this connection. The jute industry of Dundee [in Great Britain] flourished because a supply of jute came from Bengal and, again, the finished products were sold in the markets of Bengal. What a peculiar situation! This was a case of non-utilization of Bengal's potentialities and resources; and for Dundee it was an irrational industrial plan with every possibility of failure. If the jute

had not been supplied from Bengal, the factories of Dundee would have closed. If finished jute products had not been sold in the markets of Bengal, the industry in Dundee would have failed.

Under such circumstances the industrially-developed countries, to ensure a permanent supply of raw materials and the continuing availability of markets for their finished products, resort to imperialism, economic and political fascism, and so on. They try to create an arena of satellite markets to ensure the supply of raw materials and markets for their finished goods. When the developing, or undeveloped, countries detect the intentions of the developed countries, conflict arises between the developed and undeveloped countries, and this poses a great threat to world peace.

The jute mills of the present-day Bengal are not adequately supplied with the jute produced in Bengal, and thus it is necessary to purchase raw jute from outside of India. To make the jute industry flourish, we must follow the path of rationality, not the path of sentiment. We should allow only such numbers of jute





mills to operate which can be supplied with the raw jute from Bengal; the rest must be closed. And we must produce fibres of different grades instead of producing finished jute products in those jute mills which will be allowed to operate. Those fibres should be distributed among the weavers and farmers through jute cooperatives. These jute cooperatives will produce only such products as are in demand in Bengal and to some extent outside also. Now in practice we see that there is a great scarcity of fibre products in Bengal. Commodities produced by these cooperative industries will remove that scarcity of fibre products. As a result of this decentralization of industry, the masses will be economically benefited. It will be still better if the jute fibres, instead of being produced in large jute-mills in the cities, are produced in the small towns of Bengal on a decentralized basis.

Geo-Religious Sentiment

Now let us come to the main point. I have already said that this geo-economic sentiment is causing enormous harm in social life. Here, there is not the least concern for rationality. Rationality is a human quality only; no animal possesses it. The same applies to geo-religion. There is a place of pilgrimage in a certain country where if even a crow dies during that pilgrimage, it is sure to go to heaven, what to speak of a human being!

There are some people who want to make a show of their devotion, saying, “I am a slave of Vrindavana.” This is an extreme geo-sentiment. Vrindavana is a place – how can you be its slave? Have you lost your reason? Another says, “No, no, not slave! I am the dust of Vrindavana.” What are you saying? You are a human being; you are made of the five fundamental factors; why should you become dust? Still another goes a step further and says, “No, no, not dust, I am the excrement of a crow of Vrindavana.” This is the height of devotional display. They have lost all sense of rational judgement, and have not the least vestige of logic. This is an expression of geo-religion. Some people say, “Since I must die, I will die only in Kashi [Benares].” How strange! All countries have been created by the Supreme Consciousness, so all countries are equal. The universal concept of Dharma [sublime righteousness] that God is all-pervasive – *Vistarah sarvabhūtasya Viśṇorvishvamidam jagat* [“This universe is the expression of Viśṇu, the latent All-Pervading Entity”] – this essence of dharma has been forgotten. Ultimately dharma has been reduced to a geo-sentiment centring around Benares.

“At least once in your life you should visit such-and-such place of pilgrimage – then a cottage in heaven will be reserved for you!” What sort of



Pilgrims throng Varanasi

mentality is this? All countries are equal; why worship with your face turned only towards the east, or the south, or the west. All countries, all directions, are equal.

*Eso ha devah pradisho'nu sarvāh;
Pūrvo ha jāta sa u garbhe antah.*

East, west, north, south, northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest, upwards, downwards – my Parama Puruṣa encompasses all the directions.” Then why should I give undue importance to any particular direction? To do that means geo-religion; not Dharma, but simply a religion.

The Greatest Threat to Humanity's Inner Asset

Now let us see what the impact of geo-sentiment is. This geo-religion, geo-economics, geo-sociology, geo-social sentiment – these “geos” are limited to a particular country or a particular direction. And those countries or directions which are beyond its confines are considered profane. To one group, judging according to this so-called holiness or profanity, the east is sacred, while to another group the west is sacred. Thus conflicts arise between these contradictory sentiments, leading to war and

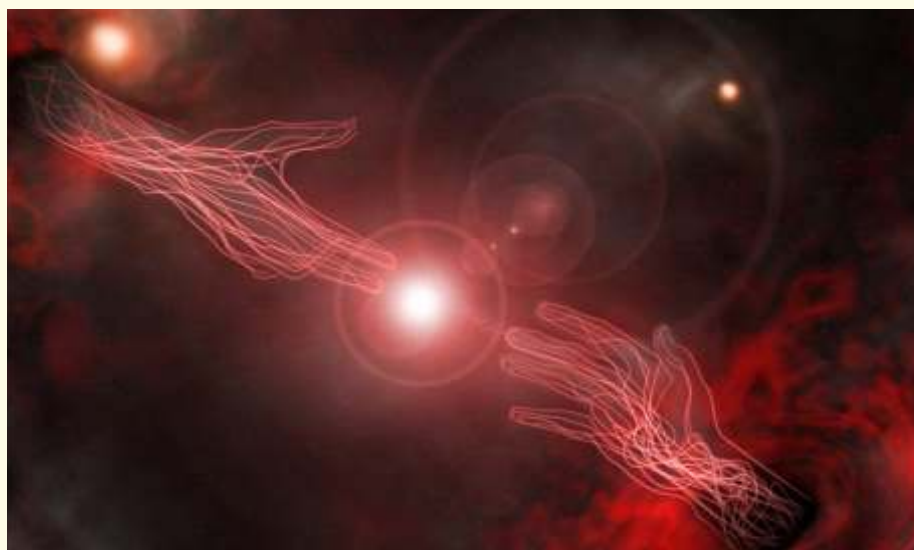
bloodshed. People have forgotten the fundamental spirit of humanism, and deviated from the principles of Dharma.

So now we see that the greatest threat to the inner asset of humanity is this geo-sentiment. Where does this geo-sentiment come from? Where does it originate? It is born in that place where people do not follow the path of rationality, the path of conscience. Dharma is the ultimate goal of the path of conscience – it is

not related to geo-sentiment.

Geo-sentiment is very cheap. The Supreme Consciousness is not attainable by superficial means. Something very great is attainable only by greatness. One must pay a high price to buy a costly thing. The Supreme Consciousness is not so cheap; it is not attainable by geo-sentiment.

Some people adopt geo-socialism, geo-politics or national socialism, thus limiting socialism to their countries only, but this is not possible. Geo-socialism, geo-religion, geo-economics, etc., which are based on this geo-sentiment, not only confine people in the bondages of limitations, but also alienate one particular social group from another. And – what is more harmful – different groups become violent towards each other, which is extremely dangerous for human civilization.



Principles of Proutist Economics

1st First Principle of Economic Democracy

Yugasya sarvanimnaprayojanam' sarves' a' m' vidheyam.

[The minimum requirements of an age should be guaranteed to all.]

The first requirement for economic democracy is that the minimum requirements of a particular age – including food, clothing, housing, education and medical treatment – must be guaranteed to all. Not only is this an individual right, it is also a collective necessity, because the easy availability of the minimum requirements will increase the all-round welfare of society.

Commentary: As Schopenhauer noted, ideas go through three phases – first they are ridiculed, second they are violently opposed and finally they are accepted as common sense. Throughout history slaves, saints and scholars have proclaimed, fought for and died for this most basic, common sense principle. All rights become meaningless without the right to live. Can there be nothing more common sense than this principle? This principle has been stated by Shrii Sarkar in the form of a Sanskrit aphorism (sutra).

However this principle has been rejected by the majority of economists since the field began. This is because the very meaning and mission of the word economics has been violated. The English word “economics” means literally the laws of the household of a community. The idea of every community and the entire human community as one household, with one hearth of one family has never been accepted by the so-called civilized communities although it is common sense to many so-called backward, indigenous communities. The current system of economics is based on the slave household where a small group of people fatten themselves on the misery of the rest. A new, genuine economics thus must find its mission in the protecting and thriving of every single member of our human household and this includes our plant and animal brethren as well as the rivers, mountains and the Earth itself.

From this vision comes PROUT’s mission that the foremost branch of economics is People’s Economics. Shrii Sarkar defines this as follows:

“People’s economy deals with the essential needs of the people in general – the production, distribution, marketing, shipping, storage, pricing, sales, freight charges, pro forma costing, and all related activities of such essential needs. Most importantly, it is directly concerned with the guaranteed provision of minimum requirements such as food, clothing, housing, medical treatment, education, transportation, energy and irrigation water. Continuous improvement in and ready availability of these requirements is the key factor in people’s economy.

The minimum requirements can be assured through guaranteed purchasing capacity which should be enshrined in the constitution as a fundamental or cardinal human right. This will give the citizens of the country legal power if their minimum requirements are not met, hence the necessity of purchasing capacity will be reinforced by constitutional law. As people’s economy will deal with minimum requirements and people’s subsistence problems, it must take precedence over other parts of the economy.

People’s economy should also be concerned with the development of both private and cooperative industries. Private industries would be limited in size and scope to prevent monopoly production and exploitation, and would be required to function as cooperatives once they grow too large. Cooperative industries are the best means of independently organizing people so that they take collective responsibility for their livelihood.

People’s economy also includes employment for all; the eradication of mass poverty; the development of rural economy; the phase-wise socialization of land into the hands of those who work physically or intellectually for proper production; practical training programmes to impart skills which enable people to find employment in their immediate urban or rural locality; work placement; and the transportation, transshipment, loading and unloading of any materials, even if they are not economically viable in the short-term. It is also concerned with the generation of cheap power and the supply of water, which are essential if people are to control their local economies. Finally, it includes economic decentralization, cooperative dynamo and

block-level planning.” (“Quadri-Dimensional Economy”)

The second and older word for economics is the Sanskrit word "Artha". Artha as per Shrii Sarkar means the temporary removal of physical, psychic (intellectual, emotional, cultural, intuitional) and spiritual suffering. Hence economics or Artha is a liberatory science. The current system of economics was developed by agents of the British and American Empires and is designed as a propaganda tool to justify the economic looting of criminal elites and to justify the violence they use to attain their goals. A new genuine Artha must find its mission in awakening the minds of the exploited people to their slavery, awakening our minds to the vision of being collectively in control of the destiny of the local economy and awakening our hearts to the countless revolutionary struggles to seize control of their local economy from the hands of the exploiters.

From this vision comes PROUT mission for Psycho Economics. Shrii Sarkar defines it as follows,

“Psycho-economy has two branches. The first branch endeavours to eradicate exploitative and unjust economic practices, behaviours and structures. It will counter all economic and psycho-economic exploitation and make people aware of how capitalists, in their singular or collective roles, exploit society and create unhealthy, artificial demands which not only poison the mind but encourage dangerous habits detrimental to psychic sanctity and expansion. The first and foremost duty of psycho-economics is to wage a tireless fight against all degenerating and dehumanizing economic trends in society.” (“Quadri-Dimensional Economy”)

The availability of the minimum essentials of life plays a vital part not only in achieving a world family but also in the development of the personality. Countless youths are destroyed every year by the violence of adults who are traumatized by poverty. Poverty, it has been found affects the brain and decreases one’s cognitive capacity. When one loses self-respect and lacks confidence, one not only loses capacity to reason, one also loses one’s conscience and hence starts down the dark road of theft, violence and addiction to drugs or alcohol. This is why the guarantee of minimum requirements is so crucial for society today. In Scandinavia, for example in the past, the purchasing capacity of the people was high and they enjoyed a good standard of living. Because of this, they do not face the problem of overpopulation – which is serious problem only in societies with extreme economic inequality based on extreme economic tyranny of 1% of the elites.

Finally we should note that guaranteeing the welfare of everyone will lead to the all-round welfare of society. Let us be clear as to what a real society is. It has nothing to do with nations, races, religions and other vivisections of the Cosmic Family. Nor does it have anything to do with species-ism or the exploitation and genocide of animal and plant species and the assault on the planet itself. As Shrii Sarkar so simply reminds us,

“If we take the full meaning of the term society into consideration, it will be seen that till now human beings have not been able to form a real society. If India builds a society for only Indians, Pakistan for only Pakistanis and England for only the English, then three separate societies will exist, but we cannot look upon them as the society of humanity. Because humanity is divided into groups, one society will naturally try to thrive by exploiting the vitality of others. On observation you will notice that efforts are being made to establish so-called societies in some particular part of the world, for some particular section of the people, and based on some particular “ism” or faith. A social consciousness based on such divisions lies latent in the minds of the people, whether they are Indian, Pakistani or English, so they remain absorbed in thoughts of their smaller groups. It is actually due to some external impact that social consciousness takes the form of a really all-embracing Indian, Pakistani or English consciousness. The social consciousness of an enslaved nation is never more keenly felt than when the people are at war with the dominating colonial power. After independence that consciousness is lost. Examples of antisocial fissiparous tendencies do not stop here. Even in different regions of the same country people do not live within one social group. . .

To what state has society effectively been reduced? I reaffirm the fact that human beings have still not been able to form a human society, and have still not learned to move with the spirit of a pilgrim. Although many small groups (motivated by self interest) work together in particular situations, not even a small fraction of their work is done with a broader social motive. By strict definition, shall we have to declare that each small family unit is a society in itself? If going ahead in mutual adjustment only out of narrow self interest or momentary self-seeking is called society, then in such a society, no provision can be made for the disabled, the diseased or the helpless, because in most cases nobody can benefit from them in any way. Hence it will not suffice to say that all people marching ahead is only a collective form of segregated psychic phenomena; for in that case there always remains the possibility of some people getting isolated from the collective. All human beings must attach themselves to others by the common bond of love, and march forward hand in hand, then only will I proclaim it a society.” (Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, “The Spirit of Society”)



Nationalism Versus Civilization *Part 2*

✱ Rabindranath Tagore

I have seen in (fascist) Japan the voluntary submission of the whole people to the trimming of their minds and clipping of their freedom by their government, which through various educational agencies regulates their thoughts, manufactures their feelings, becomes suspiciously watchful when they show signs of inclining toward the spiritual, leading them through a narrow path not toward what is true but what is necessary for the complete welding of them into one uniform mass according to its own recipe. The people accept this

It is no consolation to us to know that the weakening of humanity from which the present age is suffering is not limited to the subject races, and that its ravages are even more radical because insidious and voluntary in peoples who are hypnotized into believing that they are free.

all-pervading mental slavery with cheerfulness and pride because of their nervous desire to turn themselves into a machine of power, called the Nation, and emulate other machines in their collective worldliness.

When questioned as to the wisdom of its course the newly converted fanatic of nationalism answers that 'so long as nations are rampant in this world we have not the option freely to develop our higher humanity. We must utilize every faculty that we possess to resist the evil by assuming it ourselves in the fullest degree. For the only brotherhood possible in the modern world is the brotherhood of hooliganism (goonda-ism).' The recognition of the fraternal bond of love between Japan and Russia, which has lately been celebrated with an immense display of rejoicing in Japan, was not owing to any sudden recrudescence of the spirit of Christianity or of Buddhism, - but it was a bond established according to the modern

faith in a surer relationship of mutual menace of bloodshedding. Yes, one cannot but acknowledge that these facts are the facts of the world of the Nation, and the only moral of it, is that all the peoples of the earth should strain their physical, moral and intellectual resources to the utmost to defeat one another in the wrestling match of powerfulness. In the ancient days Sparta paid all her attention to becoming powerful - and she did become so by crippling her humanity, and she died of the amputation.

But it is no consolation to us to know that the weakening of humanity from which the present age is suffering is not limited to the subject races, and that its ravages are even more radical because insidious and voluntary in peoples who are hypnotized into believing that they are free. This bartering of your higher aspirations of life for profit and power has been your own free choice, and I leave you there, at the wreckage of your soul,



Rabindranath in his study circa 1925

contemplating your protuberant prosperity. But will you never be called to answer, for organizing the instincts of self-aggrandizement of whole peoples into perfection, and calling it good? I ask you what disaster has there ever been in the history of man, in its darkest period, like this terrible disaster of the Nation fixing its fangs deep into the naked flesh of the world, taking permanent precautions against its natural relaxation?

Have you not seen, since the commencement of the existence of the Nation, that the dread of it has been the one goblin-dread with which the whole world has been trembling? Wherever there is a dark corner, there is the suspicion of its secret malevolence; and people live in a perpetual distrust of its back where it has no eyes. Every sound of footstep, every rustle of movement in the neighborhood, sends a thrill of terror all around. And this terror is the parent of all that is base in man's nature. It makes one almost openly unashamed of inhumanity. Clever lies become matters of self-congratulation.

Solemn pledges become a farce, - laughable for their very solemnity. The Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation, that all its precautions are against it, and any new birth of its fellows in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril. Its one wish is to trade on the feebleness of the rest of the world, like some insects that are bred in the paralyzed flesh of victims kept just enough alive to make them toothsome and nutritious. Therefore it is ready to send its poisonous fluid into the vitals of the other living peoples, who, not being nations, are harmless...And for all this the Nation has been claiming the gratitude of history, and all eternity for its exploitation; ordering its band



of praise to be struck up from end to end of the world, declaring itself to be the salt of the earth, the flower of humanity, the blessing of God hurled with all his force upon the naked skulls of the world of no nations.

You say, these machines (nations) will come into an agreement, for their mutual protection, based upon a conspiracy of fear. But will this federation of steam-boilers supply you with a soul, a soul which has her conscience and her God? What is to happen to that larger part of the world, where fear will have no hand in restraining you? Whatever safety they now enjoy, those countries of no nation, from the unbridled license of forge and hammer and turn-screw, results from the mutual jealousy of the powers. But when, instead of being numerous separate machines, they become riveted into one organized gregariousness of gluttony, commercial and political, what remotest chance of hope will remain for those others, who have lived and suffered, have loved and worshipped, have thought deeply and worked with meekness, but whose only crime has been that they have not organized?

But, you say, 'That does not matter, the unfit must go to the wall - they shall die, and this is science,'

No, for the sake of your own salvation, I say, they shall live, and this is truth. It is extremely bold of me to say so, but I assert that man's world is amoral world, not because

we blindly agree to believe it, but because it is so in truth which would be dangerous for us to ignore. And this moral nature of man cannot be divided into convenient compartments for its preservation. You cannot secure it for your home consumption with protective tariff walls, while in foreign parts making it enormously accommodating in its free trade of license...

This satisfaction of man's needs is a great thing. It gives him freedom in the material world. It confers on him the benefit of a greater range of time and space. He can do things in a shorter time and occupies a larger space with more thoroughness of advantage. Therefore he can easily outstrip those who live in a world of a slower time and of space less fully occupied.

This progress of power attains more and more rapidity of pace. And, for the reason that it is a detached part of man, it soon outruns the complete humanity. The moral man remains behind, because it has to deal with the whole reality, not merely with the law of things, which is impersonal and therefore abstract.

Thus, man with his mental and material power far outgrowing his moral strength, is like an exaggerated giraffe whose head has suddenly shot up miles away from the rest of him, making normal communication difficult to establish. This greedy head, with its huge dental organization, has been munching all the topmost foliage of

the world, but the nourishment is too late in reaching his digestive organs, and his heart is suffering from want of blood. Of this present disharmony in man's nature the West seems to have been blissfully unconscious. The enormity of its material success has diverted all its attention toward self-congratulation on its bulk. The optimism of its logic goes on basing the calculations of its good fortune upon the indefinite prolongation of its railway lines toward eternity. It is superficial enough to think that all to-morrows are merely to-days with the repeated additions of twenty-four hours. It has no fear of the chasm, which is opening wider every day, between man's ever-growing storehouses and the emptiness of his hungry humanity. Logic does not know that, under the lowest bed of endless strata of wealth and comforts, earthquakes are being hatched to restore the balance of the moral world, and one day the gaping gulf of spiritual vacuity will draw into its bottom the store of things that have their eternal love for the dust.

Man in his fullness is not powerful, but perfect. Therefore, to turn him into mere power, you have to curtail his soul as much as possible. When we are fully human, we cannot fly at one another's

throats; our instincts of social life, our traditions of moral ideals stand in the way. If you want me to take to butchering human beings, you must break up that wholeness of my humanity through some discipline which makes my will dead, my thoughts numb, my movements automatic, and then from the dissolution of the complex personal man will come out that abstraction, that destructive force, which has no relation to human truth, and therefore can be easily brutal or mechanical.

Take away man from his natural surroundings, from the fullness of his communal life, with all its living associations of beauty and love and social obligations, and you will be able to turn him into so many fragments of a machine for the production of wealth on a gigantic scale. Turn a tree into a log and it will burn for you, but it will never bear living flowers and fruit. This process of dehumanizing has been going on in commerce and politics. And out of the long birth-throes of mechanical energy has been born this fully developed apparatus of magnificent power and surprising appetite, which has been christened in the West as the Nation. As I have hinted before, because of its quality of abstraction it has, with the greatest

ease, gone far ahead of the complete moral man. And having the conscience of a ghost and the callous perfection of an automaton, it is causing disasters of which the volcanic dissipations of the youthful moon would be ashamed to be brought into comparison. As a result, the suspicion of man for man stings all the limbs of this civilization like the hairs of the nettle. Each country is casting its net of espionage into the slimy bottom of the others, fishing for their secrets, the treacherous secrets brewing in the oozy depths of diplomacy. And what is their secret service but the nation's underground trade in kidnapping, murder and treachery and all the ugly crimes bred in the depth of rottenness? Because each nation has its own history of thieving and lies and broken faith, therefore there can only flourish international suspicion and jealousy, and international moral shame becomes anaemic to a degree of ludicrousness. The nation's bagpipe of righteous indignation has so often changed its tune according to the variation of time and to the altered groupings of the alliances of diplomacy, that it can be enjoyed with amusement as the variety performance of the political music hall...

In fact your instinct tells you that the advent of another people into the arena of nationality makes another addition to the evil which contradicts all that is highest in Man and proves by its success that unscrupulousness is the way to prosperity, - and goodness is good for the weak and God is the only remaining consolation of the defeated.

Yes, this is the logic of the Nation. And it will never heed the voice of truth and goodness. It will go on in its ring-dance of moral corruption, linking steel unto steel, and machine unto machine; trampling under its tread all the sweet flowers of simple faith and the living ideals of man.

But we delude ourselves into thinking that humanity in the



modern days is more to the front than ever before. The reason of this self-delusion is because man is served with the necessities of life in greater profusion and his physical ills are being alleviated with more efficacy. But the chief part of this is done, not by moral sacrifice, but by intellectual power. In quantity it is great, but it springs from the surface and spreads over the surface. Knowledge and efficiency are powerful in their outward effect, but they are the servants of man, not the man himself. Their service is like the service in a hotel, where it is elaborate, but the host is absent; it is more convenient than hospitable.

Therefore we must not forget that the scientific organizations vastly spreading in all directions are strengthening our power, but not our humanity. With the growth of power the cult of the self-worship of the Nation grows in ascendancy; and the individual willingly allows the nation to take donkey rides upon his back; and there happens the anomaly which must have its disastrous effects, that the individual worships with all sacrifices a god which is morally much inferior to himself. This could never have been possible if the god had been as real as the individual.

Let me give an illustration of this in point. In some parts of India it has been enjoined as an act of great piety for a widow to go without food and water on a particular day every fortnight. This often leads to cruelty, unmeaning and inhuman. And yet men are not by nature cruel to such a degree. But this piety being a mere unreal abstraction completely deadens the moral sense of the individual, just as the man who would not hurt an animal unnecessarily, would cause horrible suffering to a large number of innocent creatures when he drugs his feelings with the abstract idea of 'sport.' Because these ideas are the creations of our intellect, because they are logical classifications, therefore they can so easily hide in their mist the personal man.

And the idea of the Nation is

one of the most powerful anesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion, - in fact feeling dangerously resentful if it is pointed out.

But can this go on indefinitely? continually producing barrenness of moral insensibility upon a large tract of our living nature? Can it escape its nemesis forever? Has this giant power of mechanical organization no limit in this world against which it may shatter itself all the more completely because of its terrible strength and velocity? Do you believe that evil can be permanently kept in check by competition with evil, and that conference of prudence can keep the devil chained in its makeshift cage of mutual agreement?

The Nation has thriven long upon mutilated humanity. Men, the fairest creations of God, came out of the National manufactory in huge numbers as war-making and money-making puppets, ludicrously vain of their pitiful perfection of mechanism. Human society grew more and more into a marionette show of politicians, soldiers, manufacturers and bureaucrats, pulled by wire arrangements of wonderful efficiency.

But the apotheosis of selfishness can never make its interminable breed of hatred and greed, fear and hypocrisy, suspicion and tyranny, an end in themselves. These monsters grow into huge shapes but never into harmony. And this Nation may grow on to an unimaginable corpulence, not of a living body, but of steel and steam and office buildings, till its deformity can contain no longer its ugly voluminousness, - till it begins to crack and gape, breathe gas and fire in gasps, and its death-rattles sound in cannon roars. In this war, the death-throes of the Nation have commenced. Suddenly, all its mechanism going mad, it has begun the dance of the furies, shattering its

own limbs, scattering them into the dust. It is the fifth act of the tragedy of the unreal.

Those who have any faith in Man cannot but fervently hope that the tyranny of the Nation will not be restored to all its former teeth and claws, to its far-reaching iron arms and its immense inner cavity, all stomach and no heart; that man will have his new birth, in the freedom of his individuality, from the enveloping vagueness of abstraction.

And then there will come from her own children those who will break themselves free from the slavery of this illusion, this perversion of brotherhood founded upon self-seeking, those who will own themselves as God's children and as no bondslaves of machinery, which turns souls into commodities and life into compartments, which, with its iron claws, scratches out the heart of the world and knows not what it has done.

And we of no nations of the world, whose heads have been bowed to the dust, will know that his dust is more sacred than the bricks which build the pride of power. For this dust is fertile of life, and of beauty and worship. We shall thank God that we were made to wait in silence through the night of despair, had to bear the insult of the proud and the strong man's burden, yet all through it, though our hearts quaked with doubt and fear, never could we blindly believe in the salvation which machinery offered to man, but we held fast to our trust in God and the truth of the human soul. And we can still cherish the hope, that, when power becomes ashamed to occupy its throne and is ready to make way for love, when the morning comes for cleansing the bloodstained steps of the Nation along the highroad of humanity, we shall be called upon to bring our own vessel of sacred water - the water of worship - to sweeten the history of man into purity, and with its sprinkling make the trampled dust of the centuries blessed with fruitfulness.

Battle For The Sundarbans

✱ By Anu Muhammad

Spread into Bangladesh and India, the Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world, a combination of rich ecosystems for the humanity. For Bangladesh it is much more, a question of life and death. It has protected millions of people from so many natural disasters. This Sundarban is now under threat because of profit-mad groups from home and abroad.

Amid popular protest and despite experts' opinion against the establishment of Rampal coal fired power plant at Rampal, which is close to Sundarban, the Bangladesh

government and India's National Thermal Power Corporation keep working on the establishment of the plant. The government also allowed a Bangladeshi company Orion last year to build another power plant nearer to the forest. On 19 March, 2014 the government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China to set up another 1320 MW coal-based power plant in Patuakhali, a location that is also close to the Sundarban.

It seems that the government is aggressive in allowing problematic projects, indifferent and inactive in protecting people and environment.

These projects and the government's attitude has created an environment that encourages denial of national law to protect the environment, to ignore international laws and conventions to follow certain rules for protecting ecologically sensitive area, and to pull land grabbers to rush into the area to take possession.

Grabbers' Free Zone

Last year a series of investigative reports in a leading English daily newspaper revealed the government's role in allowing industrialists "to purchase land and providing site clearance to install

hazardous industries grossly violating environmental laws" in the Sundarban area. The reports mentioned that a number of projects including government owned silo, naval dockyard and different commercial projects sponsored by mostly persons blessed by the ruling party to be set up in the buffer zone, those "are posing serious threats to the already vulnerable mangrove forest, which acts as a natural wall, reduces intensity of cyclones and saves life and property". For example, "Sun Marine Shipyards, a shipbuilding company is jointly owned by Mahbubul Alam Hanif,

Sundarbans mangrove - fragile ecology in danger





Sunset in beautiful Sundarbans

joint general secretary of the ruling Awami League”. Others include companies and businesses like “Lithe and Fam Kom ready-made garments manufacturers, Jamuna, Amin Mohammad, Mir and Navana LP gas manufacturers, Sundarban and Confidence shipyards.” (Daily Star, October 13-14, 2013)

According to the reports, around 3,000 acres of land in that area, “mostly through using unfair means” already gone to the hand of a few groups. Online advertisements also are available about the availability of another 1,550 acres of “industrial land” in adjacent areas being eligible for a “shipyard, ship-breaking yard, oil tanker, cement factory and LP gas unit”!

Another report, published in ‘National Geographic’ magazine talked about the silo, “a major food silo being built by the ministry of food across the river from the forest at Joymonirgol. The project is being implemented by Toma Group, a company part-owned by the

government's jute minister, Mirza Azam. In November last year (2013) the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone on the project”.

The consequence for the poor local people, including religious minority, has already been disastrous. Many were forced to leave their homes for an unknown destiny. Recent evidences in the following months show that things have become much worse.

Tiger Conference and Destructive Projects

Ironically Bangladesh hosted a three day international conference on tiger conservation in Dhaka recently. Delegates from 13 tiger range countries attended the conference that began on September 14, 2014 . Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her inaugural speech, stated that her ‘government will do everything for conservation of the tigers’. There is no doubt that these words sound rhetorical and absurd since the government has also been backing several projects threatening

the Sundarbans’ survival, the main habitat of tigers in the region.

There are numerous research papers and articles available to show uniqueness of the Sundarbans, its ecological importance as well as its economic value and its role as mighty natural wall against natural disasters. Dr. Y. Jhala of India 's Wildlife Conservation Society, who was attending the tiger conference, said to ‘National Geographic’ magazine that “There are only around five viable wild tiger habitats left in the world for long term hope. This is one of them. If you break these up into smaller parts you lose that, not ecologically, but biologically.”

Dr Abul Bashar, biologist and Dhaka University professor showed that the ecosystems in the Sundarbans is unique in the world, any damage in any part of the system will be disastrous to the whole system (Sarbjonkotha, November 2014).

People in general and

independent experts in particular from Bangladesh have been expressing their concern and protest against these projects in many ways. A number of research papers, investigative articles have already specified the problems. Big local and national demonstrations, including a 6 day Dhaka-Sundarbans long march, raised peoples voices; artists have written several songs and and performed plays about the Sundarban since government approval of coal fired power plant project.

Ramsar and UNESCO Worries

The international community and related international agencies have been making their points against harmful projects in greater Sundarbans are as well. The Ramsar secretariat and UNESCO sent number of letters to express their concern about the fate of the Sundarbans because of dangerous commercial projects. Since 2011, the Ramsar secretariat have been sending letters to the government of Bangladesh (GOB). These projects also made UNESCO to write letters questioning government's role and demand certain steps.

At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee requested the government to submit a state of conservation report by February 1, 2013 . But the government “has not submitted the requested report”. On May 22, 2013 , the World Heritage Centre wrote a letter to the government to express their serious concern. On April 11, 2014, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the government requesting further information about projects affecting Sundarban.

UNESCO also noted that the “the dredging necessary to keep the channels of the Pashur River open for navigation is likely to alter the morphology of the river channels..” Therefore the committee “...requests the State Party to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the dredging activities include a specific assessment of potential impacts.. and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre prior to making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse...” Their concern for “making any decision that would be difficult to reverse” is crucial.

Most importantly, the UNESCO committee urged the government to undertake a “comprehensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of development in the Sundarban” and to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2015 , “an updated report on the state of conservation..for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015.” That means they are expecting that the government will not proceed with the projects before doing some fresh and credible comprehensive assessments.

Protests From India

Meanwhile different organizations and experts from India have also started joining their voices to save Sundarban after realizing that (1) an Indian company is the major partner in the primary projects of destruction and (2) the Sundarbans spread into India as well. Therefore, if damage is done in Bangladesh the effect will not stop at the political boundary.

On September 8, National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) & Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum, (DMF) of India had sent a letter of request to the Prime Minister of India to stop participation in the Rampal coal fired power plant project. The letter said, “Our country should not be a partner in the destruction of environment and ecology of the largest and the richest mangrove forest on our planet that provides the Bay of Bengal ecosystem with the largest nursery of fish... the hundred thousand fishers and wild honey collectors dependent on the natural resources of the Sundarban forests.”

Sundarbans Must Win

Will the governments of both Bangladesh and India stop advancing with plans causing the destruction of the Sundarbans or will they continue denying local, national and global cries against destruction in the name of development? Evidences show the latter trend. There are reports of



harassment, surveillance, threats on unwilling local people too.

It seems that local and foreign looters and profiteers are dominating the government's decision making process. People and environment do not have any space in their consideration. Not only have the policymakers lost the ability to understand scientific arguments, they have also lost commonsensical vision.

There are many environmentalist groups and individuals in the country, but surprisingly many of them are still silent about the killer projects on and around the Sundarban. We still hope that they and many of the international environmentalist groups will break their silence to save Sundarban soon.

Recently several theatre groups, singers, artists and writers came together in Dhaka as part of countrywide cultural campaign to registrar their protest against destructive projects in the greater Sundarbans and to urge all at home and abroad, national and international organizations, environmentalist groups, experts and individuals to come forward with effective role to build strong resistance against destruction of Sundarban. The survival and growth of Sundarban cannot be compromised for the sake of profit-mad business mafia. Battle for Sundarban continues, has to be strengthened. Sundarban must win in the battle, because there are many alternatives for power generation; but we have only one Sundarbans that cannot be rebuilt or replaced with any other; there is, therefore, no alternative to the preservation of the Sundarbans.

Catastrophic Oil Spill

In the early hours of December 9, 2014 in dense fog, the tanker Southern Star 7, carrying some 92,000 gallons of bunker oil, was rammed by a cargo vessel in the Sela River, at the entrance to the Bangladesh Sundarbans, southeast of the river port of Mongla. The collision occurred inside the



A thick, black sheen spread in the days after the tanker crash, covering some 60km of waterways

Chandpai dolphin sanctuary. The seven crew members survived only by jumping ship and swimming to shore. The body of Captain Mokhlesur Rahman was retrieved five days later.

Reportedly, some 52,000 gallons of fuel has already leaked into the brackish tidal water. According to Hossain, the spill has spread over a 40-mile-long (64 kilometers) area along the Sela and Pusur Rivers.

The company that owns the tanker is using buoys to bar the oil slick from spreading and has initiated a "buy back" program, paying villagers 30 taka (less than 40 cents) for every liter of sludge retrieved. Local fishers have been asked to scoop up the oil with their nets.

As one environmental scientist said, "Possibly, there is no expertise to handle an oil spill in an estuary in this part of the world." How a shipping route of any kind was allowed to pass through all three of the dolphin sanctuaries is one of the many uncomfortable questions officials will likely be asked in the days ahead. Clean up efforts fall on locals

"Local children and youngsters begun removing the already spilled oil from the Shela River using kitchen utensils like bowls, plates, and other cooking pots,"

Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, a professor at Dhaka University, told mongabay.com. "They are doing it bare-handed without any protective gear. The local administration has declared cash incentive for the oil collectors. They have now opened three-four collection centers to purchase the furnace oil from them at the rate of BDT 30 (\$0.38 US dollars) per litre."

Regional authorities have indeed depended almost wholly on locals in the area to deal with the oil spill without any equipment, training, or protection whatsoever. In addition to kitchen utensils, locals have been seen "cleaning" up the spill with sponges and shovels.

Environmentalists say this current disaster will likely be repeated in the future, if the government goes ahead with plans to build two large coal plants on the edge of Bangladesh's largest forest. Construction is already occurring on the hugely-controversial 1,320 megawatt Rampal coal plant, which will sit just 14 kilometers from the edge of the forest.

The Sunderbans are not the property of bureaucrats or businessmen. Humanity is the child of the Sunderbans and matricide can never be tolerated.

Anu Muhammad is Professor of Economics, Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh.



The killing in early 2013 of another secular blogger, Ahmed Rajib Haider, which was blamed on religious hardliners, sparked protests from free-speech supporters and counter-protests from Islamists. The police say the attack on Mr Roy was similar.



US-Bangladesh Blogger Avijit Roy Hacked to Death

* Akbar Hossain

Attackers in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka have hacked to death a US-Bangladeshi blogger whose writings on religion angered Islamist hardliners. Avijit Roy, who advocated secularism, was attacked as he walked back from a book fair with his wife, who was also hurt in the attack. No-one has been arrested but police say they are investigating a local Islamist group that praised the killing.

Hundreds of people gathered in Dhaka to mourn the blogger's death. Mr Roy's family say he received threats after publishing articles promoting secular views, science and social issues on his Bengali-language blog, Mukto-mona (Free Mind) - a "rational concept to oppose any unscientific and



Flowers were laid at the scene of the killing in Dhaka on Friday.

irrational belief". His 'Mukto-mona' website on Friday bore the message in Bengali "we are grieving but we shall overcome" against a black background.

Den of Militants

A group of men ambushed the couple, who live in the US and were visiting Dhaka only to attend the book festival, as they walked toward a roadside tea stall. At least two of the attackers hit the couple with meat cleavers in the attack on Thursday evening, police chief Sirajul Islam told AP news agency. Dropping their weapons, the attackers ran away, disappearing into the crowds.

Police told the BBC they were investigating a local hard-line religious group that had praised the killing in an online message. Ajay Roy, father of the dead man, urged the authorities to find the killers and "ensure exemplary punishment". "This Bangladesh which was built by the blood-sacrifice of the martyrs has now turned into a den of militants," he said. Students, teachers and bloggers gathered at Dhaka University on Friday to protest against the killing.

Virus' of Extremism

In a forthcoming article to be published in the Free Inquiry magazine of April-May 2015, Mr Roy likens religious extremism to a "highly contagious virus". He says he received threats from Islamist hardliners in Bangladesh last year when his book, *The Virus of Faith*, was released at a book fair. "The



Avijit Roy was a vocal opponent of religious extremism

death threats started flowing to my e-mail inbox on a regular basis," he writes.

"I suddenly found myself a target of militant Islamists and terrorists. A well-known extremist... openly issued death threats to me through his numerous Facebook entries.

"In one widely circulated status, he writes, 'Avijit Roy lives in America and so, it is not possible to kill him right now. But he will be murdered when he comes back.'"

The killing in early 2013 of another secular blogger, Ahmed Rajib Haider, which was blamed on religious hardliners, sparked protests from free-speech supporters

and counter-protests from Islamists. The police say the attack on Mr Roy was similar to the 2013 murder. Death threats against writers and bloggers are nothing new in Bangladesh.

Prominent writer Taslima Nasreen had to leave Bangladesh after she received death threats from hard-line Islamists in the mid-1990s. She wrote on her blog: "Avijit Roy has been killed the way other free thinker writers were killed in Bangladesh. No free thinker is safe in Bangladesh. "Islamic terrorists can do whatever they like. They can kill people with no qualms whatsoever."



Activists formed a human chain during the protest



Students and social activists gathered to protest against the blogger's death

From Wife-Beaters to Peace-Preachers

Tackling Domestic Abuse in Zimbabwe's Hinterland



A third of Zimbabwean women have experienced physical violence at the hands of their spouse or partner



* Akbar Hossain

Jairos Maruwe used to beat up his wife so badly he once knocked her unconscious and broke her arm. It landed him in jail at least once, but it was the way he was raised. "We grew up thinking that women are our tools and we can do whatever we want with them," the 34-year-old farmer in northeastern Zimbabwe's Marondera region told IRIN. "We have this tendency to resort to violence and emotional abuse when we think they have wronged us," he said.

That was then. Now, Maruwe is the secretary of the local branch of a group set up to reduce domestic abuse in Zimbabwe, where one in three women, according to a 2013 study, experience physical violence by their spouse or partner during their lifetime. "It is important for us



as men to accept that we are the main culprits where GBV [gender-based violence] is concerned," he said.

"The reality is that, in most of the cases, we are the ones that are wrong. My involvement in the GBV

group has taught me that there are many ways of solving domestic disputes without having to resort to violence. I now preach the anti-violence gospel," he said. Maruwe is among hundreds of men in 26 rural districts (Zimbabwe has 59 districts in all, over 40 of which are in rural areas) to have taken part in an innovative project set up this year by local NGO Padare/Enkundleni, with funding and logistical support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The scheme encourages men to get involved in the fight against GBV. It forms part of a four-year, US\$96 million Integrated Support Programme (ISP) on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV prevention launched by the government last year in conjunction with UN agencies, international donors and local NGOs in an effort to reduce maternal mortality, cervical cancer, HIV and GBV. ISP aims to provide services to 7,000 survivors of sexual assault and rape, in addition to reaching more than a million people with interventions to address some of the underlying issues that result in violence against women and girls.

Village Groups

Kelvin Hazangwi, director of Padare/Enkundleni, told IRIN rural communities have been largely bypassed by anti-GBV initiatives which have tended to focus on towns and cities. He said they had so far trained about 50 men in each district on community engagement, gender and human rights issues and methods for working with men to combat GBV. Those men then transfer their skills and knowledge to village groups (each with up to 50 members).

The men in these groups meet to talk about local reports of domestic violence and how to deal with them, in part by engaging with known perpetrators about the negative effects of GBV. "While there are numerous initiatives and tools to fight GBV, men, who are generally seen as the perpetrators, have largely been ignored as agents of change." "While there are



Meeting of women who experienced sexual violence - Congo

numerous initiatives and tools to fight GBV, men, who are generally seen as the perpetrators, have largely been ignored as agents of change," Hazangwi told IRIN. The groups write "commitment charters" which promise, among other things, to speak out against GBV and use dialogue to stop violence, to end child marriages, and to create partnerships with relevant local institutions such as the police and health centres. The charters, which are written in local languages, are posted on billboards close to busy places such as rural business centres, while local male artists are hired to paint murals at local community halls and livestock dipping points. Padare is also targeting two schools per district where groups of a 100 male students have been formed to educate their peers about GBV. In Marondera, where anti-GBV men's groups have been set up in several villages, the programme is already paying dividends, say activists. Rugare Samuriwo, 60, an elder in Maruwe's village and a member of the men's group, said that cases of domestic violence had dropped sharply since the programme began.

"The village is now more peaceful. Involving us [men] in fighting violence in the home works, because we have the power to change our own attitudes by talking to and counselling each other. Men are now generally ashamed to be violent because they have been made aware of the negative effects of doing so," said Samuriwo. Hazangwi said there are plans to evaluate the programme to establish its efficacy; to date there has not been any independent assessment of the project's impact.

Obstacles

Samuriwo admitted they faced resistance from some male villagers who refused to be part of the group and still felt that beating up their spouses and subjecting them to abuse was a way of asserting their authority in the home. Female victims of domestic violence, he added, generally still avoided reporting their cases to the police or health institutions. According to the 2013 study (a baseline survey on GBV in Zimbabwe), only one in every 14 women who were physically abused reported it to the police and one in 13 sought medical attention.

Young India Says 'Yes' to Military Rule, 'No' to Inter-Religious Mingling

* Nikita Niraj Arora

A survey of high school and college students from 11 cities has revealed that about half of them would prefer military rule over a democracy. But perhaps what is more is that an astonishing 65 percent 'agree' that boys and girls from different religions should not mingle.

The survey also threw up other shockers. While more than half of the students surveyed believed that women 'provoke' men with the way they dress, close to half of them say women have no choice but to accept violence. The survey, conducted by Children's Movement for Civic Awareness (CMCA), a Bengaluru-based NGO, covered about 10,000 high-school and college students from 11 cities across the country.

On the question of democracy, 50 per cent of the respondents preferred military rule to democracy. The same number insisted that migrants should go back 'home'. "The state the country is in, we need an authoritative leader. We need someone who tells us what to do", said Soumitra, a student.

However, there were other who held the opposite point of view. "I am disappointed. We will be the future generation, driving the country in different fields. We have to go to our roots and eliminate these things," said Tejashri, a student at



the Welingkar Institute.

The findings of the survey are symptomatic of the times, according to Manjunath Sadashiva, director of CMCA. "This shows that the youth does not have a critical appreciation of the liberties and freedom one enjoys in a democracy. It shows the cynicism and disillusionment with the political scenario, but doesn't

justify the preference for an authoritarian government or military rule," he says.

"Our society is going to be further fragmented. Social tension is going to increase, and not decrease, if these youngsters are not equipped with necessary skills, attitudes and values to live in a multi-cultural democracy," Mr Sadashiva added.

Nuclear Revolution

A Revolution in Values



PROUT advocates another type of revolution [other than palatial] called "nuclear revolution." In nuclear revolution, every aspect of collective life — social, economic, political, cultural, psychic (mental, emotional and intuitional) and spiritual is completely transformed.

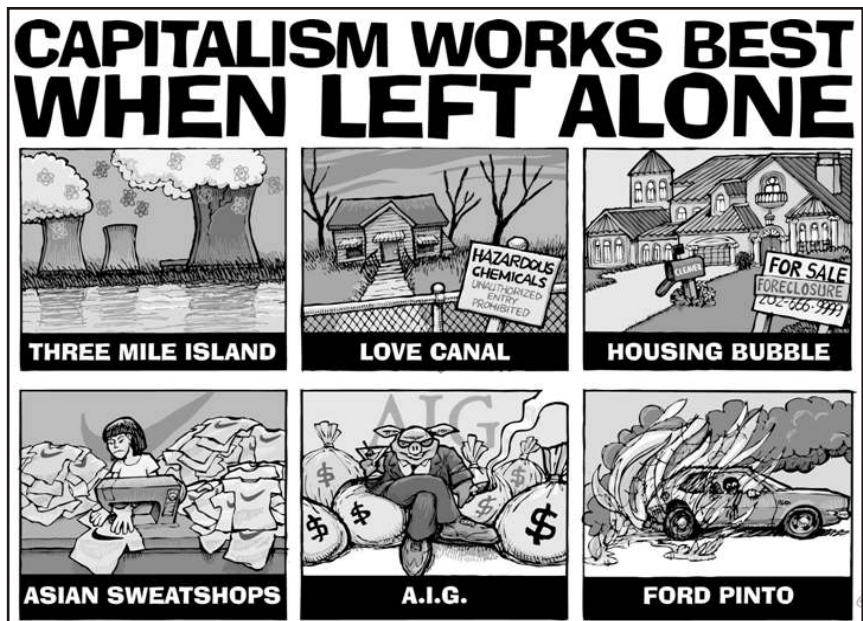


*Ravi Logan

Capitalism has become an outworn system, unable to provide equity, economic empowerment, environmental protection, or deep meaning. The age of capitalism is nearing an end. Humanity cannot long continue under capitalism, and it must move forward, making a transition into a new era. Many people are aware of the acute difficulties in the world, and that profound change is required if solutions to our present problems are to be found. Small steps will no longer suffice. The larger problems facing humanity cannot be solved by change of policy, change of laws, or even change in institutions. What is needed now is change of values. And, in most nations of the world, to bring this change of values, revolution is required.

New Moral and Spiritual Values

United States President George W. Bush popularized the term "regime



change," using this expression in his military campaign to oust Iraq's President Saddam Hussein from power. Regime change can be imposed by a foreign power, as occurred in Iraq, but more

commonly it occurs through coup d'état or mass uprising. When regime change is brought by struggle from within a nation, it is palatial change. Through regime change, one regime is replaced by

another. But this is not a change that has deep impact upon the values of the society; it does not alter the collective psychology. So palatial revolutions are rarely true revolutions. The proper purpose of true revolution is to overcome inertia in the collective psychology. This cannot be done with regime change. Simply deposing one ruling group and installing another will not end the oppression people feel, for the oppressive ideology of greed remains in place, the hollow lifestyle of consumption remains in place; so the fundamental problems still exist. What is required is to give life to a new collective psychology, based on new values, leading to a new era and new capacity for social dynamism. In, "Nuclear Revolution", P.R. Sarkar states PROUT advocates another type of revolution [other than palatial] called "nuclear revolution." In nuclear revolution, every aspect of collective life — social, economic, political, cultural, psychic (mental, emotional and intuitional) and spiritual is completely transformed.

New moral and spiritual values arise in society which provide the impetus for accelerated social progress. The old era is replaced by a new era; one collective psychology is replaced by another. This type of revolution results in all-round development and social progress. [Discourse on "Nuclear Revolution"]

As Sarkar points out, nuclear revolution brings transformation in all aspects of social expression — "social, economic, political, cultural, psychic (mental, emotional and intuitional) and spiritual." This comprehensive transformation occurs because nuclear revolution brings change in the core values of the society: "New moral and spiritual values arise..." When values shift in the moral and spiritual realm, their effects spread into all arenas of social expression.

In nuclear revolution there is a deep cultural and ideological shift that is first brought deep into the hearts of the people. Their thinking changes, and then political change happens as a result. Nuclear revolution doesn't start with

political change; political change follows naturally in its wake. It is because the hearts and minds of people begin to want something that they get mobilized. When the time is right, if there is hope and a vision of a way forward, then the people will rush to it.

Values of the New Martial Era

New values do not arise in a well-functioning society. If people do not feel oppressed, or their progress stifled, then the values that underlie the society are not questioned. It is when society stagnates and problems become extensive that people begin to question the norms at the heart of their collective existence. When there is no other way to overcome social stagnancy and social ills, then out of necessity the old ways are challenged and new values arise.

In the late medieval era, the enterprising spirit that arose from the village craftsmen and merchants who began to compete to produce higher quality goods brought social progress. The early merchant society was a progressive advance



for the human society. But this was long ago. The system of competitive enterprise that once brought dynamic improvement in the quality of life has become a plutocracy, a tyranny of the wealthy. The common people are oppressed the power of the meta-corporations whose operations that span the globe. The big capitalists live by their greed-driven pursuit of profits; they care little for the collective welfare. They go against the needs of the people, and so they are falling. The capitalist dominated era lurches towards its demise. The people's allegiance to capitalist values is waning; the center does not hold. The disillusionment with capitalism will only deepen until, eventually, the collective desire for change brings a new age.

In the flow of the social cycle, the capitalist age is followed by the martial, or warrior, age. This new martial age will not express itself as in the past. It will not be an age of warfare, of conquest and domination. But it will be an age in which the characteristic values of the martial class will become prominent in the collective psychology. It is this class which will determine the predominant values and the approach of the society. In the capitalist society, the value is on personal enterprise and accumulation of wealth. In the martial society, by contrast, the dominant values are duty and honor. The martial society is a well-ordered society, as people uphold their social duty, their collective responsibility. There is not the extravagant individualistic indulgence of capitalist society, but instead a strong sense of duty – duty to one's close relations, duty to one's community, and duty to the society. A sense of duty to collective interests comes before the pursuit of personal gain.

Under capitalism there has been a neglect of individuals, communities, and the environment. This has caused much insecurity and suffering. The reaction that is growing to this neglect will



naturally give momentum to the rise of martial values, to values of duty and honor. The martial class psychology is not one that gives honor to those who act out of personal interest; honor is given to those who act out a sense of duty to the community. And — as was present in many indigenous warrior cultures — duty to the natural world may also be valued. The martial psychology values collective strength. It does not find strength in a disunited society, in a society of individuals; strength lies in a well-knit collectivity, in community and in family. It is the security of tight social bonds that is natural to their way of life. In the present age, the pursuit of individual interest has eroded once strong bonds that provided people with support, security and human warmth. In capitalist society, very few people are now embraced within a clan or tribe. In many places, there is no longer even the close bonds of the large extended family. In some societies, the norm has become the nuclear family, and with more and more people living in separated families, or completely on their own, having none to rely upon. In the new collective psychology, the society will value strong community, strong collectivity, with all embraced and cared for. The

value will not be each for themselves, but all moving together – not in forced regimentation, but in unity amidst our diversity.

The martial psychology also values a well-disciplined social order. It will not tolerate the anarchy of global capitalism, it will not allow the corporations license to bring harm in the quest for profit; it will impose needed discipline. Proper control will be exercised over those aspects of social and economic life that have potential for harmful effects. Industries will not be allowed to pollute the water and air. Banks will be tightly regulated. No cartels will be allowed to control valuable resources needed by all. The rights of other species to exist will be protected. And so forth. The new values that are called for by the crisis of capitalism are those same values that are inherent in the collective psychology of the martial class. These are the values that will shape the collective psychology of the new era. Each nation may vary how it expresses these values, and each society will have additional values that define their ethnic or national identity. Ethnicity and nationality will still be there. But the broad values of the martial class are ones that will define the collective psychology of the coming age.

There will still be merchants;

there will still be entrepreneurs; there will still be industry and commerce; there will still be a vital economy. In all societies there is need for economic enterprise; in all societies, there are goods and services to trade. These economic functions will go on, but the core values of the society will shift. The glory will not be in becoming an economic giant and being admired because you have become wealthy. A person's worth in a martial society will be measured by honor and duty. These new values, as P.R. Sarkar says, will bring transformation in every arena of life. In social life, there will come to be greater unity and importance given to social obligations. In economic life, production will be for human need, not just for monetary gain; and all aspects of economic activity will be closely regulated to prevent harm. In cultural life, creative expression will be for collective inspiration, not simply for indulgent self-expression. In the psychic arena, the importance given to collective duty will give people an expanded sense of purpose in life, and the tight social bonds will give them a greater sense of security.

Universalism

The defining characteristic of nuclear revolution is that there is a revolution in the core values that lie at the nucleus of social expression. When the values at the center of social life change, there naturally follows a transformation in the outer expression of the society, a transformation in all arenas of life.

But there is a yet deeper conception of nuclear revolution — one that lies beyond a change of the class values that give fundamental shape to the collective psychology. P. R. Sarkar has said:

Among all the types of revolution, nuclear revolution is the best. The nucleus of creation is Cosmic Consciousness. It is also the goal of revolutionaries, and whatever they do by way of revolution with this goal in mind, leads them to the culminating point of their life's march. Revolution

must have an ideological goal. In essence, revolution means controlling all the three nuclei of the universe — physical, psychic and spiritual. [“Talks on PROUT”] In this deeper conception of nuclear revolution, the goal is not simply to bring the change of age, to replace the dominance of the values of one class with those of another. Nuclear revolution, in its deeper sense, is to align the goals at the nucleus of the society with collective movement toward the Cosmic Nucleus. At this level, nuclear revolution is no longer just physical and psychic in scope, but embraces a spiritual dimension as well.

Properly conceived, ideology is that which provides human beings with inspiration and guidance in their journey toward the spiritual goal of their existence — toward the spiritual realization that is the “culminating point of their life's march.” The guiding objective of nuclear revolution, then, embraces an ideological goal, a spiritual goal, so that human life can be supported in its progress toward fulfillment.

This spiritual dimension of nuclear revolution has collective benefit, as well as individual benefit. The benefit to individuals is a social order that supports progress toward spiritual transcendence. The benefit to the collective is a common identity that can assure global unity.

Globalization is taking place with an irrepressible momentum. The people of this planet are becoming more and more connected, more and more interdependent. A fiscal crisis in one part of the world may jeopardize global financial stability. Unrestrained use of coal power in a few populous countries accelerates the climate change that affects all humanity. A few terrorist actions force the global air transport system to be burdened with tight security measures. It is no longer possible for humanity to be divided, each nation or group pursuing its own interests at the expense of the others. To move forward we must recognize our universal humanity and our

interconnected destiny. Universalism must become the value that defines our fundamental humanity. We must come to identify first with our common humanity, with the different national or ethnic groupings cooperating together for the common welfare of the global humanity.

Universalism is the primary new value that must influence the humanity's collective psychology. Universalism arises most solidly out of a spiritual ideology of life. Universalism is the natural outlook of those whose goal is the Cosmic Consciousness and finds its expression in service to all living beings and non-living beings also.

Sadvipras and Nuclear Revolution

The revolution that brings the post-capitalist age will be initiated by intellectuals who have become disgruntled with conditions under capitalism and who feel a passionate desire for change. And their efforts may be aided by disgruntled elements in the martial class.

But nuclear revolution is not the undertaking of the reform-minded intellectuals and warriors alone. Perhaps they can bring a change of age from the capitalist to post-capitalist era. But they are less equipped to instill in the collective psychology the ideal of universalism.

For this, the sadvipras must play a prominent role. The sadvipra embodies the spirit of universalism. There is not an intellectual embrace of universalism. It is a universalism that is the outer expression of their spiritual realization of wholeness. It is the universalism of the seeker of the Cosmic Nucleus. With this inner realization comes a great force of love for all creation, selflessly expressed in their social action. This selfless love of the sadvipra has great power to move the society, to change the collective psychology, to shift the values, and to align the social ideology with the core longings of our humanity.

93 Farmers Committed Suicide in 45 Days in Marathwada Region

* Mohammed Akhef

AURANGABAD: Forty-five days, 93 suicides. 2015 has started quite ominously for farmers in the perennially parched Marathwada region and activists blamed the fickle weather and the delay in release of government compensation for this.

The divisional commissioner has reported as many as 93 farmers' suicides in Marathwada in the last 45 days since January 1. Last year, the region had reported 569 farmers' suicides as against 207 in 2013.

A committee of each taluka comprising the tehsildar, police officer, taluka agriculture officer, sarpanch and a panchayat samiti member probes a suicide case to confirm if the death was due to debt burden. A farmer committing suicide is eligible for compensation only if he possesses land and is debt-ridden. Moreover, he should have taken loans only from either nationalized or co-operative banks or registered money-lenders. There has to be follow up from the banks concerned for the repayment of the loan.

Divisional commissioner Umakant Dangat said, "Farmer suicide is one of the biggest challenges before the administration. Crop failure and debts are considered the main reasons for farmers' suicide. This is common in an area where the single crop pattern is in practice. Ensuring water security for the farmers via



water management is the solution to the problem in a region like Marathwada."

He added that the farmers should be introduced to some sustainable means of farming system. Agriculture here needs to be supplemented by allied activities like vegetable production, dairy, so that farmer suicides are brought down to a great extent.

Of the total farmers' suicides committed this year in the region, 26 have been reported from Beed, closely followed by Nanded (20) and Osmanabad (18). Parbhani has reported one farmer suicide, while Jalna, Hingoli, Aurangabad and Latur districts have reported three, four, nine and 12 farmer suicides, respectively.

"The delay in distribution of

compensation is the biggest reason for the farmers to take the extreme step. Besides, the vicious cycle of crop loan in combination with erratic monsoon in the region leaves the farmers with no option but to take the extreme step," said farmer activist Jayajirao Suryawanshi.

Of the 93 deaths, the administration has 26 cases pending for inquiry because of which compensation has not been granted. District collector Naval Kishor Ram said, "Once a farmer suicide is reported, we send it to the block level committee including tehsildar, police inspector and agriculture officer. There are two levels of inquiries conducted and they ideally take at least one month. We ensure there is no delay in the release of compensation."



* Arun Prakash

This year's Union budget presented by NDA Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on February 28, was almost like the previous government's. Though the government was new after 10 years of UPA rule, their second budget is once again totally tilted in favor of the rich and went against the marginalized sections who form the majority of the society. This was of course not surprising as it was largely in line with the NDA's pro-corporate stance.

Neglecting the Poor

In India where more and more people employed in informal (unorganized) sector, not much has been done to increase social security measures like health, education or to improve the living conditions of poor through investing in housing. Allocations to key ministries



Words like 'development' and 'infrastructure' paint a rosy picture. Infrastructure such as the roads, highways, railways benefits corporates much more than the poor. No highway or industrial corridor is of use to them as much as a road constructed in their village.



BUDGET 2015

SERIOUS QUESTIONS ON GOVERNMENT'S WILL TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES

responsible for implementing policies for the marginalized sections have been reduced. Planned expenditure for this year has been reduced by Rs. 1,09,723 crores from

Rs. 5,75,000 crores the previous year to Rs. 4,65,277 crores. This reduction in effect implies that government has consciously decided to spend less for the

betterment of people. To compound the problem, last two years a huge amount of planned expenditure was not carried forward in this budget. In the financial year 2012-13, the

amount earmarked to be spent on public work and schemes was Rs. 5,21,025 crores while the actual utilization was 4,13,625 crores. Roughly 20% of funds earmarked for development schemes for people was not spent and lapsed. And, in the financial year 2013-14 roughly 18% of funds lapsed - the plan budget was Rs 5,55,322 crores whereas utilization was just Rs 4,53,327 crore i.e. Rs. 101995 Cr (roughly 18%) remained unutilized. These figures indicate that the government has been failing regularly in vigorously pursuing schemes meant for development of the people. This raises a serious question over its political will towards reducing inequalities in this country.

Tradeoffs Corporates

Vis a Vis Public

While in this year’s budget corporate tax has been reduced from 30 to 25% along with an increase in the service tax by 2%. This step however, leads to as before from shifting the financial burden (in terms of taxation) on to the larger public while providing humongous benefits to a few corporates. Giving tax exemptions to corporates leads to huge loss in revenues as the profits are quite large. Also, the amount spent on corporates is not just restricted to forgoing revenues but also includes other benefits like subsidies in consumption of other resources like land, water, electricity. Hence, the amount of money that the government actually spends for the corporates is much more than mere forgone revenues. In fact, it may be added that the labour reforms initiated by the government wherein contractual form of labour is being promoted is also a way of making the human resource cheaper for the corporates to use and afford.

Rosy Picture

By pronouncing words like ‘development’ and ‘infrastructure’ a rosy picture has been painted. The infrastructure such as the roads, highways, railways benefits the corporates much more than the poor. These help the corporates to reach

The labour reforms initiated by the government wherein contractual form of labour is being promoted is also a way of making the human resource cheaper for the corporates to use and afford.

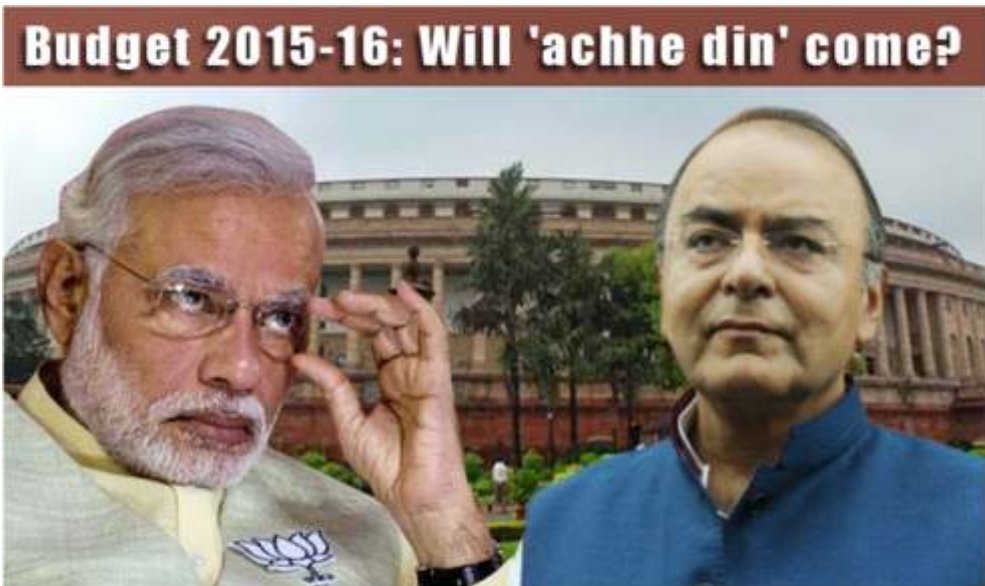
remote areas and exploit natural resources more often than not at the cost of environment. Infrastructure development should focus on serving the poor and no highway or industrial corridor is of use to them as much as a road constructed in their village. While spending on irrigation is certainly required, unless the government allots land to the landless its true benefits will never reach the poor and marginalized.

Dalits and Adivasis Hardest Hit

As per Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA), which works towards the elimination of caste-based discrimination, the Budget has severely fallen short on its fiscal

promises and takes away 57% per cent of state money meant for welfare schemes for Dalits and Adivasis. The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), the most important budgetary components for Dalits and Tribals started in 1979, became necessary as Dalits and Tribals were continuously denied their adequate share of government funds essentially required for their development. This year, Dalits have been allocated only Rs 30,850 crore, while the allocation is only Rs 19,980 crore for Adivasis. However, as per the SCSP/TSP Guidelines, the SCs should be allocated 16.6% of the Plan Outlay, which amounts to Rs 77,236 crore towards SCSP and the STs should be allocated 8.6% of the Plan Outlay, which amounts to Rs 40,014 crore towards TSP. Dalits, therefore, have been denied a total of 61% of the due amount under the SCSP, and 53% has been denied to Adivasis under TSP. When compared to 2014-15 allocations, SCSP allocation was Rs 43,208 crore and TSP allocation was Rs 26,714 crore, this year’s allocation has reduced.

None can deny the truth that Dalits and Adivasis have been the backbone of economic growth through their sheer contribution to agriculture and infrastructure development in this country.





Can 2015-16 Budget be the defining moment for NDA?



However, it is for all to see that they are paid far below the minimum wage; their health indicators such as infant and maternal mortality rates and the rate of anaemia are very high when compared to others. It is not only ironic but a cruel stroke that the Government instead of protecting them and promoting their development has grossly reduced spending on their welfare.

Women Hit Harder

The Budget hits the SC/ST women very hard, as practically nothing is earmarked for them. Out of the total allocation of Rs 30,850 crore under the SCSP, the allocation for women specific schemes is a meager sum of Rs 73.70 crore – which amounts to 0.23% only! Are Dalit and Adivasi women not in the gamut of ‘Sabka Vikas’? The scenario is much the same when one looks at the Budget allocation under TSP -- a paltry sum of Rs 40 crore i.e. 0.20% only! The only small streak of hope is the allocation of Rs 50 crore for SC Girls’ Hostel! It is also very shocking to note that despite a wave of atrocities against Dalit and Adivasi women, the government turns a blind eye by not earmarking any allocation to Dalit and Adivasi women in the Nirbhaya fund which has a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore.

Education Schemes also a Casualty

This year the allocations have also gone down in the education sector (Ministry of Human Resource Development) to Rs 10194.7 crore under the SCSP and Rs 5486.44 crore under TSP. Allocation in the critical Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC/STs has been reduced from Rs 1904.78 crore to Rs 1599 crore. Allocations to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Scheme and in Higher education for SCs and STs have also been reduced. The new Government on whom much hope rested has really missed the boat to reach out to the Dalits and Adivasis! This Budget could have provided real relief to the poor and marginalized sections of society who face atrocities, discrimination, poor health, lack of education and unemployment, but no concrete and satisfactory measures have been taken to improve their lot.

Where is the money going? The answer is not far to seek – it is going to the corporates with corporate tax being reduced from 30% to 25%. After pushing for various ordinances in past few months which will invariably favour the corporates, it was in fact essential for the government to push

for reduction of corporate tax so as to supplement its scheme fully. While on one hand it is planning to make a law to catch black money, it has seen to it that more profits occur to the wealthiest in form of reduced taxation. This is under the mistaken belief of trickledown economics that more the corporate houses are favoured, more investments would be made by them and more jobs would be created which would benefit the poor. But as the renowned economist John Galbraith rightly ridiculed this fallacy in his inimitable style by saying, “Trickledown economics is like feeding horses oats so that sparrows can eat the dun”.

PROUT Can Make Difference

If the five fundamental principles of PROUT as enunciated by its founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar are followed by the Government in power. PROUT’s economic principles among others ensure that the minimum necessities of life i.e. food clothing and shelter must be guaranteed to all human beings, by providing everyone with sufficient purchasing capacity – only then things will be different. And this can only happen when political leaders have genuine love for the people.

Precariats In India

Globalization and Changing Employment Relations

* Shalu Nigam

Introduction

The Prime Minister of India recently announced the paradigm shift in the labour laws to boost manufacturing and facilitate the ease of doing business. In the process, the plight of workers was blatantly ignored. However, this was not the first instance of an initiative to reform policies and laws relating to land, labour and capital. These have remained contentious issues since independence and there is clear division between interest of common masses and those of the government as well as of the business sector. With diminishing access to land, capital or permanent

employment in the capitalistic globalized world, most of the people are compelled to take up work on contractual basis. Earlier, contract workers were hired to do peripheral non-skilled jobs. However, today, more and more people with education and skills are joining the band of 'contract workers' or 'Precariats'. And the situation is becoming worse for those working as contractual workers or Precariats in the changing economic environment, specifically in countries like India, where other social security measures are almost non-existent. This paper looks at the expansion of 'Precariats' in the

Globalization is intensifying inequalities where one percent of the world population is capitalizing on the rich dividends while the rest are toiling hard without any protection or benefits.



given social context of globalization, privatization and labour reforms, which is being advanced to expand business to the extent that economic exigencies have surpassed social justice.

What is Meant By Plutonomy and Precariat Living Approach?

Noam Chomsky in his recent work suggested that the society is divided into two groups: Plutonomy and Precariat. Chomsky explained that these terms were used by the Citi Bank Group while advising their investors to increase their profits. In this system, the term Plutonomy refers to the luxurious life style of wealthy group of one percent of

people in the world who have access to all the resources and are immune to any economic transition. The rest, vast majority of population is living in precarious conditions, therefore are called as Precariats. This theory propounds that in order to maintain the aristocracy of one percent of the population, 'greater worker insecurity' must be imposed on the rest. According to this explanation, "if workers are insecure they won't ask for higher wages, they won't go on strike, they won't call on benefits, they will serve the masters gladly and passively. And that is optimal for 'corporation's' economic health." Corporations, therefore, in connivance with state as well as rich and affluent are imposing situations in which majority of population is compelled to survive in precarious living conditions. Though the capital is dependent on competitiveness, profitability, skills, talents, abilities and efficiency of Precariats, yet this workforce is oppressed and exploited through the 'process of precariatization'. The corporate organizations today, are boasting of their profits and cost cutting strategies while maximizing outputs and potentials with minimal cost at the incessant insecurities of this mounting army of precariats. Globalization, therefore, is intensifying inequalities where one percent of the world population is capitalizing on the rich dividends while the rest are toiling hard without any protection or benefits. In fact, the neoliberal order is developing a new set of demands and expectations from these workers and creating a situation where they are forced to work in exploitative conditions. Precariats, over the world are being paid low wages, are struggling to survive, facing insecurities, have no control over the work they are supposed to do and are anticipating a future full of vulnerabilities and uncertainties. The ILO's convention on Decent Work or for that matter any such document or charter on worker's rights remains merely on papers



because there is no system yet visualized to mitigate the appalling, unstable, insecure precarious situation in which precariats are compelled to survive.

Who are the Precariats in India?

In India, Precariats are often termed as 'contract workers' because they work in precarious conditions where insecurity and unpredictability prevail. These workers are hired on contractual basis. They sell their labour yet, are denied their basic rights to minimum wages, or to demand for proper work conditions, deprived of their rights to social security, and above all the right to raise voice against any exploitation. They are often engaged in hazardous occupations which could jeopardize their health and safety. Precariats are in susceptible positions because they are often unorganized. They engage with a particular organization for a short period, therefore hardly are in position to join of form unions. An artifact of neoliberal regime, precariats are different from casual labour as they are 'expected to live a life of unstable labour and unstable living'. The difference between Precariats and those who work as permanent workers lies in terms of employee-employer relationship and the method of wage payment. 'Precariats' are forced into indirect employment relationships. Unlike

direct labour, contract workers neither appear on the muster roll of the establishment nor are paid directly. Earlier, people with low skills or education were hired as contract workers in India to do jobs that are peripheral in nature. Now, with the advent of globalization, educated, skilled, middle class people are joining the increasing band of 'Precariats'. The contract system through which Precariats are hired is often based on triangular relationship between the organization, the contractors and the worker. However, at times, 'Precariats' are also hired directly on contractual commonly known as 'hire and fire' contracts. They are hired for short periods, where contracts are renewed for fixed intervals, till the time their services are required and then are sacked when organization no longer require them – a process which empowers employers rather than strengthen the workers. Unlike the manner in which proletariat was exploited in capitalist economy, Precariats in the neo-liberalized economy are engaged in insecure work conditions, frequently moving in and out of jobs, working on contractual basis, and at times, with no explicitly defined terms. In such a transient work situation, employers have a choice to exploit helplessness and hardship of workers. Vulnerability augments because

Precariats are under the constant threat of losing their job. For a precariat the hope that s/he may be absorbed within the organization, be regularized and may get a permanent status in the uncertain world of work does not exist. Consequently, in extreme cases, their lives become so agonizing that people are compelled to take harsh measures. This pattern has been observed in several places in India where driven by combination of factors such as extreme poverty, over work, precarious employment or layoff, crushing debts, harassment from private money-lenders and their goons are the causes due to which workers and their families were forced to commit suicide. In spite of such grave circumstances, today, everywhere, work is constantly being contracted or outsourced. Precariats are recruited at all income levels to do the job - in private sector, in public sector, in academics where PhD

degree holders or the faculty are hired on adjunct or temporary basis, in non-profit sector, in small organizations and in giant corporations. Hired as consultants, adhoc, freelancers, temporary workers, contingent workers, those working on project basis or on task based assignments, or by varied other designations, they perform similar or rather more work than the staff enrolled on permanent basis. They are expected to work outside the remunerated hours and must constantly engage themselves in looking for new jobs. The period of employment of precariats varies from half a day to single day or for few weeks or months depending on the nature of work. In this episodic form of employment, the work arrangement is transient, volatile, fragile and unilateral rather than being stable, reciprocal or mutual. This is a ruthless form of oppression where 'precariats' loses control over time and over the use of their

capabilities. Globalization, therefore, is thriving on the vulnerabilities of precariats. When workers are in dire need of job, they do not fight for proper wages as for them 'getting something is much better than earning nothing'. The relationships are mediated by structural inequalities of gender, class and caste. People from vulnerable groups including women have low bargaining power and in such terrifying situations they further are denied their rights to negotiate. Also, for a woman precariat, the work never ends owing to manifold discrimination. Coping with work and home, caught in a volatile situation at the work place, entrapped in rough schedule of stress and scarcity, the situation becomes tough. Work instability, irregular income, erratic work hours, and unstructured work all combine to make the situation unpredictable thus leading to a



situation where women constantly vacillate between domestic crisis and workplace misery. Developing and maintaining network to constantly look out for new assignments or upgrading skills in such enigmatic conditions becomes problematic because of time lag. Harassment, maltreatment, exploitation are used as tools to abuse the vulnerability of women precariats within workplace.

Why the Army of Precariats is Rising Across the Globe?

Globalization is creating a new system of exploitation that is different and much more intense and harsher than its antecedent version of capitalistic economy. In this uneven and exploitative arrangement of informal economy, businesses gain financially but socially it is an unfriendly and anti-people model. More and more people are losing their livelihoods and employment due to restructuring of economy to suit the need of handful. According to the report by ILO on Global Employment Patterns in 2012, globally, employment to people ratio is declining and large masses of people are compelled to live in

deployment, focus on core competencies, etc., deployed by the corporations constitute advantages for business, but it also leading to the growth of precarious living conditions for many. Expedited by technology, the neoliberal regime is adding on to the vulnerability of precariats. Google co-founder Eric Schmidt while expressing his concerns opined that “As more routine tasks are automated, this will lead to much more part-time work in caring and creative industries. The classic 9-5 job will be redefined.” He points to technology as the major culprit shaping and redefining the world of work in such a way that is resulting in job loss. Further, the concept of flexibility of labour or contractualization of workforce is responsible for creating a system that is anti workers. Flexibility entails that organizations can hire people on contractual basis or may outsource the work. However, this is a deceitful strategy that has been utilized to diminish the bargaining power of workers. Positions are filled with no in-built security but with the 'until further notice' clause. In the public and the private institutions this tyrannical practice

is being used to gain control as well as domination over workers intensifying power imbalance between worker and employer. The risks that larger institutions used to have earlier are now being shifted on workers. According to Zygmunt Bauman, “The disembodied labour of the software era no longer ties down capital: it allows capital to be exterritorial, volatile and fickle. Disembodiment of labour augurs weightlessness of capital. Their mutual dependency has been broken unilaterally; while the capacity to labour is as before incomplete and unfulfillable if left alone, and dependent on the presence of capital for its fulfilment, the reverse does not apply any more. Capital travels hopefully, counting on brief profitable adventures and confident that there will be no shortage of them or of partners to share them with. Capital can travel fast and travel light and its lightness and motility have turned into the paramount source of uncertainty for all the rest. This has become the present-day basis of domination and the principal factor of social divisions”. In a nut shell, it may be said that the changing work situations due to economic alterations and technological revolution in the globalized world has accentuated inequalities, sharpened vulnerabilities and deepened uncertainties.

Contract Workers in India in Pre 90s

In the broader Indian context, historically, the concept of employing contract workers was prevalent when the small businesses hired them as it was an economically viable option from the perspective of an employer. The system of contract labour was convenient as it denied workers of their status as workmen, therefore enabling employers to defy all liabilities towards them. It proposed a form of disguised employment where it is easier to resolve issues related to unionization, demand for facilities, or for sharing profits and gain



control over recruitment, as employment relationship can be easily denied. In short, employers could acquire complete control over workplace without any legal hassles. During the colonial period, the British employers utilized the services of middlemen who helped them to recruit, manage and control labour, acting as an interface for the Britishers to deal with the diverse yet cumbersome issues relating to caste, language, religion etc. Provisions were made in the Penal Code and Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, 1859 was enacted that made the breach of service conditions by contract labour criminally liable. These provisions were often abused by the employers against the contract workers. Based on the observations relating to the misuse of the law, the Whitely Commission in 1860 recommended the abolition of contract labour. However, the practice of contract labour system continued in the independent India. Later, several Committees and Commissions were formulated to assess the conditions of contract labour. Most of these were of the view that the conditions of contract labourers were abysmal and therefore recommended to abolish the contract labour system. The Supreme Court of India in its landmark judgement in the matter of Standard Vacuum Refinery Company versus their Workmen stipulated conditions under which contract labour should not be employed. The concerns of policy planners for the protection of contract workers from exploitation during the period led to the enactment of Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970. Later, several decisions by the Supreme Court analyzed the situation of contract labour and regularization of workers hired on contract basis in both public and private sector. A few of the decisions favoured contract workers however there were others which hardly grant any relief. The litigation also involves instrumentality of the State as a model employer in perpetuating



unjust contract labour system. Nonetheless, during later decades many of the reports by the labour commission and other such bodies refused to make any comment on regularization or abolition of contract labour. The situation today is that the process of invisibilisation of workers continued today in spite of litigation, reform and advocacy. The process of Precariatization in the post-liberalization phase took an ugly shape marginalizing more and more workers, adversely affecting millions of families, depriving workers their right to livelihood, employment and of decent living.

Intensification of Vulnerabilities of Precariats Post 90s

The neo liberal regime introduced in India during 90s altered the workplace conditions and transformed the relationship between the worker and the employer. Neoliberal policies propounded stringent competition and in the demand to drive up profits, labour rights are violated both, implicitly and explicitly. Privatization demands that the rigid labour laws which impede efficiency and profitability of the business must be changed. However, what is neglected is the most vital aspect of production – the

human resources. In the zeal to develop robust economy, standard labour contracts are violated while welfare measures and social protections are reduced leading to further deterioration of already vulnerable workforce. In fact, many alterations that took place at global level due to neo liberal regime also severely affected the local situation and local population. With the advent of globalization, the production process was fragmented into various parts and outsourced or distributed to different outside agencies. Precariats emerged out of this division of the work. The lean production system was conceptualized initially in order to 'right-size' the organization with the objective of reducing the manpower cost. In the process, the system for creating new jobs was mired. Workers were divided into two uneven groups – core and periphery. Initially, the non-core operations were seen as non-productive and therefore these were outsourced to lower the investments. However, now with the changing economic situation, even regular operational and production jobs are also being increasingly assigned to contract workers. Today, Precariats are engaged to carry out the most sophisticated, hazardous, sensitive and skilled, core operational



activities. The neoliberal order has altered the employer-employee relationship making it more vague, abstract and indirect. Gorz in 1982 has argued that “changes in the production process had produced a majority ‘non class’ encompassing ‘all those who have been expelled from production... or whose capacities are under-employed as a result of the automation and computerisation of intellectual work.’” Recession further increased the situation of precarity as the organizations struggled to manage the costs, evidently the workers’ security and protection vanished. During the past decade and a half, after liberalization, a large workforce has been retrenched from formal sector. There were no legal barriers that could prevent the public or private sector companies to do so. Strategies like offering voluntary retirement schemes besides lockout have been used to restructure business organizations, to reduce the cost and to ‘increase the productivity’. Surplus labour from

the formal sector is being pushed into the informal sector. Informalisation in its twin form – out-sourcing and lay-offs denied many workers of their rights to meaningful and decent employment. The situation became so intense that in many sectors today there are seventy percent contract workers and 30 percent are on the permanent muster roll of the company. Studies reveal that a vast majority of contractual workers are engaged in mining and construction sector without any formal contract. Also, even in large-scale production units 60 percent workers in regular production work are hired on contract basis, as temporary workers or as trainees. The recent trend is that many MNCs are now turning to the practice where employees are generally removed from the regular payroll and then re-hired on contract basis for doing the same work they were doing earlier. The National Sample Survey Organisation estimated that 7.2 million people were thrown out of

the formal sector workforce in India from 2011 to 2013. This scenario has severely affected the quality of employment and raised several questions about employment sustainability. Even now, these workers who were forced out, the emerging masses of precariats hardly have any job or income security. Those who joined informal sector as precariats primarily receive a consolidated wage or salary with no additional contribution towards Employees’ Provident Fund, Employees’ State Insurance, Gratuity or the New Pension Scheme. Malpractices by local unorganised contractors further exploit these workers. Lack of long-term association with the enterprise and non existence of an employer-employee relation or employee – employee affiliation nullifies the possibility of collective bargaining. Presently, the number of precariats is increasing not only in unorganized sector but also in organized sector where work is constantly being outsourced or

contracted. A study conducted by VV Giri National Labour Institute in 2011, found that that 30 per cent of all workers in the private sector and 32 per cent in the public sector are employed via contractors. It is estimated that this trend has grown in past few months and now 55 per cent of public sector jobs and 45 per cent of all private sector jobs employ contract workers. Approximately 1.4 million precariats are working on short term fixed contract as teachers in primary and secondary schools, office clerks, protective and personal care assistants. Government, ministries and other public sector units are engaging people on contract basis on a large scale. Around 6.9 million of the 12.3 million temporary workers in the government sector are working in various programmes such as Integrated Child Development Services (2.5 million working as Anganwadi workers and helpers), National Rural Health Mission (ASHA workers who have been termed as honorary workers or voluntary workers), National Rural Livelihood Mission and other programmes. The wage differential is also much higher in the public sector than in the private sector. These workers, hired to do regular jobs, are paid less than one tenth of wages a permanent worker receives. The public sector and the government therefore is a major violator of the worker's right instead of a defender of their rights as citizens. Also, through forcing privatization and enhancing private sector participation by selling off public assets, the state gave away its monopoly and empowered market forces while deterring the rights of employees and citizens. In the altering socio-economic climate, Precariats have developed a distinct relation with state as "they have fewer and weaker social, economic, cultural, social and political rights than others". According to Guy Standing, "The precariat is the first mass class in history that has systematically been losing rights built up for citizens". They are

'denizens' or citizens who are being denied one or more rights. With the increasing vulnerabilities created through precarious work conditions and denial of basic rights, the struggle of workers is also gaining ground and evolving at many places. Many such peoples' resurgence movements have been reported during recent years. For example, the Singur and Nandigram struggles against Tata's Nano, agitation of workers in Jhargram in Midnapore, in West Bengal against Jindal Group, POSCO struggle in Odisha, Anti SEZ movements in Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat and Karnataka all were initiated against anti-people policies of state through land acquisition by businesses and focus of the government on creating SEZs. Honda Workers' Struggle in Manesar against exploitative casual labour practice started in 2005 and grew stronger recently in the wake of casualization of labour. Similarly, Hyundai Motors in Chennai, MRF in Tamil Nadu, Pricol in Coimbatore, Nestle in Uttaranchal, Rico Auto and

Sunbeam, General Motor in Gujarat, all are dealing with worker struggles that have been initiated by workers who are struggling against exploitative practices commenced by these companies. These dissents are emerging out of anger, frustrations, needs and aspirations of working class where illiterate or educated, unemployed or underemployed people are coming together and collecting their energy to confront regressive structures of inequality. The changing economy is therefore giving rise to new relationships and new vulnerabilities and transforming social relations at the work place replacing old version of worker – employer ties.

Way Forward

At micro level as well at macro scale, globalization has created misery for the masses, accentuated inequalities and developed a vicious circle of vulnerability for those who are on the margins. In such a precarious situation where education or skills cannot guarantee a secure job, workers are compelled





Revolution in Hong Kong, Arab Spring, Tahrir Square, Gezi Park in Istanbul, the anti-austerity protests in Athens all are emerging where collective voices are raised against unfair practices. Most of them are demanding social and economic security thus raising hope through social engineering. They all are the part of the “primitive rebels”, as termed by late historian Eric Hobsbawm for the phase of an emerging class, seeking a path of recognition, representation and redistribution. These voices may herald strategic action against commodification of work and life. Therefore, it may

to take extreme measures and where more and more people are ending up being vulnerable and insecure, there is a need to reconsider the existing circumstances. At the policy level, guaranteeing economic and employment security becomes necessary to restore faith in democratic system of governance. The dynamic relationship between state, labour and capital needs to be re-examined in the current context rather than pressurizing for labour reform with inadequate legal backing or safety net for precariats subjecting them to whims and fancies of market. Gorz has elaborated on the concept of guaranteed social income independent from labour. Similarly, Guy Standing in his chapter on ‘Politics of Paradise’ has argued for provision of Basic Income approach. In a nutshell, there is a need to create a concept of guaranteed social security as a right. More specifically in a country like India – where common security measures like unemployment allowance, sickness insurance or other such welfare policies do not exist – an unconditional, universal allowance, may be created that can guarantee basic survival. The reason

being that the payment of basic wages, unemployment allowance, paid medical leave, income and employment security cannot be seen simply as labour costs. These are critical provisions that people need, to maintain a dignified life as workers and citizens. At the same time, there is a need to redistribute wealth which can be made possible by ending the subsidies given to the corporate organizations. Imposing taxes on affluent organizations and utilizing it to provide the social benefits to the masses is another step that may help to narrow down economic and social inequality. Further, the tool of collective bargaining is losing its meaning in the climate created by the neoliberal regime where trade unions are weakening. Yet, uncertainties are also harbinger of change and marginality is a site for resistance. This is evident from the emergence of new form of movements across the globe. Using latest technological tools like internet and mobiles, the young generation, though unknown to each other, is occupying streets, roads, public spaces and digital spaces to create new revolutions. From the Occupy Movement to Los indignados in Spain, the Umbrella

be said that the workers are not passive victims of exploitation and they do have the capacity to raise their voice and exercise agency. As explained by Chomsky, “...If it does, the historic reversal that began in the 1970s could become irreversible. That’s where we’re heading. And the Occupy movement is the first real, major, popular reaction that could avert this. But it’s going to be necessary to face the fact that it’s a long, hard struggle. You don’t win victories tomorrow. You have to form the structures that will be sustained, that will go on through hard times and can win major victories. And there are a lot of things that can be done”. The situation needs to be changed. As Marx proclaims for the unity of workers, in this changing economy there is a need to reframe the slogan, ‘Let the Precariats of the world unite’!

The Author is a Precariat, hailing from and working in a third world economy. This paper is based on her experience of working over the years and dealing with the Public sector, Private sector, MNC, Nonprofit and Academic sectors in India.

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Among the “Aam Aadmi” is the “Aam Bachha”, whose needs require special attention since budget analysis undertaken have shown how children’s rights have remained on the periphery, while they constitute 40% of the country’s population.



POLITICS, PAISA OR PRIORITIES

WHERE WOULD CHILDREN FIT INTO THE 2015-16 UNION BUDGET?

* Bharti Ali and Kumar Shailabh

Recently, suspecting organised trafficking in children, the Maharashtra government announced its plan to conduct DNA tests on children found with women begging on the streets. Surprisingly however, nobody ever questions why the established child protection mechanisms fail in the first place to ensure children a safe and secure environment. Even designing a response, everybody seems to forget that at the end of the day it is all about investing in child rights holistically; giving adequate space to children’s rights in the national and state budgets and ensuring effective utilisation of allocated funds!

The upcoming 2015-16 Union Budget will be the second opportunity for the BJP led government in the Centre to take its development agenda forward. The government has already highlighted its priority areas for the budget and has talked about significant tax reforms, smart cities, skill development, women’s security,



budget for the social sector, among other things. But this time they will be expected to be more cautious in their planning as the “Aam Aadmi” can no longer be ignored!

Among the “Aam Aadmi” is the “Aam Bachha”, whose needs require special attention since budget analysis undertaken by HAQ: Centre for Child Rights and other groups working towards strengthening governance and

accountability have shown how children’s rights have remained on the periphery, while they constitute 40% of the country’s population.

How the Union Budget 2014-15 Failed Children: Some Facts and Figures...

1) *A constant decrease in the share of children in Union Budget*

HAQ’s budget for children analysis for the last 15 years shows



that children have never received more than 5 per cent of the total Union Budget allocation. In 2014-15, out of every 100 Rupees allocated in the Union Budget, the share of children was only four rupees and 52 paise.

While the overall budget allocations increased by 7.78 per cent as against the previous year, share of children dipped from 4.64 per cent in 2013-14 to 4.52 per cent in 2014-15.

2) Disparity in the allocations towards various child related sectors is a cause for concern.

Despite recognition of child protection as a critical agenda in the last two five year plans, it received only 4 paise of every 100 Rupees in the Union Budget 2014-15.

Resonating its concern over India's performance on child protection, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) reviewing India's report observed,

“The budgetary allocations do not adequately take into consideration child protection needs. There is also mismanagement of allocated resources, a problem which is exacerbated by a high level of corruption and the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems”.

It is alarming to see that the child health sector received only 16 paise out of every 100 rupees in the Union Budget 2014-15.

We must note that India is far from reaching the WHO standard of 3 per cent expenditure of its GDP on health as currently the over all public health expenditure in India is just 1 per cent of its GDP. Moreover, time has come to review the appropriateness of the allocations being made.

Even a comparatively heavy allocation for School Education failed to address critical issues

Allocation for school education reduced in 2014-15 as

against 2013-14 at a time when various studies like the ASER Reports and the National Achievement Surveys have been highlighting low learning-achievement levels in school. Further, the problem of retention and dropout at secondary education, lack of infrastructure in schools, dysfunctional toilets and taps, dearth of trained teachers, and violation of RTE norms continue to be major concerns.

3) Face Value Allocations for Flagship Schemes

In 2014-15, the 'Integrated Child Development Scheme' (ICDS) budget observed a shortfall of INR 8338 Crore against the financial requirements set out in the ICDS Mission Mode document developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

While 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan' (SSA) witnessed a minimal increase of just INR 500 Crore compared to the previous year

(INR 27,758 Crore in 2014-15), allocation for 'Mid Day Meal' remained unchanged in the 2014-15 budget. Understandably, the trend of shortfall in the number of teachers and majority of teachers recruited under the RTE being untrained/semi-trained contract recruits continues. Despite clear RTE norms, investment in quality is a huge gap and last year's budgetary allocations for SSA failed to address such issues.

Even as the Prime Minister recently launched the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana' to save the girl child, one of the biggest criticisms of the scheme has been poor funding. Experts went to the extent of questioning the government's priorities, planning and intent, comparing the allocation of INR 100 Crore for this scheme with INR 200 Crore allocated for building the statue of Sardar Patel.

While there was a welcome 33.33 per cent increase in the allocation for 'Integrated Child Protection Scheme' (ICPS) in the 2014-15 budget, it was still well below the amount needed for universalisation of this programme in all districts with all the infrastructure and human resources in place. Implementation of ICPS has been very tardy as functionaries appointed under ICPS on contract basis are not receiving their salaries for months together leading to low motivation, high levels of attrition and poor implementation of the scheme. Further, no additional funds have been provided for functioning of the implementing agencies, which also creates hurdles in the implementation.

Programme implementation costs seldom include the cost of activities and tasks assigned to the implementing bodies. For example, how will the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Councils perform their tasks if there is no distinct budget for it. Similarly, cost of setting up a Special POCSO Court in every district, cost of translators, interpreters, psychologists and such other experts to be consulted by the

POCSO Courts and such other arrangements to be made for conducting child-sensitive hearings, cost of setting up Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in every district, cost of inter-state and inter-country rescue and rehabilitation efforts expected to be made by the AHTUs, cost of investigation to be carried out by AHTUs etc. must become a clear and distinct component in the upcoming budget.

4) Underutilisation of allocations create hurdle in effective implementation

India has the largest number of children suffering from malnutrition in the world. Neo-natal mortality, falling sex ratio, children suffering from preventable diseases, increasing violence against children, retention of children in schools are all a matter of concern and need to be tackled head on. This requires careful planning, adequate resource allocation and proper utilisation.

Unfortunately however, even the little that is allocated often remains unspent. This lack of attention to budget allocations and spending for children is reflected in the outcomes for children. Proper utilization would let us assess the adequacy of allocations and help change the implementation strategy if required.

As a precursor to the budget session 2015-16, it is necessary to draw attention of the Finance Minister to the expectations already shared with him by various interest groups, including those representing children.

Key Policies (Policy Asks and Expectations from Union Budget 2015-16, January 2015, People's Budget Initiative)

1) Augment resources for children's schemes in the 2015-16 Union Budget to bring about improvement in the outcome indicators for children

2) Give child protection concerns top priority and increase allocations to strengthen protection systems

3) Step-up investments under

Restructured ICDS for addressing the rights of the young under-served children, and convert all Anganwadi Centres into Day Care Centres

4) Initiate measures to check under-spending in schemes for children and ensure timely disbursement of funds

5) Link outlays for child rights schemes to outcomes by adding suitable heads to Outcome Budget document that focuses on improvement in outcomes of various schemes

Conclusion

In the midst of reforms and the development agenda, the upcoming budget must finance its commitment of 'every right for every child' adequately. While focussing on the major flagship schemes, the government must not marginalise children of the already marginalised communities. HAQ strongly feels that the real mainstreaming of children will not be possible without addressing the needs of children of varied background with varied needs, holistic planning, adequate financing and proper implementation measures in place.

The previous government promised inclusive growth. With Niti Aayog replacing the Planning Commission, many minds wonder if and how this commitment will be carried forward. Nevertheless, what needs to be borne in mind is the Government of India's own submission in its third and fourth combined periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stating that "many of the outcome indicators for children point to the disadvantaged status of children, the proportion of Child Budget in the Union Budget seems inadequate". Can the present government afford to ignore this and will it do so is something we will get to see as the Union Budget 2015-16 unfurls.

Bharti Ali is the Co-Director and Kumar Shailabh is the Programme Coordinator of HAQ: Centre for Child Rights at HAQ)

PBI Movement for Landless People



Boudh, (Odisha) : The activists of PROUTIST BLOC, INDIA (PBI), Boudh District Unit launched a movement against the misbehavior and violation of the responsibilities on the issue of the landless people by the Revenue Inspector, Baghiapada Circle in Boudh district.

The PBI launched the movement in 3 Tehsils (Boudh, Kantamal and Harbhanga) to raise the demands of the landless people. As per the government rule and circular every landless person has the right to get 2 acres of land free of cost. About 3300 landless families had applied for the land under the leadership of PBI Cadres like Aditya Pradhan, Suresh Pradhan, Sridhar Ghibla, Dharanidhar

Lauria, Golekha Danayak, Arun Pradhan, Susanta Hota, Kedarnath Sahoo, Santos Kumar Sahoo, Rajanikant Sahoo, Usatlal, Purandar Naik, Sraban Kumar, Nimai, Satyananda Sahu and Sumant Bagha.

Due to the misbehavior of the RI with the landless applicants, the PBI cadres organized a procession and ‘Ganadharna’ (Mass Protest) for an indefinite period till they got their entitlement.

Under the leadership of Dharanidhar Lauria and Golekha Danayak (PROUTISTS), about 390 landless people started a procession from Durgamandap to the RI Office, Baghiapada of Boudh Tehsil. The participants shouted the slogans expressing their demands.

PBI activist Kedarnath Sahoo said, “Any illegal action and misbehavior with the public will not be tolerated, and PBI will fight for justice.”

Revenue Inspector and Tehsildar, Boudh Tehsil assured that the survey work will start very soon. At the same time, RI gave a written apology and assurance in the presence of Tehsildar, DSP, social activists and the PBI workers – Dharanidhar and Golekha Danayak. It was therefore decided to call off the protest.



Intensive Prout Pracar by Proutist Universal

Proutist Universal has taken up Intensive Prout Pracar. One such Parikrama was organized in Tripura, in Bhojpur area of Bihar and more such programmes are being planned for Purulia District from 30th March to 2nd April. A big rally will start from Anandanagar on 30th morning and will end at Purulia on 2nd April. More than 2000 people are expected to participate in this rally Pracar meeting at Purulia. A Memorandum will be submitted to the District Magistrate on this occasion.

The Prout Parikrama will include four wheelers decorated with Prout Tabloid. It will be led by cavalcade of motorcycles, flags and festoons. One lac leaflets and 10,000 posters are being printed for distribution on this occasion. Extensive wall writing is being planned by Prout activists and will be covering 25 villages and towns.

Student and Youth Programs

The Student and Youth Federation is organizing three big programs from 11-12 April at Siliguri, 18-19 April at Guwahati and 29-30 April at Agartala. The program will merge into 30th April Rally that is taken out every 30th April at Agartala to protest against Bijan Setu Massacre.

Farmers' Federation

The UPFF is organizing a State Level Conference near Sainthia in Birbhum district of West Bengal on 18-19 April. Farmers from all over West Bengal are going to attend the two day conference that includes a rally on 18th April.

More programs are being taken up by Proutists in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Tripura.

Proutist Universal appeals to all its well wishers to come forward and help in this small but sincere effort.

For more details, please write to satyanisthananda@gmail.com.

Protest Rally by Girls Proutists



This year is the 50th anniversary of the Womens' Welfare Department of AMPS which was created with mission to serve, protect and liberate the poor and neglected women of the world. Girls Proutists has been a vital part of this mission by taking action to protest against crimes of women rooted in the lack of economic democracy freedom that women face in their homes. The barbarism women have to face has passed all bounds when an elderly nun was raped in Ranaghat (Krishnanagar District) of West Bengal, All know the barbarism of the past when more than 30 years ago a nun of Ananda Marga was murdered in broad daylight in the Bijan Setu mass killing. The current climate only has become more worse.

On 17th March, activists of Girls Proutists and WWD took out a protest rally against the war being waged on women in our society today. In Kolkata, they marched from College Square to Dharmtala. There speeches were made about the current state of society in which atrocities on women are a common event. The participants made a commitment to fight this degraded culture of patriarchy with the ideal of a new society based on dignity and justice. Without economic dignity, no dignity is possible. Without uprooting patriarchy, the safety of women will always be under threat. A memorandum was also submitted to the Governor on this issue.

The Local print media alongwith Times of India, Bangla Statesman, Rajsthan Patrika and Sanmarg news paper widely covered the event. NDTV and ABP Ananda also highlighted the protest rally.

I Have Become a Hero

Shrii Shrii A´nandamu´rti

Life is to fight. Now when one starts fight, then he becomes a man in human structure. He is no longer a brute in human structure, he is a man in human structure. And in that phase he says: “O Lord, by Your mercy, by Your grace, I have become a hero, I have started fighting against debasing forces functioning within my mind, functioning within my family, functioning within the society. So by Your grace I have become a hero. I am a hero, I am a *viira*, thou art Vireshvara [Lord of Heroes].”

So in the second phase of *sádhana* (spiritual practice), Pashupati becomes Vireshvara. It is another name of Lord Shiva. Pashupati becomes Vireshvara. And as a result of further fight, when this fighting tendency, this belligerent tendency, becomes his wont, in that case He becomes a deva (god), he is called a deva.

Dyotate kriidate yasmádyate dyotate divi;

Tasmát deva iti proktah stúyate sarvadevataeh.

[The vibrational manifestations emanating from the Supreme Nucleus are known as devatás or devas; and these devatás address that Supreme Nucleus as “(Maha)deva”. He with His powers vibrates the entire universe, makes the entire universe dance; and He by dint of His occult and supra-occult powers brings everything back onto His lap.]

So he becomes a deva. And he says: “O Lord, by Your mercy I have become a deva, a god.” (Deva means “god in human structure”). “And Thou art my Lord, Thou art Mahádeva.” So in the third stage that very Lord becomes Mahádeva. Pashupati becomes Vireshvara, Vireshvara becomes Mahádeva – according to the status or phase of *sádhana* of the spiritual aspirant.

Now, this fight, this fight against the eccentric force fighting, eccentric force functioning, in the world, is actually the *sádhana*. You know, in each and every structure, there are two forces, the centripetal force and the centrifugal force. In the case of this Cosmological world, in the case of this Cosmological system, in the case of this Brahma Cakra, the centripetal force, the centre-seeking force, is called *vidyá* [enlightenment], and the centrifugal force is called *avidyá* [nescience]. So this spiritual practice, or intuitional practice, is a fight between *vidyá* and *avidyá*. A *sádhaka* (spiritual aspirant) is to strengthen his *vidyá*, his centripetal force, in his movement towards the nave of this Cosmological order, towards the nucleus of this Cosmological order – because of the fact that this Cosmological nucleus is the nucleus of all other nuclei of the universe. It is the abode of supreme beatitude. All other nuclei of the universe are sheltered in Him. (That’s why he is called *Nárayana*. “Ayana” means “shelter”. And “Nára” means “Operative Principle”). There is no other way. If one wants peace of permanent nature, if one has developed the longing for supreme beatitude, one has no alternative but to move towards this Supreme Nucleus; and this movement is *sádhana*. And while moving towards this Supreme Nucleus, one will have to fight against the centrifugal force, the *avidyá shakti*.

In this fight against avidyá shakti one must have sufficient weapons. You know, a soldier requires weapons, and sadhana is a fight. In your internal sphere, that is, in your mind, you should have ten weapons. Those ten weapons are five Yama and five Niyama [moral principles]. And similarly, while fighting against evil forces in this crude physicality, you should have ultra-modern physical weapons also. Those who want disarmament and those who want to ban the atom bomb are not friends of human society. They do not want to accelerate the speed of human society. Rather they want to retard its progress. Weapons you must have, but you should have control over your body and mind. There must not be any abuse or misuse of your weapons.

Now, in this progress, that is, in the realm of intuitionalism, you should have ten internal weapons – Yama and Niyama – and your progress in sadhana depends on jinána, karma and bhakti. Your progress is effected by jinána and karma.

Tribute to an Ardent Proutist



Sh. Indra Vashishtha (22.04.1931 - 15.12.2014)

Indra Vashishta, an ardent Proutist, was born in Lucknow, India on April, 22, 1931. He passed away on December 15, 2014 after a long spell of illness. Eldest among three brothers and two sisters he was greatly influenced by his mother Ananda Bharati, a great soul who had dedicated her life for the cause of suffering humanity. After completing his studies, he joined Gestetner, a reputed MNC. It was a lucrative job with many perks. In 1964, he got wedded to the philosophy of PROUT, and began by dedicating most of his time for activities of Prout. This however, cost him his job but it made him more determined towards his commitment to the propagation of Prout. During the dark days following the Emergency of 1975, the founder of Prout, Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar was implicated in false cases, imprisoned, tortured and even poisoned. There was outrage all over the world for this heinous act and many Proutists immolated themselves to draw the attention of the world. During this period, Shri Vashishta was a source of great support to the Editor of Prout Journal, Acharya Santosanda Avadhuta in organising demonstrations to draw public attention all over Delhi - the centre of this politically motivated intrigue - against this blatant injustice, demanding the immediate release of Prout's founder and quashing all false cases. He also donated his scooter to help in these endeavours.

For these activities, Shri Vashishta was arrested from Mumbai and incarcerated for 18 months there. His wife, Smt. Sheela Vashishtha, a staunch Proutist, too was arrested in Delhi and was forced to languish in Tihar Jail. This happened when their daughter's marriage was fixed and in an extraordinary situation, the two had to bless their daughter and son in law from different prisons in India.

Shri Vashishta's contribution to Prout will be remembered for all times to come and shall inspire fellow Proutists to establish a society based on Prout's philosophy and economic principles in the not too distant future.

Despite of his failing health, he remained actively involved in Prout activities till the very end. He has contributed greatly to the publication of Prout Journal. We at Prout Journal resolve to make it a household publication taking it's ideas to every home.

On behalf of all Proutists, we pay our deepest reverence to the departed soul and pray for his peaceful journey ahead.

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