

PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis

Womanhood ♀ in Shackles

Human beings are not lifeless matter, their collective structures is based on cooperation of a special type. It should not be based on the relation of master and servant, but on mutual cordiality. It should be a coordinated cooperation and not a subordinated one.

PROUT

Progressive Utilization Theory

Cry of the Suffering Humanity

**A
Vibrant
Magazine
which
Informs
&
Inspires**

What is PROUT :

PROUT is an acronym for the Progressive Utilization Theory. Conceptualized in 1959 by Indian Philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, PROUT is a viable alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches has adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity. PROUT seeks a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development and cultural expression.

Combining the wisdom of spirituality, the struggle for self-reliance, and the spirit of economic democracy, Proutist intellectuals and activists are attempting to create a new civilizational discourse. PROUT news-magazine aims at conveying comprehensive and visionary goals of PROUT Philosophy.

PROUT magazine invites scientists, economists, politicians, artists, intellectuals and others to join us in the creation of a new, spiritually bonded society by propagating and popularising unambiguous elevating thoughts. Through Proutistic views and Neo Humanistic analysis, it strives to serve as beacon for the benighted civilization of our times.

Main principles of PROUT and Neo-Humanism :

Neo-humanism expands the humanistic love for all human beings to include love and respect for all creation - plants, animals and even inanimate objects. Neo-humanism provides a philosophical basis for creating a new era of ecological balance, planetary citizenship and cosmic kinship.

Basic necessities guaranteed to all : People can not strive toward their highest human aspirations if they are lacking the basic requirements of life. PROUT believes that access to food, shelter, clothing, education and medical care are fundamental human rights which must be guaranteed to all.

Balanced economy : Prout advocates regional self-reliance, cooperatively owned and managed businesses, local control of large scale key industries, and limits on the individual accumulation of excessive wealth.

Women's Right : PROUT encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. PROUT's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women.

Cultural Diversity : In the spirit of universal fellowship PROUT encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition.

World Government : PROUT supports the creation of world government with a global constitution and a common penal code.

For both civilization and science, intellectual knowledge is indispensable. Spiritual or intuitional development is possible through the happy blending between civilization and science. - Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Editor

A'ca'rya Santosananda Avadhuta

Contributory Editor

A'ca'rya Maheshvarananda Avadhuta

Editorial Board

A'c Vedaprajnananda Avadhuta

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Ganga Grace

Sarabjit Prakash

Correspondents

Kanhu Charan Behura

Rajesh Singh

Dr. Gopal Shastri

Layout & Design

Pranav Koul

Bhagwan Das

Head Office

Prout Bhawan, JC-48,
 Khirki Extension Main Road,
 Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017
 Mobile No. : 09212199658
 Email : prout.am@gmail.com

General Manager

Ramkesh Choudhary - 9350860274

Circulation Manager

Rajiv - 09650055058

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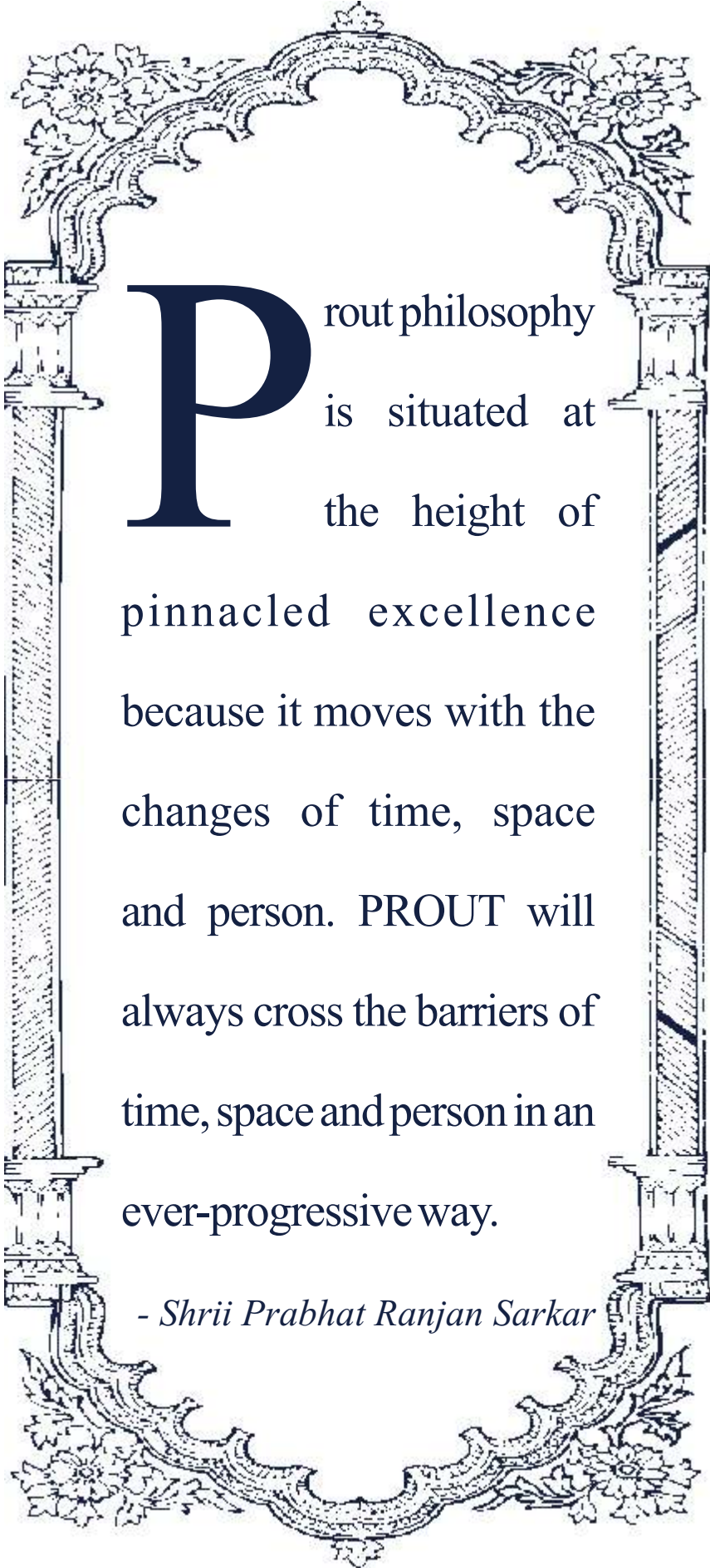
For Enquiries**Please Contact**

Mob. : 9650055058, 9350860274

Email. : proutcustomercare@gmail.com

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.



ProuT philosophy is situated at the height of pinnacled excellence because it moves with the changes of time, space and person. PROUT will always cross the barriers of time, space and person in an ever-progressive way.

- *Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar*

From the **Editor's**
Desk

Moralism is Call of the Day

The horrifying incident inside a bus in Delhi perpetrated on a young girl whose promising future and life was cut short provoked an outrage in India and many other parts of the world. The savagery of the attack and the government's weak response had provoked demonstrations throughout India, continuing yesterday, over the perceived indifference of the country's ruling elite and its failure to protect women. The Chief Justice of India made public his grief by saying that this incident has shocked the conscience of the nation. He even went on to suggest that judicial delays may be one of the causes of marked increase in such cases and this in turn makes deterrence meaningless and directed that fast track courts be set up all over India to deal with offences related to women. As one angry young woman rightly pointed out in a television interview, "Why ask women to dress this way and not that way, why not ask men to change their mindsets". Since the attack and protests that followed, in which a policeman died and a journalist was killed, the government announced a review of rape laws and measures to reduce sexual assaults. Brinda Karat, an outspoken MP, said it was a shame that it took "a death of such a brave, healthy woman to wake India and wake up this government." Official statistics show that Delhi is India's "rape capital," with 414 rapes in 2010 and more than 600 this year. Only one in three reported cases ends in a conviction. Many believe that victims are so afraid of the police that only one in 50 rapes is registered. Neither deterrent capital punishment, nor life imprisonment nor fast track courts are answers. What is required is creating a society that respects women, with staunch moralists at the helm. But what do we have today - degeneration in political leadership. Our National and Regional parties give tickets to MPs and MLAs with criminal records. Out of 4835 sitting MPs and MLAs in the country, 1448 have criminal cases against them. 6 MLAs face rape charges, and 36 are charged with offences related to women. These they themselves have stated in sworn affidavits before the Election Commission. Especially with respect to making women feel safe we also find moral degeneration at all levels of governance - from a constable on beat duty to clerks in courts. There are many others in all levels of government. Small wonder such immoral incidents still continue.

PROUT's founder Shrii PR Sarkar gave the proper insight. "The status of women in prehistoric human society was the same as that of independent females of any living species. The women, just like the men, spent their days in the lap of nature singing, dancing, laughing and playing. These conditions continued throughout the period when there was no human society as such and continued into the matriarchal age. But when the patriarchal social system came into being, the rights of women began gradually to be curtailed. The doctrine of male superiority and female suppression is against nature. Those who propagated these were not only unprincipled, they were also well aware of the inherent loopholes in their arguments. That is why they propagated all these ideas in the name of God". He ends on an optimistic note, "When women will develop a sense of self-respect and be like other spirited creatures, they will cast aside the veils of servitude. They will then be enabled to expand their role in serving society in a balanced and consolidated way".

But for this, men have to come to the forefront to give women what is their just dues not in a master - servant relationship but in a warm and cordial atmosphere of free human beings. And in that society labeled neither patriarchal nor matriarchal men and women work will together but hand in hand to solve problems of the day all over the world.



JUSTICE

The second part about Justice by Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar explains in greater detail about how criminals are formed. Poverty is one of the causes, momentary weakness and finally crimes out of cruelty. He has given very clear and logical reasons to explain these complex issues that bother society today. He has also explained in detail about what constitutes virtue and vice, the present and required judicial system, a universal penal code and the need for a spiritual ideal – without which society can never move ahead and is bound to stagnate.

Anil Srivastava, Mumbai

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

Thank you for sharing this excellent and highly informative article. I would like to know more about the history of Netaji and the politics surrounding it, which has fascinated me for a long time.

Sandeep, Singapore by email

A very well researched article about Netaji – the leader of leaders. The life and beliefs of Subhas Bose shows the kind of man he was. It was unfortunate for India that history happened the way it did and Netaji could not lead India after she got independence. The inspirational page about his ideals written in his own hand are real eye openers for the youth of this country today, who know very little about this great man. Also the back page with Shrii Sarkar’s ‘Mission’ was very inspiring indeed.

Sardar Singh, Rupar

NEOHUMANISTIC EDUCATION

Marcus Bussey has excelled himself in his treatise on how to educate people so that they can become Sadvipras. The practice of Neohumanism together with Prout has clear social effects which he rightly says lies at the heart of universalism. The curriculum he has designed and the pointers to the future are quite fascinating.

Yeshua Clemens, Seattle by email

SOCIETAL PROGRESS

Ravi Logan’s definition what progress actually means is quite right. He has explained in detail about the new conception of Neohumanistic progress, Spiritual progress and the liberation of the intellect that rises to the vast skies of universalism makes for serious consideration by students and thinkers of social philosophy alike.

Arjun Auditto, Bengaluru

PROUT EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The article on transformation of universities in Malaysia by Sohail Inayatullah made interesting reading. Many questions have been asked and many answered. The overall recommendations to Malaysian authorities interfaced with theories on education by Shrii Sarkar, tried out practically by the writer and the reactions thereof gives hope for the future.

Sonali Lakhar, Pune

PROUT MEDICAL MANIFESTO

Steven Landau’s details about the ills of the American Healthcare systems and how Prout can come to the rescue was very thought provoking. His suggestions are very correct and must be tried out.

Jean Stanfest, Ottawa by email

COLLAPSE OF THE INDIAN RUPEE

A thought provoking article by Dr. Susmit Kumar. Bad days seem to be coming unless Prout economics come to the rescue.

SS Rathore, Jaipur

KAUN BANEGA CROREPATI

Kunal Bhalla’s expose is a real eye opener. It’s true that only the game show owners become crorepatis.

Sharda Sharma, Gorakhpur



Articles / Suggestions Invited

We invite your articles, comments, letters, wit & humour materials etc. on any aspect of human life including Spiritual, Socio-economic, Political, Cultural, Ideological, Educational and local self government. Clips, photographs and cartoons are also welcome.

Please send them at the following address :

Editor, **PROUT**
JC-48, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017
Mobile : 09212199658, 09350860274
Email : prout.am@gmail.com

What Goes Around Comes Around

One day a man saw an old lady, stranded on the side of the road, but even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her. Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe; he looked poor and hungry. He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was those chills which only fear can put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you, ma'am. Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan Anderson."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady, that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt. As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down the window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only just passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid. Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk. The lady asked how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. Bryan never thought twice about being paid. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty, who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way.

He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance they needed, and Bryan added, "And think of me."

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. She went in to grab a bite to eat, and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the whole day couldn't erase. The lady noticed the waitress was nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain and aches change her attitude. The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger. Then she remembered Bryan.

After the lady finished her meal, she paid with a hundred dollar bill. The waitress quickly went to get change for her hundred dollar bill, but the old lady had slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. The waitress wondered where the lady could be. Then she noticed something written on the napkin. There were tears in her eyes when she read what the lady wrote: "You don't owe me anything. I have been there too. Somebody once helped me out, the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here is what you do: Do not let this chain of love end with you."

Under the napkin were four more \$100 bills.

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard. . . . She knew how worried her husband was, and as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, "Everything's going to be all right. I love you, Bryan Anderson."

There is an old saying "What goes around comes around."

Author: Unknown





“ Human beings are not lifeless matter, their collective structures are based on cooperation of a special type. It should not be based on the relation of master and servant, but on mutual cordiality. It should be a coordinated cooperation and not a subordinated one. ”

SHRII PRABHAT RANJAN SARKAR

Womanhood in Shackles

As in the societies of most other species, in human society also females are physically weaker than males. Because their nervous systems are weaker, their minds are also slightly weak. Nevertheless women have no less value in human society than men. Selfish men, however, have disregarded the value of women; they have taken full advantage, and are continuing to take full advantage, of their weakness. Although men have publicly declared that women should be respected as the

mothers of society, they have actually relegated them to the status of domestic cattle and sheep.

In every sphere of life men have either substantially limited the rights of women, or made the ability of women to exercise their rights subject to the whims and caprices of men. Such an attitude never existed among the primitive human beings who lived at the dawn of human history. Nor had primitive men conceived of the deceitful practice of establishing their supremacy by keeping women in bondage in the

name of social purity. Even today among primitive races we do not find significant lack of magnanimity concerning the freedom of women.

By nature human beings are not wicked; rather most people are peace-loving and thus inclined towards personal purity. This inclination of the individual keeps the collective mind pure. Although women enjoy freedom in so-called underdeveloped races, we can observe that there is not even one per cent of the social purity in so-called developed races that there is among those races. When freedom is forcibly curbed a hostile reaction is produced in the mind, and purity rapidly disappears as a result. This is one of the causes of the lack of social purity in the so-called developed societies of today. To try to camouflage this impurity with high-sounding rhetoric or ostentatious religious rituals cannot do any real good for society. Those who want to keep women subservient to men by holding out false hopes or the illusory prospect of heavenly enjoyment in the afterlife, fail to understand that although such false hopes or the lure of heaven may be sufficient to keep women passive or in servitude, no real good can ever come to human society from this. The reason is that if, due to dogma and superstition, half of society is bogged down in a state of inertia, the other half will undoubtedly find progress difficult carrying a heavy, inert burden. In individual life purity is equally necessary for both men and women, and to make this possible real spiritual vision is essential. As long as injustices against either sex exist, purity is impossible.

Everyone should realize that to construct or preserve anything, there must be close cooperative action among the constituent parts. Human beings are not lifeless matter, so not only should all of their collective structures be based on cooperation, but that cooperation must be of a special type. It should not be based on the relation of master and servant, but on mutual cordiality. It should be a coordinated cooperation and not a subordinated one.

What sort of treatment have women received so far? It is very true that women have gradually lost their rights or freedom in certain cases due to lack of competence. There are those who think that, because of this, special abilities are the only criteria for having rights. Such people, however, actually want women to be wageless slaves under the strict supervision of

men. But is it merely due to their lack of competence that women have lost their rights? Have not the overflowing sentiments of their hearts also been partly responsible? Have not women, swayed by their emotions, ignored their own petty interests and gradually given everything – even the high social status that fascinates them – to their husbands, sons and brothers? Is it not reasonable to expect human beings (certainly human beings are not animals) to pay proper respect to such humility and large-heartedness? If a guest arrives unexpectedly, who volunteers to forgo a meal to feed the guest? Who deprives herself first when a delicious dish is prepared? Who leaves home to keep house for others, giving up her paternal property rights (regardless of what the law says)? Are not these observations applicable throughout most of the world? I do not say that men are ordinary human beings and that women are angels; I have only focused on women as human



Late nineteenth century photo of women at the grinding stone

beings and mentioned their special qualities. Does a husband, when his wife is ill, nurse her with as much care as she nurses him when he is ill?

If men wish to prevent helpless widows from remarrying by taking advantage of their sentimental female hearts, they convince those widows that they will be reunited with their late husbands after their deaths – so how can they consider remarrying? Shame on such men! Perhaps such tales may make women, already sentimental, even more so. The prospect of being reunited with the spirit of their deceased husband after their death may induce helpless widows to undertake rigorous lifelong penance, and to fast on every ekādashii [the eleventh day after each new moon and full moon]. Are not those who want to keep women slaves to dogmatic ideas guilty of acting against the dictates of their consciences?

The very idea of heaven and hell is sheer nonsense anyway. Such stupid ideas thrived in the

minds of those who popularized ancient myths, but they have no capacity to find a foundation in the solid ground of rationality. If, however, in order to humour such fools, I accept the existence of heaven and hell, I might ask, "If the spirit of a wicked husband goes to hell and grazes in the fields as a bull, should his virtuous wife also go to hell after her death, become a cow and start grazing beside him?"

Let us end this digression. The main point of the discussion is this: those who take advantage of people's simplicity or ignorance are veritable demons in human form, and those who deceive people by exploiting their sentiments of sacrifice are even worse than demons.

Freedom is attained through struggle. No one offers it on a platter, because freedom is not a gift; it is one's birthright. But as far as the rights which women have lost today, at least so it seems in most countries of the world, a proper socio-psycho-analysis shows, I should say, that women have not really lost their freedom; rather, they have trustingly placed their destiny in the hands of men. This is the plain truth. That is why I cannot but laugh when I see a certain type of snobbish lady, who pretends to be learned, entrust her children to the care of a maidservant or nurse, travel about in a car purchased by her husband, attend meetings, and make lengthy speeches on the freedom of women.

Actually, when there is no question of women's rights having been snatched away, there is no need for a movement styled on the trade-union movement. Whatever responsibility there may be in this regard, it is entirely that of men. If at all a movement is required, it must be implemented by men themselves. 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.

It must always be remembered that freedom, or liberty, and license are not the same thing. The concept of women's freedom is good, but license should not be encouraged in the name of liberty. Giving license to either men or women could destroy the social structure in a short time. Hence those who are the most vocal in proposing the freedom of women must carefully consider the form this proposed freedom shall take.

When we pay recognition to any simple truth, we should not be carried away by sentimentality. Only rationality based on humanism is acceptable. As children of nature, women should have the same access as men to light, air, earth and water. In fact, it is not a matter of granting rights to women, but rather a case of recognizing their rights. If, however, the recognition of women's rights is treated

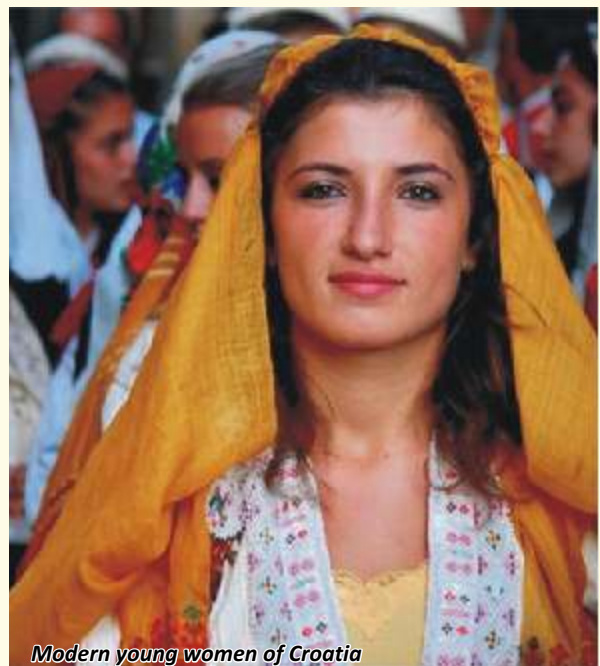
sentimentally,(1) it may result in great social disaster.

The law of inheritance: For example, take the right of inheritance. There are diverse views on the subject among different sections of society around the world. Some people favour women having the sole right of inheritance to the complete exclusion of men; others favour equal distribution between men and women; still others give women only some tiny leftovers and in reality keep everything in men's hands. Behind all these systems there is clearly an attempt to maintain the influence and supremacy of one gender or the other, rather than to demonstrate rational judgement and humanitarian concern.

In fact, a final decision on this issue should be based on the fundamental principle that we will not deprive anyone; we will give equal opportunities to both men and women concerning the right of inheritance. At the same time we will enact laws to ensure the orderly administration and preservation of property in order to reduce the possibility of a breach of domestic peace.

In most countries society is patrilineal. The patrilineal system has some advantage over the matrilineal one. There are two main advantages.

The first advantage stems from the fact that it is not as easy to determine the identity of the father as that of the mother, and in the absence of any direct blood relationship the mother's affection for her children is generally greater than the father's. Under these circumstances the patrilineal system is much better, for it awakens in the father a proper sense of responsibility for his children and precludes the



Modern young women of Croatia

possibility of the children's identity remaining unknown or concealed. And the father is compelled by circumstantial pressure to take responsibility for bringing up his children; and therefore makes an effort to properly preserve the structure of the family. (Among less-developed creatures, fathers rarely take care of their offspring due to the absence of this sort of circumstantial pressure.)

The second advantage of the patrilineal system complements the first. Since the relationship between the father and the child is known, the mother naturally does not feel so very alone in rearing the child. The physical and mental structure of a woman is such that even though she may have all the requisite ability to take care of her children, it is extremely difficult for her to bring them up properly and to adequately provide for food, clothing, education and medical care all alone; at the same time she has to keep her children with her or near her, or else it becomes difficult for the children to survive. Therefore if men, instead of women, take the main responsibility for providing food and clothing, while women, after duly attending to the needs of the children, where possible or in cases of necessity earn money by working either at home or outside, neither the children nor society will be adversely affected in any way.

I do not support the supposed wisdom of those who advise women to spend their lives with ladles, [[tongs]] and spatulas, because this is unrealistic. Necessity often compels women to discard this convention. Such a system may suit a handful of rich or upper middle-class people, but it has no value for day-labourers or the poor. Many of those who loudly advocate equal rights and the freedom of women, in reality keep their women behind a purdah or covered with a burka. Even among such families I have noticed poor housewives going to the market with their husbands to buy and sell, or to the fields, farms or coal mines, voluntarily taking on light work. Evidently, they cannot afford to behave ostentatiously and live indolently behind a lace curtain.

However, there are people who, in the name of giving equal rights to women in all spheres of life, want them to engage in heavy physical and mental labour which is unsuitable for them. Such an outlook

is deplorable. It must be accepted that the physical bodies and nervous systems of women are not as strong as those of men, so men and women cannot work in identical areas. Apart from this, for physical reasons women cannot work in the same way every day of the month, and during pregnancy and the post-delivery period the ability to work strenuously is severely restricted. These points must not be overlooked.

There are many people who sentimentally think that if a few women are made ministers or members of parliament they will serve as shining examples of equal rights and the progress of women. But is this the correct attitude? Will it not be detrimental to society as a whole if rights are granted, or a principle of accelerating progress is adopted, at the expense of competence? The recognition of rights is a legal matter as well as a collective psychological phenomenon, and the only way to expedite progress is to establish a progressive education system. A woman who becomes a minister or an ambassador in any country is not an index of the real status of the women in that country. To raise the standard of women in society is neither so easy nor so cheap.

Since rational analysis leads us to the conclusion that the patrilineal system is better than the matrilineal, the system of inheritance should be structured accordingly. Of course, at the time of drafting the law of inheritance, special precautions must be taken so that nothing is framed in the name of the patrilineal system that will make women slaves fighting for their very survival in the houses of their brothers or brothers-in-law. In other words, after recognizing the equal rights of women to use family property as long as they live and to enjoy a lifelong income from such property, the law of inheritance should be based on the patrilineal system.

The dowry system: Many people regard the dowry system, which is followed in various countries today, as being unfair and unjust towards women. But actually this is not so. The question of justice or injustice to women [[does not arise in relation to the dowry system]].

The problem is primarily economic, although there are secondary causes as well. In some societies, where women do not earn money, they are considered



an economic liability once they are married. At the time of marriage the parents of the groom therefore extract a substantial amount of money or goods from the parents of the bride in order to maintain the wife for the rest of her life. These are the actual facts behind the dowry system. Similarly, in societies where men do not earn money, the parents of the bride receive a substantial dowry from the parents of the bridegroom. Of course a secondary cause of the dowry system arises when there is a disparity between the number of men and women in a particular country or section of society. So in fact, the parents of the bride give a dowry in a particular society only when the subsistence of the woman is dependent on the income of her husband, or where the number of men is less than the number of women. If it is mainly the women who earn the money or if the number of women is less than the number of men, the situation is reversed.

There are those who mistakenly think that the dowry system will cease once the equal rights of daughters to paternal property are recognized. However, it has been noticed that even in societies where daughters are heirs to paternal property, the dowry system has gradually gained prominence for economic and other reasons. Generally very few daughters these days inherit alluring amounts of property from their parents, so it is completely unrealistic to expect that the parents of the groom will relinquish their claim to a dowry in the hope of receiving inherited property. A few daughters from rich or upper middle-class families inherit very substantial properties and therefore do not have any cause for worry, whether the dowry system exists or not. Even the most unattractive daughter of rich parents gets married very easily due to the power of money.

Social interaction: There are diverse views

among those who formulate social codes concerning the free mixing of men and women. It does not require much logic to convince people that the final outcome of free mixing in an undisciplined society is unhealthy. It is also true, however, that the absence of social interaction creates a suppressed longing, a special attraction or an unhealthy curiosity, as does the denial of other desires. This may lead to illicit mixing, which eventually undermines social purity. A system that thwarts social interaction is nothing but an attempt to suppress the mind. Where there is illicit mixing, the only harm done to men is that they degenerate morally, but the damage to women is far greater, because they may be cast out of society in disgrace. Thus on the one hand, men and women will have to be free to mix together socially, while on the other hand, a well-thought-out code of self-control will have to guide their social interaction.

Those who want to keep their daughters away from the influence of modernism, and are therefore reluctant to send them to school and college, perhaps do not realize that long ago the waves of modernism intruded into the privacy of their homes without their knowledge. So their efforts to protect their daughters and themselves by following the custom of purdah and making women wear burkas, are entirely farcical.

The trend of the age is irresistible, for in this too there is dynamism. It is the duty of intelligent people to channelize the trend of the age towards the path of benevolence by applying their intellect. Neither the individual nor the society as a whole is capable of resisting the powerful spirit of the age. It knocks down anyone who tries to thwart it, and proceeds ahead with irresistible speed. Those knocked down and sprawled on the ground stare at it in utter helplessness, with dazed minds and vacant eyes, as it marches by.





Light of a Tigress

One that Awakened a Nation's Conscience

✱ Arun Prakash

This is a story of a young woman of 23 years, the apple of the eye of her parents who after a brave struggle of thirteen days succumbed to injuries perpetrated on her in a most vicious manner on a cold night of December 16, 2012 in Delhi the capital of India. She came from a modest middle class family of Ballia and her parents were a rare model in India for whom the daughter came first and showed the way to her two younger brothers.

For them their 'didi' was a role model. She gave tuitions to supplement her school and college fees, while her parents seeing her academic brilliance took loans to pay for her course as physiotherapist at Dehra Dun and recently she qualified and was working as an intern in a private hospital in North Delhi.

The outrage and protests that unfolded together with the Government's weak and knee jerk reaction is best summed up in the Timeline below:

Suppression of women is against nature ... we have only to look out into this wide world to find sufficient proof. Can anybody drape a burka over a tigress? Is there anyone with enough courage to do it? Can anyone dictate to a tigress - "You cannot cross this boundary?"

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

December 16 - The woman is gang-raped and attacked on a bus in Delhi

December 18 - Angry protestors begin to take to the streets to call for a government crackdown on rape. Protests last for days

December 19 - Three of the men accused of raping the young woman are produced in the court for the first time

December 22 - 72 people are hurt as protestors clash with police in Delhi

December 23 - Indian Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde orders a review of rape laws

December 23 - Three of the accused appear at court with an angry mob calling for the death penalty outside

December 25 - A policeman allegedly trampled during anti-rape protests dies. Eight people are charged with his murder

December 27 - The injured student is flown to Singapore for treatment as her condition worsens

December 29 - She dies after a cardiac arrest and organ failure



Policeman wielding lathi on a woman

give proper assurances, the Government treated it as a law and order problem and used force to stop the protests, resorting to lathi charging, shooting water cannons on cold winter days and tear gas shells, pushing the media out of the scene and shutting down metro rail stations.

Seven metro rail stations in New Delhi were closed on December 22, to discourage protesters from gathering at Raisina Hill. And on the 24th, police blocked roads leading to India Gate and Raisina Hill to prevent possible mass protests. Nine metro stations were closed on that day, affecting thousands of commuters. News reporters were not allowed to reach India Gate and Raisina Hill. In addition Section 144 Cr PC, which disallows assembly of groups larger than five and curfew was imposed near Rashtrapati Bhavan.

After her death, protests were staged all over India, including Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam and Thiruvananthapuram, etc. Many of the mourners carried candles, wore black

dress and some tied black cloth across their mouths. New Year's celebrations were scaled down to a large extent, with the Indian Armed Forces and some clubs and hotels in Delhi cancelling their New Year parties.

Judicial Commission

And on December 22, the Government of India appointed a judicial committee headed by JS Verma, former Chief Justice of India, with a mandate to submit a report, within 30 days, to suggest amendments to criminal law to sternly deal with sexual assault cases. The committee has urged the public in general and particularly eminent jurists, legal professionals, NGOs, women's groups and civil society to share their views, knowledge and experience suggesting possible amendments in the criminal and other relevant laws to provide for quicker investigation,

Water cannons on a cold December day at the Central Secretariat

Protests and Reprisals

Instead of dealing with protestors at a political level and



Police and Rapid Action Force take up positions at India Gate





Her death sparked outrage in India with many taking to New Delhi's streets to demand better protection for women

prosecution, and trial, and also enhanced punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault of an extreme nature against women'. The Committee held its first meeting on December 26, 2012 and it had received more than 6000 emails with suggestions by then.

This horrifying episode united a nation of angry citizens who rallied together demanding a solution to such problems. This rape was not the first and it will not be the last. In fact as events turned out, barring media overdrive it made hardly any difference on the ground. Despite the national and international outcry, gang rapes still continue. Also, the attitudes of the authorities towards rape remain the same. There was the recent suicide by a 17-year-old female gang rape victim. She was gang-raped in November but was pressurised by a police officer to drop the charge and marry one of the perpetrators. Also, a 14-year-old gang rape victim attempted to take her own life; she was put on a ventilator – she too died. The perpetrators for her rape are reported to be on the run. Also recently in West Bengal a 45 year old woman accompanied by her husband was gang raped and then murdered. Her husband tried to fight the attackers but was severely beaten. The Times of India reported that prisoners in Tihar Jail took a mass oath to respect women and stand up for their safety when released. These inmates gave vent to their ire and meted out their

own form of justice by beating the six culprits of December 16 lodged in Tihar.

Worldwide Effect

Its effect was also felt worldwide. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said, "Violence against women must never be accepted, never excused, never tolerated. Every girl and woman has the right to be respected, valued and protected". Indians, living outside India, held their own protests or vigils. Those living in Britain submitted a petition to the Indian High Commission for stricter laws against rapists. They had their own protest in London, at the Mahatma Gandhi Statue, organized by the Pravasi Bharat. In Paris, people participated in a march to the Indian embassy where a petition was handed over asking for action to make India safer for women. In San Francisco, California, civil rights organizations held a candlelit vigil in front of the Indian consulate. On January 3, there was a vigil in Ottawa, Canada. A blog on the Wall Street Journal talks about that while there were women of power in India, other women still have to fight for equal rights. When it comes to rape, there is "blame the victim" mentality.

Young Person of the Year Speaks Out

Expressing grief, Pakistan young women rights' activist Malala Yousufzai who recently recovered in a London hospital from serious



Malala Yousufzai

injuries suffered while taking on the Taliban in Pakistan due to her insistence on women getting proper school education, admonished the Indian government on Twitter for shifting the victim to Singapore, despite her precarious condition. The teenager, who was recently named as Time Young person of the year', succinctly put it "The rapists dumped her on the road and the Government dumped her in a hospital in Singapore – what's the difference". Before Malala, many prominent academics and experts had criticized the government's decision to shift the victim out of India, despite India having one of the best medical facilities in the world. Indian media reported that the decision to transfer the victim overseas was prompted by Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, who had been booed by the protesters for trying to make political capital out of the incident. Dikshit reportedly urged both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde to move the young woman abroad for better treatment'. More likely reason was as noted strategic affairs expert Brahma Chellaney tweeted that "The Intelligence Bureau had suggested to the Centre that if the girl died in Delhi, then it would spark a fresh round of protests in the Capital. This is confirmed by the way the funeral of the young woman was carried out keeping the public in the dark as a secret Government operation in the early hours of the morning of December 30.

A Veteran Reports

An Army veteran and military historian Dr. Anil Athale a retired Colonel writing for 'rediffnews' hit the nail on the head when wrote, "It is the 'tolerance' of eve-teasing and harassment of women that is the starting point of 'social rapes – and it's time to instill fear of the law". This heinous crime has raised several questions that need answers but sadly the media debate has generated more sound than light. Firstly it is a shame that Delhi



Dr. Anil Athale

besides being the national capital is also the rape capital of the country. The number of rape cases in Delhi is almost twice as many as those in Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai put together. Delhi that shares borders with lawless Uttar Pradesh, has much to do with this sorry state of affairs. On a long-term basis, unlike the rest of the country, north India, with the exception of Punjab and to an extent Haryana, has not had any meaningful social reform movement. As Colonel Athale explains, that in Pune where he lives, “Women are free and safe as they stand on the shoulders of social reformers like Agarkar, Phule, Karve and Ambedkar. The reformists faced the ire of traditionalists in the 19th century. Same is the case in southern India, where social reform movements and women's empowerment have a history of over a hundred years. Unfortunately, in most of north India, social reform has been supplanted by politics. Even if the reforms begin today (of which there appears to be no sign), it will take at least a century for the region to catch up”.

MPs & MLAs with Criminal Records

Why is that so? Let's look at our lawmakers first. Following the December 16 incident in a recent PIL praying for suspension of lawmakers with criminal cases against them, the Supreme court was

informed that that out of 4835 MPs and MLAs in the country, 1448 face criminal cases – and they cut across party lines. Among them on such crimes against women; there are 6 MLAs who have actually declared that they have charges of rape against themselves in their sworn affidavits submitted to the Election Commission of India at the time of their election. 36 other MLAs have declared that they have other charges of crimes against women such as outraging the modesty of a woman, assault, insulting the modesty of a woman etc. In all this, UP which borders Delhi tops the list. As if that's not enough there are also 2 MPs, who have declared that they have charges of crimes against women, such as cruelty and intent to outrage a woman's modesty etc. The Supreme Court declined to hear a plea for disqualification of MPs and MLAs charge sheeted for crime against women. The present Election laws give our lawmakers protection and given the ‘compulsion of coalition politics’ there's hardly any hope of laws changing. So judges can't be really blamed for saying that they do not have jurisdiction.

Crimes against Women

“Rapes and crimes against women are of two distinct categories. First one pertains to crime committed by an abnormal person in anonymity and given the prevailing sense of morality that exists today, while there are long term solutions like moral education starting from home and school and rigorous adherence to their tenets, there is no short term immediate solution to stop them. Even stricter laws and deterrent punishments like death would other than assuaging public feelings do little to stop such criminal behaviour. The second, more horrifying and important one that is good reflection of the times we live in today is to see crimes against women as a 'social' evil like gang-rape or collective eve-teasing. To some extent these crimes take place mainly in urban settings where

one feels he can flout social norms in cities which provide 'anonymity' not available in a rural setting where everyone knows everyone and there are social consequences of deviant or criminal behaviour. Rural areas, especially ones that have feudal culture, are also scenes of such crimes. There are other reasons too e.g. loss of family values, lax social control, ineffective policing, titillation by media, horrible role models of leadership, ineffective and slow criminal justice system corroded by corruption, for such behaviour.

Zero Tolerance

Eve-teasing or harassment of women is done brazenly in the open, generally by a group of men. Onlookers look the other way for fear of violence and the victim bears the humiliation silently. The men feel that they can get away with it and it becomes an open invitation to end fear of the law. This is the starting point of 'social rapes'. A detailed study of the rapist's background would surely reveal him to be a habitual eve-teaser. Once a person or a group gets away with this, the next step is molestation and ultimately rape. More than any other city in India, in Delhi every single woman who has had to travel by public transport has faced eve-teasing or molestation. Our largely 'crorepati' and dynastic MPs and political leaders are seemingly unaware of this horrible fact. One reason this problem has remained unaddressed is this disconnect between the 'aam aadmi' (ordinary person) and the 'khaas aadmi' (special person). The Delhi outrage highlighted this glaring contrast between well-protected VIPs and the hapless 'aam aadmi'”.

Practical Suggestions

Anil Athale offers few practical suggestions, “In many small towns of Maharashtra, the police regularly rounded up eve-teasers, tansured their heads and paraded them through streets - it worked. It is time the police adopt this tactic of public humiliation in

metros as well, to catch and punish eve-teasers. As an innovation the police can well make the convict stand at a public square in his own locality with a placard round his neck proclaiming 'I am an Eve-teaser'. To catch eve-teasers, the police should form teams of women police who act as decoys with their male colleagues ready to nab the culprit. In violent areas, the members of such a team should be armed for in the 'katta'-(local firearm) infested areas, criminals do use weapons even against the police force. This is not some fictional suggestion; in my hometown of Pune, a very gutsy IPS lady officer did this successfully. The point is it can be done and once a number of such cases criminals are caught and dealt with in such a summary manner, eve-teasers will be forever scared that the girl that they are trying to tease may well turn out to be a police officer! Nabbing eve-teasers and punishing them promptly will stop them from 'graduating' to rapists. The police also need to adopt similar tactics in the high-end bars and restaurants where the Manu Sharmas and Vikas Yadavs of the infamous Jessica Lal case frequently do what the 'aam-aadmi' does in a DTC bus. How the police and judiciary cope with the 'Do you know who I am?' criminals will define whether India remains a land which upholds the rule of law or not. In earlier times and even today in many parts of our country, the public itself generally takes action against misbehaviour. As to why this laudable trait has vanished is a subject of research for social scientists”.

Punishment for such Crimes

Athale goes on to add, “Some time ago, the media highlighted how Manu Sharma spent his time in prison, being allowed out frequently on parole to play cricket and attend parties. The crimes of rape or acid attacks scar the victim, physically and mentally, for life. Yet, far too often, the perpetrator is let off after two-three years, even less if he has a

political godfather, gets married and leads a normal life. Even if the judicial process is slow, the government has enough powers to strip a person of various citizenship privileges like the Aadhar card, passport and jobs. The police must keep records of such offenders and this must come up in every instance requiring police verification. Once the message goes home that this crime leads to ruination, it will have a deterrent effect. For misbehaviour by the rich and powerful in public places, fines in millions of rupees must be imposed and the victims compensated. Everyone understands money. It is also time the judiciary wakes up and places stringent conditions on parole for heinous crimes, else an indulgent Chief Minister may let the culprit enjoy life in prison as well. One is in agreement with eminent lawyer Ram Jethmalani that the death sentence is no solution. Instead let the criminal be sentenced for life with no parole or remission”.

Nation's Conscience Shaken

The media coverage of crimes against women in overdrive has created an impression as though India tops the list of countries in crimes against women. Nothing can be further from the truth. Countries like the United States have far greater rate of crimes against

women per million than India can ever have! The Indian criminal justice system is in a state of near-breakdown due to judicial delays. A minister in the central cabinet, speaking on television, equated speedy justice with trial by a kangaroo court. It is time to instill the fear of law if we are to survive as a civilised society.

But thankfully the Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir thinks otherwise. In a letter addressed to Chief Justices of High Courts he wrote, “The spontaneous outburst of outrage and anger is a measure of how the incident has left an indelible mark and shaken the conscience of the nation. Rape is not only a physical barbarism, but afflicts the very soul of a victim”. He advised all high courts to set up fast track courts to deal exclusively with offences against women. “The delay in disposing such cases might be one of the factors for rise in crimes against women. Time has come for these cases to be dealt with expeditiously, lest we should fail in our endeavour to arrest the sharp increase of crimes of violence against women”. Also the police needs to send out a clear message to the men of Delhi. And they can use this incident as a starting point. Especially after the CJI's assurance let not this turn into a court case that



Chief Justice Altamas Kabir



takes unduly long to deliver justice to the wronged girl. As a first step all such people must be given salutary punishment, so that anyone would think twice before letting their baser instincts get the better of them and try outraging the modesty of a woman."

PROUT Founder's Views

On the important issue of uplifting of women Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar said, "There are many who think that a few women who are made ministers or members of parliament will serve as the shining examples of equal rights and feminine progress. But is this a

correct outlook? A proper educational system is the only way to expedite progress. A woman of any country who becomes a minister or an ambassador is no index to the real status of the women of that country. In individual life, purity is equally necessary for both men and women, and for that, real spiritual vision is needed. But this is impossible as long as injustice to either of the two sexes exists. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly with one wing". He add, "Women are the mothers of society

and therefore men have a duty to serve women. Men are greatly indebted to them. This is the age that gives importance to the intellect. In this changed social atmosphere, the future of women is bright".

The young woman's fight should not go in vain. Hers is the light of the eye of a tigress that can see in the dark. In this case this light has awakened the nation's conscience. As one protester, 25 year old Aditi Gupta, a commercial pilot rightly points out "It's a much bigger problem with our society. We have not gone beyond the traditions of thousands of years in which women were inferior to men, and we have to change that". For this moral education of all human beings especially men is a must. And this war cannot be fought by women alone. It's heartening to observe the first healthy signs in this regard with many men protestors joining hands with multitudes of women at India Gate, Jantar Mantar and in rest of the country.

Men with high moral values have to come to the forefront, unite and stand shoulder to shoulder with women so that the giant albatross of human civilization soars with both wings in the skies towards a crimson dawn of the future.



Albatross are among the largest of flying birds with wingspans up to 12 feet – they regularly circle the globe

A Failure Analysis Of The US Economy

Workers should be able to work for fewer hours to achieve their production target. They could use their spare time to pursue higher education, leisure, hobbies, vocational training, etc.

✳ **Apekshit Mulay**

Introduction

As failure analysis engineers for companies, our job is to find the root cause of failure and recommend changes in design, process, tests, etc. to fix the problem. This type of analysis has become an important part of semiconductor mass production, which makes electronics cheaper and affordable for consumers. At the same time, mass production helps the manufacturer / producer of parts by increasing their profits. What we need to recognize is that both producers and consumers are vital for the semiconductor industry. Without a healthy demand for the latest electronic gadgets such as smartphones, tablet PCs, hybrid

cars, etc. there would be no incentive for global semiconductor firms to keep investing in the research and development of new technologies that improve the quality of life. While we make a living through the failure analysis of modern-day electronics and keep our jobs, pay for mortgages, groceries, utilities, cars, etc., we also contribute to the demand for other goods by spending our wages. We are workers on one side and consumers on the other. Consumer spending helps create jobs for other services and 70% of the US economy depends on consumer spending [1]. It is the consumer's purchasing capacity that is the best metric of economic performance.

Common Sense Macroeconomics

Producers and Consumers are like two wings of a bird. If either of the wings gets hurt, the bird will no longer be able to fly. If that bird is not nursed quickly and properly, it would be disabled and either die from hunger or fall prey to a predator. With the same analogy, both producers and consumers have to prosper for a robust economy.

Before we get into more details of macro-economics, let us see where the economic profession stands at this juncture. In a recent article in The New York Times, Professor Robert J. Shiller of Yale University and a best-selling author argues that even now we don't



understand what really causes a recession and layoffs [2]. But another best-selling economist, Professor Ravi Batra, seems to have solved the puzzle of recessions by offering a new theory of unemployment. His theory relies on common sense as he argues that recessions and depressions occur when worker productivity keeps rising faster than the economy's average real wage. He demonstrates that this happened in the 1920s, which were followed by a depression. The same thing also occurred during the 2000s and the world has been in The Great Recession since 2007. Batra argues that worker productivity is the main source of supply while wages are the main source of demand. If productivity rises faster than wages, then supply rises faster than demand. This results in overproduction and forces the manufacturer to fire workers. Producers are the suppliers of goods, and consumers generate the demand for these goods. Consumer demand, being dependent on wages, is sustainable only if the consumers as workers earn higher salaries. If the wages of consumers do not catch up with increased supply of goods, the supplier of goods is unable to sell all that he/she has manufactured.

Let us take an example of the semiconductor industry where the semiconductor wafer foundries manufacture tens of thousands of wafers per month. These facilities supply silicon for the semiconductor industry. For a wafer fabrication facility to be profitable, it has to be able to produce as many wafers as possible that meet the Statistical Process Control (SPC) stability metrics and customers' quality requirements when it comes to DPPM (Defective Parts per Million). This ability to mass produce is measured by the productivity of the work force. A wafer foundry, like every other company, wants its employees to be highly productive to maintain a high supply of wafers for its customers.

The wafer fab management pays incentives based on productivity. Now, where does the need come for wafer fab to hire more workers? This occurs only if wafer fab customers demand more goods. Where does the customer demand come from? It comes from the wages of the people. When we have an economy where employed people have high wages or high purchasing capacity, they are able to generate a high demand for goods. Hence, the wages of the workers have to catch up with their productivity. If employees are very productive, that is they work hard and efficiently, they are able to increase the supply of goods into economy with their productivity.

Now, what happens if the wages of the productive workers fail to catch up with their productivity? As a result of the growing gap between wages and productivity, eventually the purchasing capacity of the workers is not able to catch up with the amount of goods that are being manufactured by them. Hence this correlates to a gap between the supply of goods and the sustainable demand for them. In other words, the wage-productivity gap causes a supply-demand gap. In my previous analogy, this hurts one of the two wings of a bird. In other words, the imbalance between oversupply of goods and weak demand for them leads to layoffs at the wafer fabrication facility. This is how an economy is so closely connected to maintaining a sustainable supply and demand of goods. Thus layoffs occur when people's purchasing capacity falls short of the goods that workers produce due to their high productivity.

Consumer and National Debt

Some brilliant minds have devised a way to keep the wages of workers to remain the same or even fall, i.e. not letting wages catch up with their high productivity, but still maintain a high consumer demand. They do this by creating 'consumer debt'. When a consumer is unable to buy much out of their real salary or wage, he/she can buy it using a

credit card or by going into debt with a loan from financial institutions. While relatively stable consumer debt is good for the economy as long as the borrower is able to repay his/her debt within the allotted time frame with interest, what can consumers do when they lose their jobs in a recession, and are not able to find other employment soon? If the consumer is not able to repay his/her debt in time, the increase in interest on the credit card loan wipes out his/her savings, thereby resulting in bankruptcy.

It should be clear that when wages trail productivity, the overall economy suffers because of the reduced purchasing capacity of unemployed workers. If you follow this logic, then it is evident that consumer's purchasing capacity is critical for sustainable demand. Hence, I consider a strong consumer purchasing capacity to be the chief source of high consumer demand, which acts as an engine for economic growth. Thus, the real job creators in a free market economy are not only the producers of goods but also the consumers of goods. Every company estimates its consumer base prior to manufacturing in order to avoid the over-production of goods. Hence, if consumer demand keeps on weakening, then the economy goes into a recession. In that case to avoid a depression, the government has to step in and increase its own spending that makes up for the loss in demand due to lost wages of the laid off workers. The government may also cut tax rates to boost consumer demand. In either case, the budget deficit rises, and may rise very sharply if the wage-productivity gap and hence the supply-demand gap are very high. This is the main reason why the budget deficit rocketed after 2007, so much so that it almost tripled from about \$500 billion in 2007 to \$1.3 trillion in 2011.

Now, if government spending creates jobs, then these workers can jump start the engine of economic

growth by paying off their debts and boosting consumer demand through their real wages. The higher the wages of these workers, the higher will be their purchasing capacity and the higher the consumer demand. This would act as an incentive to the producers/manufacturers to make further investments.

However, if increased government spending does not boost consumer demand and instead goes into the pockets of manufacturers, the manufacturing sector may hire a few more workers because of the extra money it receives from the government stimulus, but that growth will not be sustainable. In fact, a case can be made that the high budget deficit of recent years has mainly helped the manufacturer. For instance, in 2011 the economy generated 1 million new jobs with the help of a budget deficit of \$1.3 trillion. If you divide 1.3 trillion with 1 million, you get 1.3 million. In other words, the government spent an extra \$1.3 million to create one job in the economy. Is this not absurd, given the fact that the average wage is only \$50,000 per year? Thus, the government deficit is now mainly helping the manufacturers, who must be getting

the difference between \$1.3 million and \$50,000 for each person they hire.

As Batra shows, this is what the continued rise in the wage-productivity gap does to an economy. Just 15 years ago, in 1999, we had a budget surplus along with an unemployment rate of less than 5 percent. Today, we have a trillion dollar deficit along with an unemployment rate close to 8 percent.

Free Trade vs Fair Trade

An economy is sustainable when it is able to balance its trade and budget. If any country has a trade deficit (where imports are larger than exports), it leads to a fall in the country's FOREX (FOREign eXchange) reserves (which eventually depreciates its currency). The value of a country's currency is a deciding factor in the standard of living. Hence, a country cannot run year-over-year trade deficits if it wishes to maintain the standard of living of its citizens. Also, high trade deficits result in loss of FOREX reserves, which are important as they determine the buying power of the country's currency.

Let us take an example of a country 'A' where its population has

sufficient purchasing power and can buy everything produced in the nation. But there are some products that are not produced at home and have to be imported from another country 'B'. Hence country 'A' has to pay money [its currency] to buy country B's goods. Either country 'A' has to balance its trade by getting country 'B' currency from a third country 'C', or go on printing its own currency. But there is a limit that country 'B' will accept country 'A's' money. After that country 'A' will have to produce the items within the country, causing huge inflation due to depreciated value of its currency resulting from excess money printing. It is possible to avoid trade deficits through balanced trade policies. Fair trade is more important than Free trade. Free trade implies no import duties imposed by a country on its imported goods. While Free trade works great when trading with countries having nearly similar value of their monetary currencies, it results in high trade deficits when multinational corporations (MNCs) from a rich country make goods for cheap in another country with a significantly lower value of its currency. The MNCs in the United States prefer to manufacture things in low wage countries with cheap currencies, as it is highly profitable. However, in addition to increasing trade deficits, this practice also leads to massive job losses in the home country, especially when jobs are also outsourced.

As a result of this free trade policy, the U.S. economy has been running over half a trillion dollar trade deficit for the past four years [3]. While such a deficit results in higher corporate profits for MNCs in the United States, it results in depreciating FOREX reserves. This threatens the economic independence of the U.S. as a country.

Figure 1 below shows the FOREX reserves of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in USD over ten years. According to Dr.



Figure 1: World Forex reserves in billions of USD as per International Monetary Fund (IMF), April 2009 [6]

Richard Haas, Chairman of the Council of Foreign Relations, China's ownership of trillions in FOREX is a great threat to the United States, as China, with vast FOREX reserves, is in a position to influence US foreign policies through its control over the value of US currency [4]. This is similar to the way the United States was able to dominate the foreign policies of Britain and France after World War II and forced their troop withdrawal during the Suez crisis purely because of its ownership of British and French debt [5].

During the Reagan years, the trade deficit started to increase at a rate not seen in the last 60-70 years [7]. The Reagan administration then had to pressure Japan to sign the 1985 Plaza Accord to devalue the U.S. dollar at the expense of the Japanese yen in order to increase U.S. exports [8]. As a result of yen's appreciation, Japan experienced an economic crash and lost a decade of growth. The Nikkei average went up to about 39,000 in December 1989, but after the crash it hovered around 15,000 during the lost decade of the 1990s. In the last several years it has dropped even more, hovering around 10,000 [9].

Looking at the fate of what happened to Japan as a result of the yen appreciation; China has refused to appreciate its currency significantly in spite of the pressure by the Obama administration, which hopes to boost U.S. exports to China [10]. This should be a great concern for the United States because it would not be able to export significant amount of goods to China to balance its trade.

Counterfeit Electronics as a Threat to US National Security

In addition to nearly 600 billion dollars in trade deficit due to free trade policies, the counterfeit electronics from China entering into the U.S. supply chain have become a national security threat [11]. Initially, the United States manufactured all defense-related products at home. However,

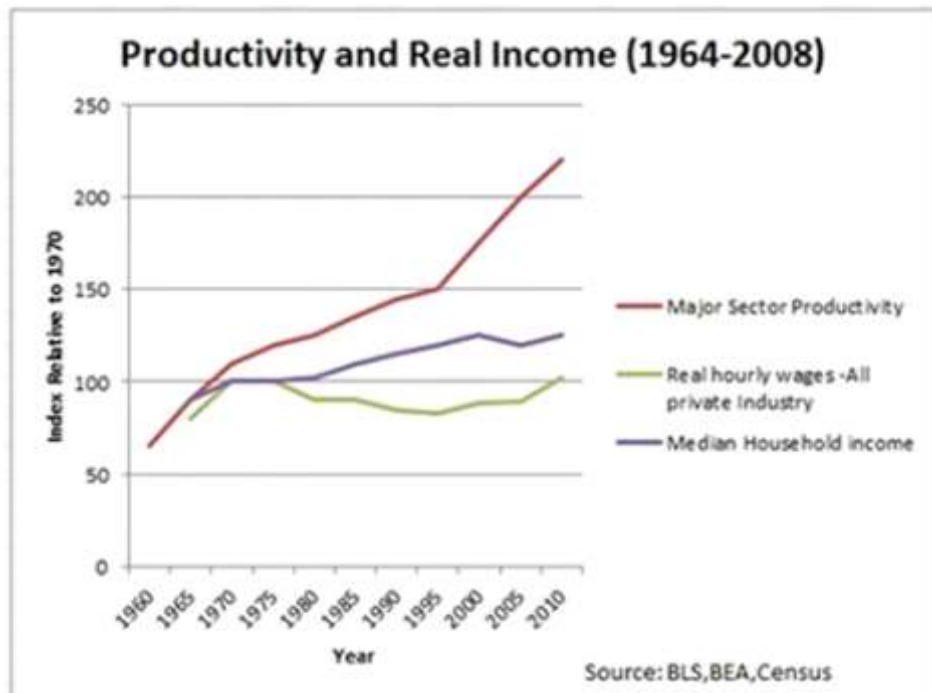


Figure 2: BLS, BEA Census- Productivity and real income index from 1964-2008 relative to 1970 (Source: David Ruccio: Graph of the week: USA productivity and real hourly wages 1964-2008 [14])

consumer electronics were being built in China due to its low cost of labor. As technology progressed to advanced transistor technology, it required a large investment from defense contractors, who work for profit, to manufacture semiconductor wafers in the United States. Hence, several defense contractors started to use Chinese built ICs for military weapons like missiles and machine guns. Along with the state-of-the-art infrastructure, the technical know-how to make advanced technology products has also been transferred to China.

So now China is flooding the U.S. defense supply chain with counterfeit ICs [12]. It has become very costly to prevent this, which is also eating away profits of U.S. defense contractors. The free trade policies of the United States are creating a perfect storm for its semiconductor industry. According to Professor Ravi Batra, "Free trade has done to the United States what Hitler and Imperial Japan could not do during the war." He characterizes free trade as the 'Agrification syndrome' by which Americans continue to lose manufacturing jobs, and continue to work harder at the jobs they do have, but suffer declining wages, despite increases to their productivity [13].

If the United States had adopted fair trade instead of free trade, it would have imposed tariffs on the cheap goods that are dumped in this country by China. As people prefer to get the best value for their money, U.S. consumers would have preferred to buy U.S. made goods as tariffs would make them competitive with Chinese goods. This way manufacturing jobs would have been preserved. Simple math shows that by just eliminating the 600 billion dollar annual trade deficit would create 6 million jobs paying a \$100,000 salary every year. This is a simple job creation strategy, as the country faces the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression.

Economic Reforms

If you observe Fig. 2 above, real wages have failed to keep up with productivity since the 1970s. The productivity of American workers has been consistently increasing. However, the average household median income has not increased at the rate at which productivity has increased. The real hourly wages have remained fairly constant. The United States needs to reform its current economic model so that wages keep track with the productivity of workers [15]. Professor Batra argues that this can happen only in a free market system,

where companies are small and unable to control prices. In such a system, there would be no need for the government budget deficit, and it would raise the living standard for every individual in society.

Under this system, the majority of shares of corporations would be owned by its employees rather than by a few investors on Wall Street. When workers become majority shareholders, they know that they are part owners of the company and will be fairly rewarded for hard work. By being highly productive, these workers would receive a fair share of corporate profits.

The system would still preserve the incentive for growth because hard work would bring higher incomes. At the same time, it would avoid severe recessions and depressions caused by poor consumer demand (due to a huge gap between wages and productivity resulting in poor purchasing capacity of the majority of consumers). Also, in economic downturns, it will be possible to cut back the working hours of the workers and reduce their wages across the board rather than lay off some workers. This would minimize, if not eliminate, the problem of high unemployment [16].

Modern economic thinkers blame automation as a major cause of job losses. Technology could be productively utilized in such a way that the manufacturing sector could cut back on work hours while paying workers a high wage due to their high productivity. This is because automation enables a worker to be very productive through use of machines to manufacture products. High worker productivity significantly increases the supply of goods in an economy. As a result workers would be able to work for fewer hours to achieve their production target. They could use their spare time to pursue higher education, leisure, hobbies, vocational training, etc. This way it is also possible to minimize, if not eliminate, the problem of high

unemployment resulting from automation while still keeping the supply of goods proportionate to consumer demand.

Employee guided firms will also be able provide health insurance and pension benefits to workers and the government would not need to spend money for this purpose. This way the budget deficit would fall to zero and the national debt could be retired over time.

Additionally, it would also avoid undue pressure from Wall Street to ship jobs overseas under pressure of delivering maximum profits to Wall Street investors. This would minimize speculation, malpractices and economic bubbles through economic self-regulation with minimal government interference.

The writer is a Sr. Failure Analyst at Microtech Analytical Labs and can be reached at engmulay@gmail.com

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Bilasi Singh's daughter Bisanti has been missing for two years



“ There are no official statistics on how many girls are sold into marriage in the northern states of India, but activists believe the number is on the rise, fuelled both by demand for women in the relatively wealthy north, and poverty in other parts of India. ”

The Girls Stolen From The Streets of India

✱ **Natalia Antelava**

The death of a student who was gang-raped on a Delhi bus has prompted anguished soul-searching about the place of women in Indian society. The widespread killing of female foetuses and infants is well-documented, but less well-known is the trafficking of girls across the country to make up for the resulting shortages. Rukhsana was sweeping the floor when police broke into the house. Wide-eyed and thin, she stood in the middle of a room clutching a broom in her hand. Police officers towered above her, shouting

questions: "How old are you? "How did you get here?"

"Fourteen," she replied softly. "I was kidnapped."

But just as she began to say more, an older woman broke through the circle of policemen. "She is lying," she shouted. "She is 18, almost 19. I paid her parents money for her."

A s t h e

police pushed the girl towards the exit, the woman asked them to wait. She leaped over towards the girl and

Rukhsana's father looks on as she talks to police about her kidnapping





UNICEF says it's a problem of "genocide proportions" and that 50 million women are missing in India because of female foeticide and infanticide - the killing of baby girls. The Indian

latest official data, almost 35,000 children were reported missing in India in 2011 - and over 11,000 of them were from West Bengal. Police estimate that only about 30% of cases are actually reported.

Trafficking peaked in the Sunderbans after a deadly cyclone destroyed rice paddies around the area five years ago.

Local farm worker, Bimal Singh - like thousands of people - was left without income, and so he thought it was good news when a neighbour offered his 16-year-old daughter Bisanti a job in Delhi.

"She went on a train. She told me 'Father, don't worry about me, I will come back with enough money so that you can marry me.'"

They never heard from her again.

"The police have done nothing for us. They came once and knocked on the door of the trafficker but they didn't arrest him. They don't treat me well when I go to them, so I am afraid to go to the police," Singh says.

In a Calcutta slum we manage to meet a man who sells girls for a living. He doesn't want to give his name, but speaks openly about the trade.

"The demand is rising, and because of this growing demand I have made a lot of money. I now have bought three houses in Delhi.

"I traffic 150 to 200 girls a year,

reached for her earrings. "These are mine," she said, taking them out.

A year ago, Rukhsana was a 13-year-old living with her parents and two younger siblings in a village near India's border with Bangladesh.

"I used to love going to school and I loved playing with my little sister," she remembers.

Her childhood ended when one day, on the way home from school, three men pushed her into a car.

"They showed me a knife and said they would cut me into pieces if I resisted," she said.

Missing millions



government disputes this estimate, but the reality of life in Haryana is hard to argue with.

"We don't have enough girls here," the woman who bought Rukhsana cried as she tried to convince the police to let her stay. "There are many girls from Bengal here. I paid money for her," she wailed.

There are no official statistics on how many girls are sold into marriage in the northern states of India, but activists believe the number is on the rise, fuelled both by demand for women in the relatively wealthy north, and poverty in other parts of India.

"Every house in northern India is feeling the pressure, in every house there are young men who cannot find women and who are frustrated," says social activist

Rishi

Kant, whose organization Shakti Vahini (or Power Brigade) works closely with the police to rescue victims.

In just one district, called South 24 Pergana of the Sunderbans in West Bengal, the BBC visited five villages and every one had missing children, most of them girls.

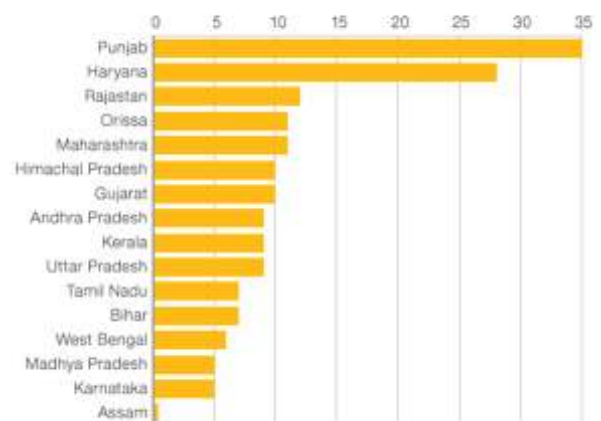
According to the

- An estimated 25-50 million "missing" women in India
- As well as infanticide and foeticide, childhood neglect is a problem and many women die early in adulthood
- Use of ultrasound for sex determination is illegal in India, but remains widespread
- The states of Punjab and Haryana have the highest proportion of missing girls at birth
- Rich and modern cities like Delhi, Chandigarh, and Ahmedabad show some of the worst child sex ratios

The UN children's agency

A surplus of boys

Percentage more boys than girls per state at birth



Source: National Family Health Survey (2005-06)



starting from age 10, 11 and older, up to 16, 17," he says.

Why are there fewer girls in the north?

Indrani Sinha, director and founder of Sanlaap (Dialogue), an NGO that works on trafficking

In Haryana, people don't want to give birth to girls, so they kill their own children. It has gone on so long it has become tradition. The main reason is dowry.

Haryana is a rich state because they have a lot of land and good agriculture. But education is very, very low, and the dowry is big because of all this land.

Boys work on the farm and inherit the farm. But if it's given to a girl, it is for her family too.

It's a cultural thing too. In Kerala, they don't think that women are a burden. The girl child is educated and will work.

But some women - particularly in Punjab - believe that if they have many girls they won't be popular in the family, so they think abortion is better.

In places where there is money, they get ultrasounds done and they sometimes kill the child. When the government issues an ultrasound machine, they try to follow up to see what happens. There are many people who practice foeticide.

"I don't go to the source areas, but I have men working for me. We tell parents that we will get them jobs in Delhi, then we transport them to placement agencies. What happens to them after that is not my concern," the man says.

The man says he makes around 55,000 rupees (\$1,000; £700) from

each girl. Local politicians and police, he says, are crucial to his operation.

"Police are well aware of what we do. I have to tell police when I am transporting a girl and I bribe police in every state - in

Calcutta, in Delhi, in Haryana.

"I have had troubles with authorities but I am not afraid - if I go to jail I now have enough money to bribe my way out."

The head of the Criminal Investigation Unit in charge of anti-trafficking in West Bengal, Shankar Chakraborty, describes police corruption as "negligible" and says his unit is "absolutely resolute" in its determination to tackle the problem of trafficking.

"We are organising training camps and awareness campaigns. We have also recovered many girls, from different areas of the country. The fight is on," he says.

The very existence of his unit, he adds, shows the government's resolve and activists agree that police are now more aware of the problem. Every police station in West Bengal now has an anti-trafficking officer. But their caseloads are overwhelming, and resources are scarce.

"Simply changing the police will not give results. When we rescue a child together with the police, then what?" says Rishi Kant from Shakti Vahini.

"What we need is fast rehabilitation. We need social welfare and judiciary systems that work."

Rishi Kant says there is a need for fast-track courts - like the court being used to try the suspects in the latest gang-rape case - to prosecute perpetrators, and

make it more difficult for them to get out on bail.

Even greater, some argue, is the need for a change in attitudes.

Two weeks before the notorious Delhi rape case, a group of influential local elders, all of them men, came together in a Haryana village to discuss what they called the most pressing issues their communities face - rape, illegal abortions and marriage laws.

One speaker addressed what he called an "alarming" increase in rape cases. "Have you seen the suggestive ways that girls ride scooters?" he said. "There is no modesty in the way women dress or act any more."

Defining terms

- Foeticide - The act of destroying a foetus or causing abortion

- Infanticide - The crime of murdering an infant after its birth, perpetrated by or with the consent of its parents

Source: Oxford English Dictionary

Another man spoke about the roots of female foeticide. "These days the society has become very educated and the girls from this educated society have started eloping. When girls bring shame on their own parents and behave like that - who would want a girl?" he asked.

Rupa, a 25-year-old woman was trafficked to Haryana from Bihar. She was sold as a wife to a man who failed to find one in his own community. The family forced her to have two abortions until she was finally pregnant with a baby boy.

In India, the cycle of abuse carries on.





✱ Tathagatha Sengupta

At first sight, the main underlying reasons for the phenomenon of seasonal mass migration from western Orissa to Andhra Pradesh and other southern states could be ascribed to inadequate rainfall leading to agricultural crises. Most of these areas, covered by the so-called KBK (Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi) districts allow only one crop per year. This means migration of a highly impoverished population of about 4 lakh people every year under desperate economic conditions, mainly to the urban centers and thereabouts of Andhra Pradesh, to work in the numerous brick kilns and construction works. Although the role of nature behind this annual catastrophe cannot be denied, but as one digs deeper into the socio-economic and political conditions of this region, other man-made factors emerge that are quite hard to ignore.

Tale of Three Villages

Let us look into the case studies of a few villages in Bolangir district. The village of Ganjaura (Turrekela block), deep inside a reserve forest, is inhabited mainly by tribal families, and a few dalit and OBC households. The village was formed around 1865, and vanished temporarily around 1932-35 when people left following a massive cholera attack. It was resettled again in 1965. The forest department of independent India used to effectively rule this village till 2 years back, before the officers fled from this area out of the fear of CPI (Maoist) squads. The end of their dictatorship was marked by an incident in 2009 when a drunken forest officer, with a few forest guards, visited the village during a village meeting and started abusing the people. The women of the village retaliated, and beat up the forest officer and his cohorts, to the point that the officer actually defecated in his pants, and ran off.

After this historic event, FRA

“Although the role of nature behind this annual catastrophe cannot be denied, but as one digs deeper into the socio-economic and political conditions, man-made factors are hard to ignore.”

The Famished Architects Of Shining India

claims were filed by the villagers, and individual pattas were obtained. Although the villagers complain that they have been given pattas only for the land under crops, and not for the neighboring forest patches from where they collect minor forest produce like firewood, mahua, tendu leaves, rassi, etc., nevertheless the forest pattas have brought some stability to the local agriculture, and now fewer and fewer families from this village are migrating for kiln work. But earlier the situation was different. As many as 20-25 families used to migrate every season. Shyama Majhi, a Gond tribal, recounted that he had gone to work in a Hyderabad kiln 20 years back, when the rates of payment were Rs. 2 for lifting 1000 bricks and Rs. 15 for making 1000 bricks. Although everyone in this village has some amount of land (most of them very small, to the tune of 2-3 acres), the means of agricultural production are totally beyond their control. For 1 acre of land under paddy, a farmer has to pay around Rs. 1200 for seeds, Rs. 4000 for fertilizers, in addition to a labour cost of around Rs. 3000. While the seeds are sold by the Government, the fertilizer and pesticide shops are owned by local Marwaris. The total output comes to around 15 quintals of rice per acre, which when sold at the rate of Rs. 8 per kg fetches only Rs. 12000. Thus, even if the farmers sell off his entire produce at the end of the season, her net profit is no more than Rs. 4000, with which she is supposed to maintain her whole family round the year. They end up using around 10 quintals for their own consumption, and sell the remaining 5 for buying oil, salt, clothes, etc. These 10 quintals are not even enough for sustaining them



through the year. Thus, within a few months, they invariably get into the cycle of debt and hunger.

The situation is even worse in the revenue village of Mohorapodor (Khaprakhol block) on the foothills of the Gandhamadan mountain range. This is a large village of around 260 families, 90% of whom are ST, the rest being largely SC, and some OBCs and general castes. About 50% of the families in this village are landless. Their main occupation during the agricultural season is manual labour on others' farms, earning Rs. 60-70 a day. The largest landholder in this village is the family of Satyanarayan Kunwar, a Gond tribal, who owns around 400

acres of land. Many landless families in this village don't have BPL cards, whereas there are families with as much as 20-25 acres of land, who are listed as BPL. Although everyone has job cards, there is very little NREGS work, and even if there is some work, the payments get delayed by 3-4 months. Many of the landless families lease land from Kunwar, and have to pay him back with as much as almost half the produce. Khagapati Kumhar had leased 2 acres of land from Kunwar, around 2 years back. Out of the 25 sacks (75 kg each) that each acre produced, he had to give away 10 sacks to Kunwar. Here again, the numerics

involved in the costs and outcomes is startling. Khagapati had to spend around Rs. 2500 for seeds, Rs. 4500 for renting bulls and plough, and Rs. 2500 for the chemicals, in addition to paying Rs. 6500 for labour costs, which led to a yield of around 25 quintals. After giving off around 10 quintals to Kunwar, he sold 3-4 quintals at around Rs. 960 per quintal, and saved the rest for their own consumption. Thus, Khagapati actually incurred a net loss of a few thousand rupees that got him into the debt trap. The local trader who bought rice from Khagapati is named Majid, who runs the biggest local business of paddy. Interestingly, it is the same Majid who works as a 'sardar' or middleman for an Andhra brick kiln owner, pays advances to people in this village, rounds them up and sends them to the kiln after the paddy is cut, to work and pay off the advance paid.

The local chemical fertilizer and pesticides shops are largely owned by Muslim traders, Majid, yet again, being one of the leading men in the business. There was a local moneylender, who used to charge more than 10% of compound interest per month. Thus in 5 months' time, a loan of Rs. 10000 would lead to more than Rs. 5000 as interest. This person was from the Meher community (OBC), and a lot of people are known to have lost their lands and belongings to him because of debts. However he lost his license after one local SP went after him. The local Maoist squads also surveyed the details of property this person looted from the people, and he was forced to return the pattas, passbooks, etc. In the absence of any other money lending

institution, the people now depend on the kiln sardars for lending them money, buying a gasp of air in the suffocation of this vicious debt cycle.

The local Public Distribution Shop for this village runs only once a month. If someone is not able to show up on that specific day, they have to wait for another month. All the local shops are owned mostly by members of the OBC and general caste (mostly Brahmins), in addition to settlers from East Orissa who control large parts of the economy in these areas of West Orissa. The local MLA is one Kanakvardhan Singhdeo (BJP), who belongs to the family of the earlier kings of Patna State, the local princely state, who has won the past four elections. His wife, Sangeeta Kumari, is an ex-MP, again from BJP. His cousin, Kalikeshnarayan Singhdeo is a current BJD MP. His father, Rajaraj Singhdeo, was a minister in the State Government run by erstwhile Janata Dal.

The same story repeats itself in Bagjharan village (Khaprakhol block). Out of the 240 families in this village, around 40 are landless, and around 150 families are marginal land owners. One of the largest landholder is Rohit Meher (OBC), who is also a current Panchayat member (ex-Sarpanch, BJD). His is one of the families who came and settled here from Patnagarh state, and took over tribal lands. Another person called Niranjan Jena, a Khandayat Khstriya (OBC) who came from Cuttack and settled down in Bagjharan, owns another 45 acres of land. Dainath Suna is a marginal land owner, owning less than an acre of land, which does not sustain his family needs. So he has to work in others' farms as a labourer. His land yielded around 10 quintals of rice this time, which is not enough to feed his family. But even he does not have a BPL card, and Karjat has to survive on rice bought at Rs. 14 per kg. The shops are all owned by local OBC people, except one ST owner.



The local fertilizer shop is again owned by a Meher, who is also the main local moneylender.

History of the Patna State

The current geographical area of Chhattisgarh and Western Orissa were originally the princely states of Garjat and Patna. After transfer of power in 1947, the state of Patna was merged with Orissa. Patna has a relatively recent history of agriculture. Cultivation as a dominant socio-economic practice started here mainly around 100 years back, when the Agariyas, known to be skilled cultivators, were settled here by the king. These were the people who cleared large patches of forest and started organised agriculture. According to some estimates, the amount of land under irrigated agriculture was around 35% around this time. This irrigation infrastructure was largely built and maintained by the local communities without any state intervention and control.

But the king of Patna was soon to learn the tricks of the trade from the British colonial rulers. In 1946, the state of Patna started taking over these public irrigation projects – a process that only gained in momentum after 1947. This led to a peasant uprising whose main political agenda was to gain back public control over irrigation. Narratives about this peasant revolt can be found in the Patna Deepika newsletter and in the Cabinet

meeting resolutions. Under pressure from the people, the cabinet of the king decided that only State-funded irrigation projects would be controlled by the state. Incidentally, the lack of understanding of the uprising that the state had is quite telling, particularly one of the narratives stating that these people like fish in their meals, which is why they are trying to get control over these reservoirs and canals, many of which were rich fishing areas. However in January 1948, Patna was merged with Orissa, which led to essentially bulldozing of the community control over water bodies by the entire state machinery, mostly through the Panchayats. Once the state took over, the maintenance of these projects met with fatal blows. Many of the water bodies were converted to fisheries for state revenue. The current agricultural figures show that only around 5% of cultivable land in western Orissa is under irrigation.

Another major historical event was the drought of 1965. This led to acute food shortage and hunger deaths. Under desperate circumstances, the administration opened up the jungles for people, for relief measures. This might have been an unavoidable decision in those circumstances, but it led to indiscriminate felling of trees, and the rise of a forest mafia controlled by the Marwaris and Gujaratis, together with the Forest

Department. While the Gujaratis controlled the trade in tendu leaves, the rest of the forest produce were managed by the Marwaris. The migration of people from western Orissa started mostly after the 1965 drought. Initially it was the dalits who started migrating to the cities of Raipur and Hyderabad, mostly because their local employment was the worst affected, and they were the most severely exploited class because of caste discriminations. This is why out of the handful of people who reaped some economic benefits out of this migration over the years, the dalits seem to be the majority.

Yet another key aspect around this issue of migration is on the legal side of things, namely the Inter State Workmen Act (ISWM) of 1979. It

the administration and the law enforcers as and when they wished. Around the issue of licensing, the initial sections of people who got the wrong end of things were the workers themselves who had no clue about the kinds of documentation required, and were regularly harassed and looted by the police for not having proper papers.

It took a lot of effort on the part of some activists and progressive lawyers to shift the focus on to the employers themselves. In terms of working hours, the Act did not mean much because brick-making involves working in only certain specific hours of the day such as before noon and after sunset, because otherwise the bricks develop cracks due to the sun. In terms of residing near the worksite,



was seen as a progressive piece of legislation when it first came, in terms of provisions such as the temporary residence of the workers should be near the site of work, and stipulations in terms of working hours, payment of travel by the employer, etc. But soon people figured out that firstly it was only a regulatory legislation and not preventive or prohibitive, secondly it was qualitatively not very different from the already existing legislations like the Minimum Wages Act, the Workmen Compensation Act (1923) and the Payments of Wages Act (1936). Moreover it came to be misused by

it anyway had to be the case because of the unusual working hours. It could not regulate the employment of children in the work because they are used to flip the bricks since the heavier adults doing it would again lead to cracks. The sardars get around the travel allowance stipulation by just paying for unreserved fare on long distance trains. All in all, the ISWM did not mean much. Moreover, it fails to reflect the effects of other employment related legislations such as NREGS, resource-ownership related legislation such as FRA, and other fundamental rights such as Right to Education,

etc. Speaking of legislations, the Orissa Relief Code has a provision that if there is news of migration in any public media, the Collector should ensure that work is provided to those people. But no Collector in the history is ever known to have used this.

The principal nodal point from where the migration takes place is a small town called Kantabanji in Bolangir district. The town was established fairly recently, after a railway track was built in 1936. The main reason for existence of the town initially was that the king of Patna used to take his train from here. Soon, perhaps because of the north Indian origins of the ruling Singhdeos (For instance, the last king and later Chief Minister of Orissa, Rajendranarayan Singhdeo was born to a Punjabi mother and brought up in Kharsua, Jharkhand), Marwaris and Gujaratis started flocking to this hitherto unknown town. The local businesses were soon to be taken over completely by these communities, which continues till today's date. The key businesses are around forest produce, liquor industry, processing of crops, textiles, stones, medicines, etc., most of which are run illegally without any license. After many of these industries were nationalized, the Marwaris again became the contractors for the state. Thus, the effect of nationalization has been nothing more than introduction of some hollow legalities, and reorganization of the same business class. The Marwari-Gujarati domination of the town has led to unparallel Hinduization of the polity. Hindutva politics dominates the local socio-political scene, the latest symbol being a huge Gayatri temple that is being built bang in the heart of the town.

Of course the history of the region would be incomplete without the history of land struggles. During the time of the king, every village of Patna state had a "Gaontia" or a village head who was also the local feudal lord, with an army of service



providers for the king, such as the washer man, gardener, etc. In return the Gaontia was not paid by the state in cash, but was given rent-free land. After the merger with Orissa, these lands were re-acquired by the State, along with other zamindari lands, using pre-1947 laws like the Patna State Land Revenue Act and the Patna State Tenancy Act. There was a lot of debate around the issue of how to use this land. Later Nandini Satpathy declared that this land be distributed to the landless, through the Gram Panchayats. Although the land was distributed accordingly (each landless family getting only about 0.5 or so acres of land), the land records were not corrected. In the early 1990s, the Gaontias filed a case asking for rights to these lands on the basis of existing outdated land records, won the case, and started harvesting. The indigenous people did not have any reason to distinguish between the State administration and the judiciary, and were left confused and disappointed with this dual nature of the same State first assigning lands to them, and then taking it back with the stroke of a pen. Helped by a progressive lawyer, Adv. B.P. Sharma, they however filed an appeal against the judgment, leading to the setting aside of as many as 60 such ex-party orders, which means

around 600 landless families.

It was around this time that the Singhdeos won the elections, and the same old ruling dynasty was re-established in the area, this time under the garb of democracy. The Gaontias, mostly STs, OBCs and General Castes (there are no Dalit gaontias), formed the “Gaontia Sangh”, started having regular meetings, to many of which Singdeo would come and participate. Thus the pre-1947 linkage of the local ruling class of the Gaontias and the State of Patna was re-established within the Constitutional framework, and the both of them together once again marginalized the landless (Sukhwasi in the local terminology). Although the Gaontia Sangh weakened over time and the landless are now harvesting crops from these lands, the records are still not set straight. The ruling class is still intact as the Gaontias are still the local ruling and economic elite, and the Singhdeos are still in Parliamentary power.

This is the local political economy which forms the framework in which this mass migration needs to be understood. On the one hand we have the feudal ruling elite still ruling the villages, particularly the revenue villages, where the feudal relations are still necessarily intact though there is no

corvee or feudal militia anymore. The ruling family during the times of the princely state still supplies the legislators both at the state and the central levels. The village economy is completely controlled by the upper caste traders and political heads. The Marwaris in the Kantabanji area have built a strong politics around Hindutva, through organizations such as Brahman Samaj, etc., which further alienates the indigenous people socially, culturally and politically. All this and the State and mafia control over vital natural resources like forest and water, completely sweeping away historic community ownership, form the basic premise for class relations, and the basis for the economic decisions made by the landless and marginally landed. The above, coupled with neo-liberal anti-farmer agricultural policies, efficiently drives people out of their homes. This incidentally also forms the basis of development politics, civil society activities, and local political society. Given that the appropriation of the commons has been successfully instrumented by the Indian state over the decades, the developmental pittance given out to these communities by the same predatory state (through its own machinery and a plethora of NGOs which have come to represent civil

society in these areas) in the form of special economic packages, rice at Rs. 2 per kg, NREGS job creation, etc. become the broad framework of local politics.

The political society reacts accordingly. While the ideological basis for politics is the issue of development, the technology of political action takes the form of electoral politics, negotiations with the state apparatus comprising of a ruthless forest department, police administration, judiciary, local goons hired by political parties, local business class, religious actions, etc. This desperate struggle for existence by the marginalized through its political society is then celebrated by the same Indian state in the name of democracy – a democracy which is nothing but a thin crack in the wall of the huge behemoth of a ruthless state built on the bedrocks of historical injustice and politics of alienation and marginalization. Like any other hegemony, it is in the interest of this structure to maintain this crack in the wall to act as a valve for the release of political energy that generates in the polity out of such tensions. But the control of the valve is to rest with the State itself. Any form of politics that questions the core class nature of such political hegemony and power structure cannot be tolerated. In the case of Western Orissa, the displaced village family, unable to negotiate with such power structures, sets out on a long journey to the neo-liberal urban shining India, to work in its brick kilns.

Human trade to keep India shining

Janta Majhi of Budhibahal village had to take an “advance” (loan) of Rs. 20000 from the local sardar Kishan Dhurwa, a Gond tribal, for paying for his agricultural inputs. In order to repay the loan after the harvest, a harvest that barely met his family’s food requirements, he together with his wife and his mother Nuadei Majhi (60 years) had to migrate to Dundigal area near Hyderabad in

2010 to work in a brick kiln. The Majhi family was forced to work in the kiln for 7 months. Work would start at 4 in the morning every day, and go on till 11 in the night, with a half an hour lunch break. The family as a unit was being paid Rs. 150 for making 1000 bricks. In a typical day they would generally make around 1200 bricks. Rs. 300 was given to the whole family as “food allowance” for an entire week, with which all they could manage to eat was broken rice. Even after working for 7 months, the Rs. 20000 loan was apparently not covered, and in fact Janta had to pay Rs. 1500 to his owner before he could get back to his village, completely bankrupt and with a broken body. Nuadei, Janta’s mother, had even fallen sick a few times at the work site, where there was no doctor. Likewise, Khagapati Kumhar was paid an advance of Rs. 4000 in June 2012, and had to go to a Bangalore kiln to repay his debt. He was paid for the first 3 weeks of his work, after which the payments stopped. His family of 3 used to be given a food allowance of Rs. 500-600 for 10-12 days. He sustained injuries on his leg during the course of his work, but could not afford to visit a doctor ever. No worker in this kiln was getting paid after those first few weeks. The owner Papanna and his stick-wielding son Binod beat up 2 workers when they asked for money. They were prevented from going out of the worksite, or from talking to anyone. The workers were kept under strict surveillance by goons hired by the owner, who would keep guard over them, even when they would go for latrine. The working hours in this kiln were also about 16 hours a day. This is the story of almost each and every worker who goes for work in the kilns.

Over the course of decades, one of them would make it big through extreme hard work and enterprises in getting other workers to go with him to the kiln. Such people would soon rise up the ranks, become local sardars themselves with help from the kiln owner, and

then gradually go up the ranks. One of them has recently even become a kiln owner himself. These few examples are touted by the local and Andhra based capitalists as the ideal cases to lure workers to the kilns. This, and liquor. The local liquor industry, again run by the same local business class, is geared mostly as an instrument for getting people to the kilns. There are numerous occasions of the male patriarch in the family being paid hard cash as advance, which he spends off on liquor and disappears, leading to the women and children of the household being harassed and forced by the owner/sardar to get on to the train to Hyderabad. This leads to further entrenchment of gender inequalities in the community, which in itself deserves a much more comprehensive and focused study.

A core feature of this form of feudal predatory capitalism is how capital makes its way by controlling time. The essence of the payment of advance by the sardars is not just in the money being paid, but the fact that it is paid during the time of a crisis – a crisis that is bound to recur every year, due to the anti-people policies dictated by the same capitalist machinery. It is the critical time of the agricultural season, the critical time of festivals, the time of the year when a family tries to build a house for itself and thus goes into debt, or the critical time when a member of a family falls sick and hence needs immediate supply of cash, that is at the heart of this form of money lending. The political economy described above is geared precisely to ensure that these crises occur, so that the landless and the marginal land-owning class has no option but to get into the debt trap. The precarious situation of the Indian farmer is hinged largely on this time-sensitivity of her economic practices, and there is nothing, and cannot be anything, within this capitalist framework that is meant to reduce this time-dependence. We see this in other contexts as well, for instance when the farmer is forced to

sell her produce at the wrong time of the year because of lack of proper storage facilities. This is the culture of what could be called a “capitalist time” which has been imposed on the other historic indigenous notions of time which never had such dependencies on market forces. The State is the chief architect of such imposition.

This is the true face of capitalism in India, at least in west Orissa. The local primitive form of capitalism, feudal and casteist to the core, driven by a post-colonial State, driving the vast majority of its subjects - people with no access to the means of production - away from their lands and productive professions, to the clutches of the neo-liberal urban political economy, which is equally predatory if not more. For clearing the Gangetic plains the Aryan settlers used the conquered shudras (lower class stratum of the non-Aryan tribes) that led to rapid class differentiation of the early Gangetic civilizations. Caste and its subsequent codification were used as one of the most effective coercive mechanisms to facilitate this process. The same underlying principle can be seen in the historic developments of the political economy of west Orissa, where the local tribals and dalits have been prey to similar exploitative economic processes. Any dissent against this political hegemony is seen as heresy and an attack on the codification called Constitution, and branded as “anti-national”, “anti-development”, etc. Primitive accumulation thus continues in different guises.

All these factors together turn Kantabanji into a slave market during the November-December period of the year. All the lodges are filled up with brick kiln owners from Andhra and Telangana. Rented vehicles can be cited in almost every village in the region, waiting for the sardars to round up people and push them in. The ATMs run out of money because of the money drawn by the sardars to be paid as advance. Swarms of people with terrified body languages flock to Kantabanji from the villages. Every night the train station is filled with people carrying sacks on their heads with their essential belongings. Apart from the workers, two other kinds of people prominently visible at the station on such nights are the local sardars and the railway police personnel. The two trains that go to Vishakhapatnam – the Korba-VSKP Link Express and the Durg-VSKP Passenger – have a delayed halt in Kantabanji to make sure that all of the workers are pushed into the unreserved compartments, one stacked above the other like sacks of rice. The lathi yielding police make sure that no one gets into the reserved compartments, ever ready to use their sticks at the slightest provocation. The ticket sales go up by 10 times than usual. The workers are not told what their ultimate destination is till the moment before they get off the train. By the time they reach Vizag or Hyderabad, they are already starving. Soon they realize that starvation has only begun, since starvation is what they can afford with the food allowance they are given at the kilns. Women

regularly get sexually harassed. Sex trade is rampant in many of the kilns. No food, no drinking water, no dignity, no safety, no medicines, no doctors, no one to talk to, no leave, no rest, no respite, no politics.

Bricks are being made, in the thousands, in the lakhs. Bricks, whose making cost is probably no more than 50 paise per unit, are sold at Rs. 2.50 per unit. Bricks are transported from the kilns to the construction sites. Buildings get built – huge, tall, imposing, arrogant structures. Bridges, flyovers, toll roads get built for the fast cars and heavy trucks to run uninterrupted, for capital to flow uninterrupted. Dams get built for rivers to be stopped, for capital to flow. Industries get built to generate power and steel, to generate capital. Manmohan Singh assigns ever increasing proportions of his fabled GDP to investment in infrastructure. India gets built, building by building, flyover by flyover, industry by industry, brick by brick. Towards the end of June, the architects of this India – the brick makers – return home, with lesser blood, lesser flesh, fewer smiles, fewer limbs, fewer dreams, and at times fewer family members. They return, only to get back to the kilns next year. India keeps shining with the blood of its illegitimate workers. The last bit of the irony is that now contract workers from Andhra are being taken to Bolangir for construction work, since they are “hard working”, and do not have the socio-political and cultural “distractions” and organizations, unlike the local workers.

The ever more sophisticated weapons piling up in the arsenals of the wealthiest and the mightiest can kill the illiterate, the ill, the poor and the hungry, but they cannot kill ignorance, illness, poverty or hunger.

Fidel Castro

Food Budget Squeeze

Market Penetration and the Calorie Consumption Puzzle in India

* Deepankar Basu and Amit Basole

1. Introduction

The nutritional intake of the majority of rural Indians, measured in terms of calories consumed per day, still remains very low, when compared to nutritional norms developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research.[1] Not only that, calorie intake has been declining even as incomes are rising over time. For example, National Sample Survey (NSS) data [2] show that average calorie intake in rural areas declined by about 10 percent over the two decades between 1983 and 2004. During the same period, real average monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE), that is the money spent per person per month by rural households after adjusting for price increases, increased by about 22 percent (Deaton and Dreze 2009). This is an unexpected and puzzling trend because it is a well-known fact that at any given point in time, those with greater purchasing power are nutritionally better off and consume more calories. The resulting puzzle is sometimes referred to as the “calorie consumption puzzle.”

When we extend the analysis to 2009–10, we see that the same trend continues. For instance, in the decade and a half period between 1993–94 and 2009–10 estimated average calorie intake in rural India declined by about 6 percent. During this period, on the other hand, real average MPCE increased by 17 percent in rural areas. Thus, this



opposite trend movement in calorie intake and real MPCE (Figure 1) indicates that the calorie consumption puzzle endures: as people are becoming better off, they are consuming fewer calories.

How should we approach this puzzle? The large and growing body of literature that has emerged around this issue can be divided into two broad strands: (a) those suggesting a coercive explanation, and (b) those offering a non-coercive explanation. Authors in the first strand argue that people consume fewer calories because they are forced to do so. A coercive mechanism that is often highlighted is the absolute impoverishment of vast sections of the rural population caused by the adoption of neoliberal policies since the early 1990s.[3] For Utsa Patnaik,

“ Past three decades, even as incomes have been rising in rural India, people consumed fewer calories. Though rural incomes have risen modestly they have not risen fast enough, with the result that the food budget is being squeezed by rapidly increasing expenditure on non-food essentials. ”

the most prominent proponent of this strand of research, the “puzzle” does not exist, because the explanation for lower calorie intake is lower real incomes. If people’s purchasing power is declining how can they be expected to increase their calorie intake?

Figure 1: Real monthly per capita expenditure (in 1987-88 rupees) and estimated average calorie intake (Kcal per day) in rural India. Source: NSSO (2011b), and



NSSO (2012).

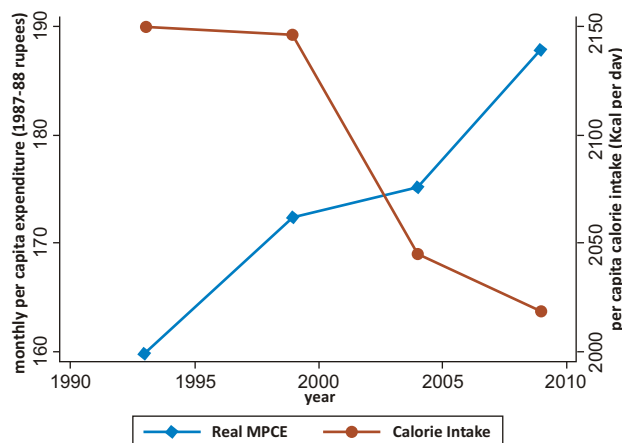
The non-coercive strand takes the opposite view. The basic message from this body of research is that people consume fewer calories because they choose to do so. This could be because they need fewer calories than before or because they are consuming more expensive sources of calories such as milk, fruits, and processed foods, as opposed to cereals (this is known as diet diversification).[4] The argument is that as people become richer they choose to spend less on food and more on other commodities such as education, health care and durables (like television, motorized vehicles, etc.). Further, they choose to spend a greater proportion of their food budget on vegetables, fruits, meat,

and milk products that are a more expensive source of calories compared to cereals such as rice or wheat. Researchers who argue for a voluntary decline in calorie intake also point out that a reduction in the agricultural workforce as well as mechanization of agricultural work have reduced the calorie needs among rural Indians, since work has become less strenuous. Finally, increased availability of safe drinking water has resulted in a reduction in the incidence of gastrointestinal diseases such as diarrhoea that previously resulted in a large loss of calories. Thus, from this point of view, declining calorie intake over time is not a worrisome development.

In a recent study (Basu and Basole 2012) we argue that the coercive explanation that relies on declining real incomes cannot account for the phenomenon of declining calorie intake. However, we also find that declining calorie needs of the rural population and diversification of diets (the non-coercive explanations) do not account for reduced intake either. We offer a third line of explanation of the calorie consumption puzzle building on the arguments in Mehta and Venkatraman (2000) and Sen (2005). When we look across Indian states and over time we find a strong negative relationship between the average calorie intake and the share of monthly expenditure devoted to nonfood essentials (after controlling for the effect of other relevant factors like real expenditure, calorie needs, diversification of diets).[5] Thus, states where on average households spend a larger share of their monthly expenditure on non food essentials (like education, health

care, transportation) are also the states where, again on average, they consume lower calories. Thus, the lower calorie intake could result due to a strong food budget squeeze.

Why does the food budget get squeezed? We argue that it gets squeezed due to galloping expenses on non-food essentials like health care, education, transportation and other essential services. This absorbs the increases in household incomes and keeps real expenditures on food from rising. The food budget squeeze has both demand and supply side aspects. On the one hand people are demanding more and better education knowing full well that this is the most important route for upward social mobility. Similarly, they are demanding better and/or more formal- institutional health care like childbirth in hospitals or allopathic medicines. Additionally, the inability of the agricultural sector to generate stable incomes, and the resulting migration to towns and cities for work has increased commuting expenses. Further, services that were previously considered luxury items, such as mobile phones, are no longer luxuries but are essential for participating fully in economic and social life.[6] On the other hand publicly funded schools, dispensaries and hospitals are in worse shape than ever. Even as people’s needs are growing, the government is failing to step up to the task of supplying essential



services. Therefore, people are forced to bear all the expenses of these essential services by themselves, leading to a squeeze on their food budgets.[7]

In addition to this squeeze, there is another important factor at work. While market incomes (incomes earned from wages or from self-employment) may not be declining, non-market incomes are falling. Over time, common property resources such as forest that are critical sources of consumption outside the market, are being threatened and increasing penetration of the market in rural areas is bringing about a decline in consumption of home-grown food (particularly cereals). However, it is not necessary that home-grown food will be substituted by equally nutritious market-purchased food. For one, money could be spent on non-food essentials. Secondly, market-purchased food may be a more expensive source of calories (particularly if it is processed food).

Thus instead of declining market incomes or reduced calorie needs, we argue that the calorie consumption puzzle is explained primarily through a combination of a food budget squeeze and declining home-grown consumption.

2. Alternative Explanations

2.1. Rural Impoverishment

A simple explanation for the puzzle could be that, in fact, there exists no puzzle. Rather, the fall in calorie intake is driven by impoverishment, i.e., decline in real income and expenditure. According to Patnaik (2004, 2007, 2010a,b) adoption of neoliberal policies has led to declining real incomes of the vast majority of the masses, especially in rural India. The decline in average calorie intake is a direct outcome of such impoverishment.[8]

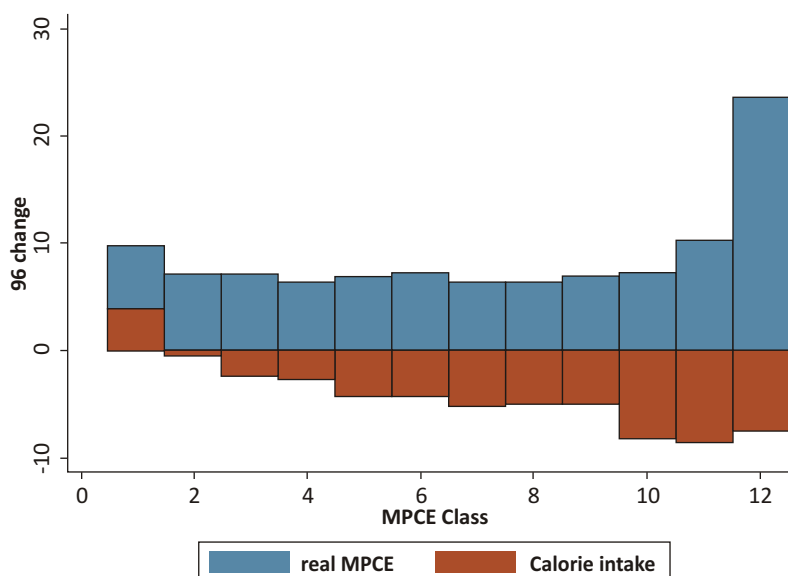
This explanation seems reasonable given the backdrop of widespread agrarian distress during the neoliberal period that we have also written about at Sanhati. But

evidence on consumption and incomes points in the opposite direction. NSS data show that even though the average level of spending in rural India remains very low, there has been a modest increase (not a decrease) in rural spending, during the past twenty years. Average real MPCE (measured in 1987-88 prices) in rural India increased by 17.45 percent between 1993-94 and 2009-10; that is, rural Indians were able to spend more money per capita over this period, even after adjusting for inflation. But, could it be that real MPCE has increased on average only because it has increased for the rich and decreased for the poor? In fact this is not the case. When we look at the poorest 10% of the population in rural India we still find an increase in real MPCE of about 12.36 percent over the same period. Indeed, there is no evidence of decline in real expenditures for any section of rural population in India (Figure 2).

Could it be that the adjustments made for inflation are somehow faulty and are not accurately reflecting the increase in price of food? This could happen, for instance, if food prices increase faster than the general rate of

inflation. But the data show that even though food prices have increased rapidly since 2008-09, over the long term (i.e. the last 20 years) the relative price of food shows no clear trend (Deaton and Dreze 2009 and Balakrishnan 2010). This means that food has not become more expensive relative to other items of consumption over the last two decades. Hence, increase in food price cannot be an explanation for the lower calorie intake that we observe over time in rural India.

There is a second, more compelling, argument against the impoverishment thesis. When we break down the NSS data by expenditure classes, we see that calorie intake has increased for the poorest 10% of the population between 1983 and 2009-10, while it has declined for all other groups in the same period (Figure 2 and top panel in Figure 3). Since there is no reason to expect rural impoverishment, if it does occur, to bypass the poorest section of the rural population, this evidence is difficult to square with the impoverishment thesis. But it is possible to explain the increasing calorie intake by the bottom 10 percent of the rural population using our hypothesis of a food budget



squeeze and declining access to non-market sources of food. For instance, it might be the case that the poorest of the poor are not able to afford even basic expenses on non-food essentials (like education and institutional health care), thereby spending their increased incomes on securing better access to food.

Figure 2: Percent change in real MPCE and calorie intake across MPCE classes between 1993–94 and 2004–05. Source: NSSO (1996b), and NSSO (2006).

Finally, we also see that real wages for agricultural and non-agricultural workers in rural India have increased over this same period. Using data from various Employment-Unemployment Surveys of the NSSO, the bottom left panel of Figure 3 plots the average daily wage of agricultural labourers for the country as a whole after controlling for price increases. The plot indicates that there is a steady increase in real agricultural wages between 1993–94 and 2009–10. The bottom right panel in Figure 3 shows that wages of non-agricultural workers in rural areas have also increased in real terms (i.e., after accounting for price increases) from 1999–00 to 2009–10.[9] Now it is true that an increase in wages by themselves do

not mean things are getting better, since overall employment could be declining at the same time, offsetting the effect of higher wages. But it is difficult to have both declining employment and increasing wages. Thus, taken together, we believe that all the pieces of evidence point to a slow but steady increase in living standards in rural India. Hence, without disputing the reality of agrarian distress during the neoliberal period, as highlighted by the continuing spate of farmer suicides, we believe that absolute immiserization of the vast majority of the rural population cannot be an explanation for the calorie consumption puzzle.

Figure 3: Top panel: Estimated average calorie intake (Kcal per day) of the bottom decile and the top quartile of expenditure classes in rural India. Source: Deaton and Dreze (2009), and NSSO (2012). Bottom Panel: Average daily real wage of agricultural labourers and nonagricultural workers in 1987-88 prices. NSSO (2011a).

But there are two issues on which we are in agreement with proponents of the impoverishment thesis, such as Utsa Patnaik. Firstly, the fact that people across the income spectrum, from the poorest

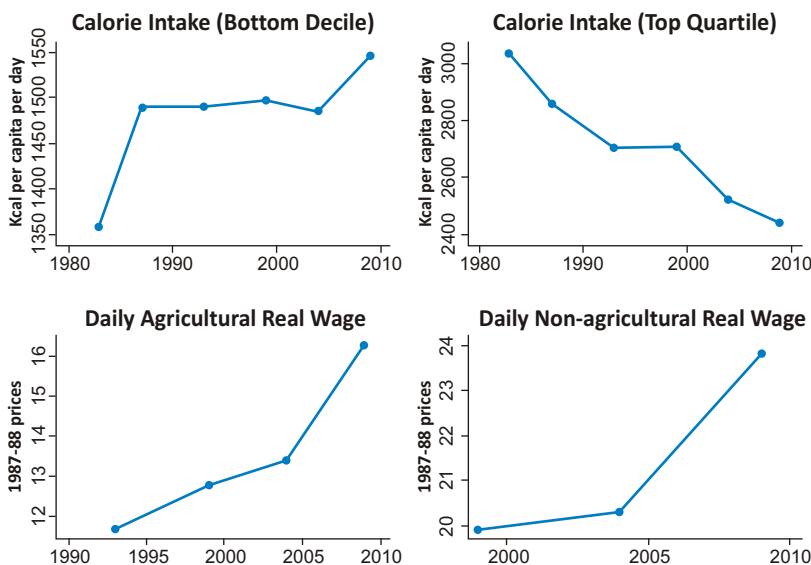
to the richest, are earning or spending more money, does not tell us anything about inequality between the rich and the poor. As is well-known, inequality in India has increased sharply during the neoliberal period.

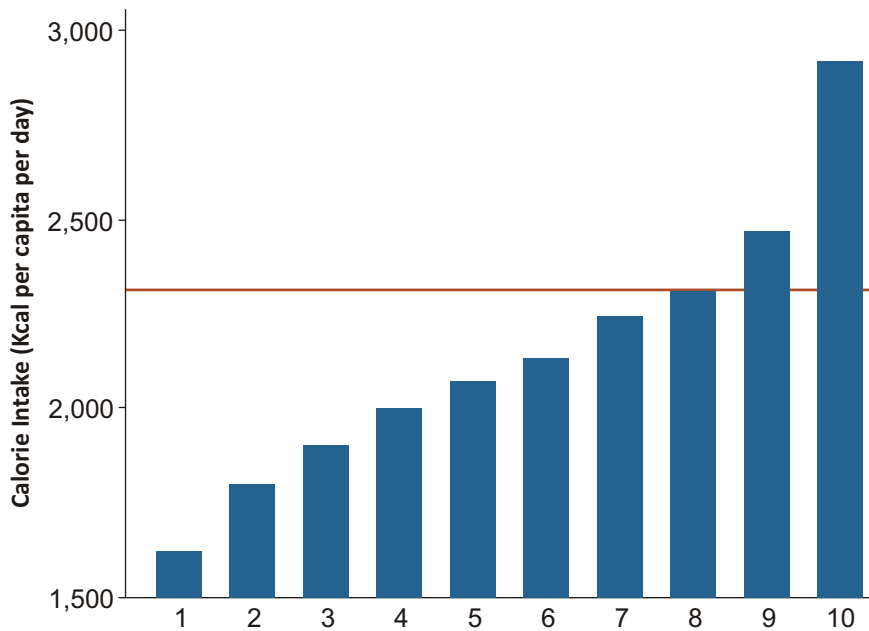
Second, one of Patnaik’s principal concerns is to show that official poverty figures grossly underestimate poverty in the country. While this issue does not directly bear on the puzzle being discussed here, the two issues are related. A decline in calorie intake over time has meant that a large proportion of the population now consumes fewer calories than the poverty norm of 2400 Kcal/day (in rural areas). However, the way the official poverty rate is calculated does not take into account actual calorie consumption. Instead the expenditure level that was required to purchase the requisite number of calories in 1972 (when the norm was developed) is simply adjusted for inflation to give a new expenditure criterion. If a person spends more than this amount, he/she will not be counted as poor, even if they consume fewer calories than the original norm. We agree that such a method obscures widespread undernourishment and malnourishment among Indians, especially in rural areas.

2.2 Non-coercive Explanations

A more benign explanation for the decline in calorie intake is that people are in need of fewer calories as work in agriculture is becoming less strenuous (due to mechanization of important parts of agricultural production) and as access to safe drinking water is reducing prevalence of diseases like diarrhoea which result in a loss of calories. Further, as people’s spending power increases they are choosing to substitute cereals (cheap source of calories) with vegetables, fruits, milk products etc., i.e. more expensive source of calories (Deaton and Dreze, 2009; Rao, 2000; Mittal, 2007).

Why might the calorie needs of





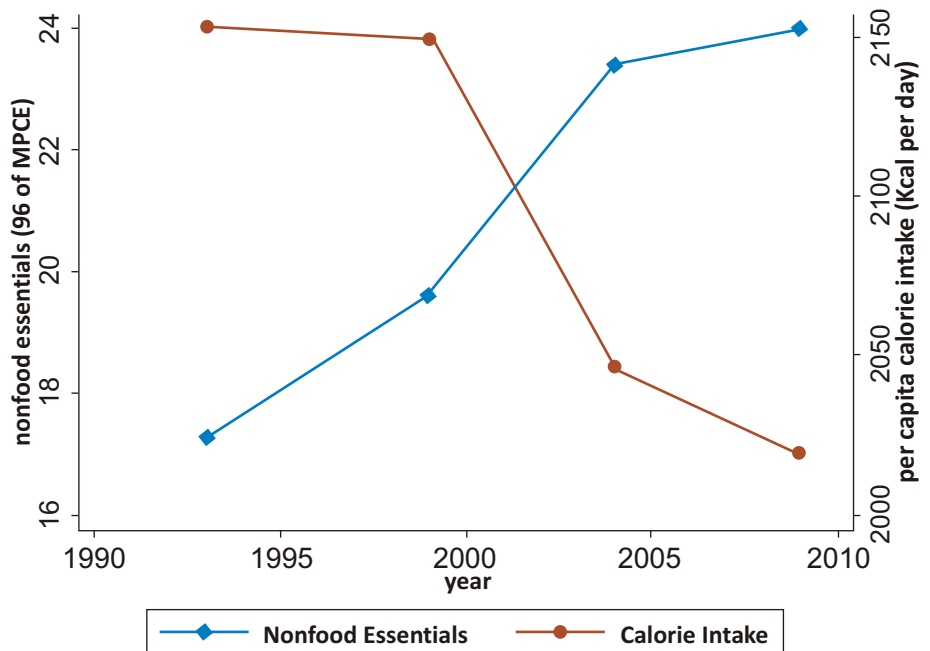
especially for poorer rural Indians of whom calorie intakes are still very low. As shown in Figure 4, in 2009–2010 the absolute level of calorie intake for all MPCE classes except the top two lay below the 1972 poverty line norm of 2400 Kcal per capita per day and even below the updated 2009 norms published by the Indian Council of Medical Research (see note 1). And the poorer half of the population (the lower five MPCE decile classes) lies far below the line, having average calorie consumption of less than 2100 Kcal per capita per day. The “declining needs” explanation requires us to believe that a very large number of rural Indians are voluntarily foregoing food consumption even while falling far short of the basic minimum nutritional requirement. We think this is highly unlikely.

Figure 4: Estimated average calorie intake (Kcal per day) across MPCE decile classes in rural India

the population go down? There are at least three important reasons that might reduce the calorie needs of the population. First, it is a well-known fact that, on average, agricultural work is far more physically demanding than non-agricultural work. Thus, as a larger share of the Indian workforce moves from agriculture to industry and services, the average calorie needs of the population might decline. Second, as sanitary conditions improve, the calorie absorption capacity of the population increases. This might reduce the average calorie consumption needs of the population because a larger share of whatever is consumed can now be retained. Third, mechanization of key parts of agricultural work (like threshing), adoption of labour-saving technology within households, and mechanization of transportation (i.e., switch from walking to using bicycles, from bicycles to motorcycles, and so on), might also reduce the average calorie needs of the population.

In our analysis, we use two variables to capture the calorie needs of the population at the state level: (1) the share of the workforce in the agricultural sector, and (2) the percentage of households that have access to safe drinking water, i.e., water coming from a tap, a tube well or a hand pump. The first is meant to

capture the reduction in the strenuousness of work due to shifts of the workforce out of agriculture and mechanization of agricultural work; the second is meant to capture the improved epidemiological environment in rural India. When we include these variables in our analysis we find no evidence that declining calorie needs play a



significant role in the whole story.

Further, it is not clear to us that a decline in calorie needs, even if it has occurred, will also lead to decline in average calorie intakes,

in 2009–10 with respect to the 2009 ICMR norm for sedentary activities for males (horizontal line, 2320 Kcal per capita per day). Source: NSSO (2012)

3. Results of our study: A different coercive explanation

Instead of declining calorie needs we find strong evidence for two other factors mentioned by Deaton and Dreze (2009). First, rising non-food essential expenditures are squeezing the food budget. NSS data reveal that in the past two decades, almost the entire increase in rural spending (after adjusting for inflation) has taken the form of increased spending on education, transportation, consumer services, etc., while food budgets have remained stagnant in real terms (Deaton and Dreze, 2009). This can be seen from data available in NSSO (2011b): for the average rural Indian household, the value of food expenditure in real terms (i.e., after accounting for the increase in food

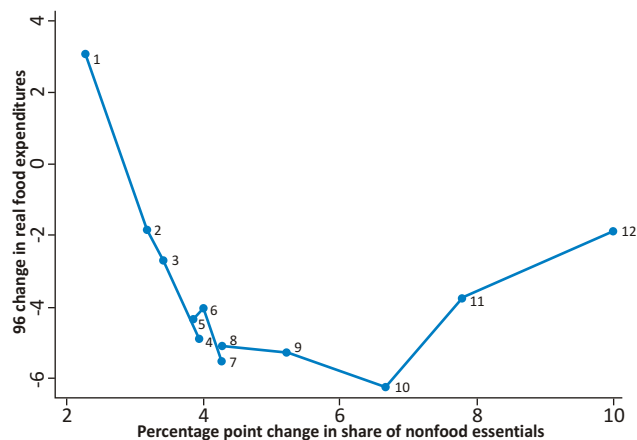
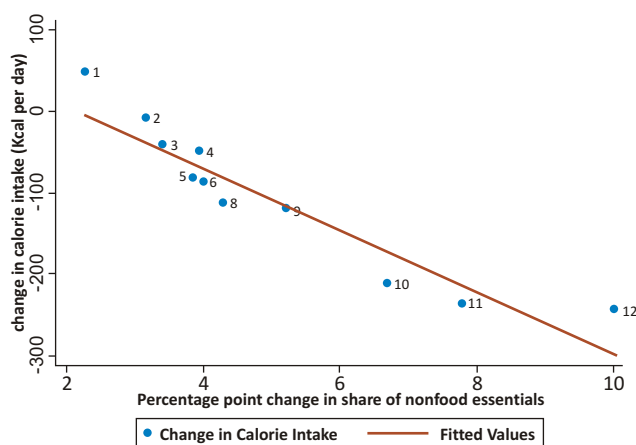
essentials display exactly opposite movements over time: even as the share of MPCE devoted to such non-food essentials has increased over time, average per capita calorie intake has declined.

Figure 5: Share of Monthly expenditure devoted to nonfood essentials (percentage) like education, healthcare, transportation, and estimated average calorie intake (Kcal per day) in rural India. Source: NSSO (2006), and NSSO (2011b).

The relationship between calorie intake and non-food expenditures emerges even more strongly when we look across rural classes. Taking two time points, 1993-94 and 2004-05, Figure 6 shows that richer classes witness higher increases in non-food

if larger in absolute (or even percentage) terms, would not have the same implications for nutritional status as even a much smaller decline for the lower expenditure classes. This is because they have very different starting points (say 3000 Kcal versus 2000 Kcal).

Second, a given change in NFE does not have the same implication for the food budget for all expenditure classes. The bottom panel of Figure 6 plots change in NFE against the percentage change in real food expenditures across MPCE classes. We see clearly that smaller increases in NFE give rise to larger decreases in real food expenditures for the intermediate MPCE classes (particularly classes 4 to 10) indicating that the food budget is more likely to be squeezed for these



prices) did not increase over the past two decades, and in fact declined slightly over the last 15 years.

Let us first look at some data that clarifies this phenomenon. Figure 5 shows how the share of total expenditure devoted to education, health care (i.e. buying medicines, doctor visits, x-rays and blood tests, hospital visit etc.), conveyance and other consumer services as well as per capita calorie consumption have changed between 1993-94 and 2009-10. It is obvious from the figure that per capita calorie intake and the share of expenditure devoted to non-food

essential expenditures (NFE) in this period, and also register larger declines in calorie intake. At least two interesting implications emerge from this graph. First, there is a strong negative relationship between changes in the share of non-food essential expenditure and changes in calorie intake across MPCE classes. Moreover, the relationship exists across the vast majority of rural households, both rich and poor.

However, two points are important to note in this regard. First, a decline in calorie intake for the upper expenditure classes, even

classes. For the top two MPCE classes (i.e., classes 11 and 12), larger increases in NFE are accompanied by smaller reductions in the food budget, suggesting that the food budget is squeezed to a lesser extent. That is, the relatively well-to-do rural classes have been able to maintain spending on food to a greater extent, despite large increases in non-food spending. The poorer rural classes have not been able to do so. The data suggest that the food budget squeeze operates to a greater or lesser extent for the vast majority of rural households, except possibly the richest two expenditure classes.

Lastly, note that the poorest of the poor (MPCE class #1) seem to be unaffected or relatively less affected by the food budget squeeze: for the lowest MPCE class we see a small increase in calorie intake (50 Kcal/day) as well as an increase in real food expenditures. One possibility is that the bottom expenditure class households are so desperately poor that they cannot afford to send their children to private schools or access private healthcare in the first place. Hence, the increasing cost of education or healthcare does not have a large impact on their household budgets. So, they are able to devote the increases in their real incomes to food consumption, allowing them to increase their calorie intakes. Further, these households may also rely to a greater degree on non-market sources of food, fuel, etc. This might cushion them against the operation of the food budget squeeze.

Figure 6: Top: Calorie intake change as a function of percentage point change in share of NFE in MPCE between 1993-94 and 2004-05. Bottom: Percent change in real food expenditures by percentage point change in share of NFE between 1993-94 and 2004-05. Source: NSSO (1996b), and NSSO (2006).

Does the negative relationship between the share of the monthly budget devoted to nonfood essential expenditure and per capita calorie intake, shown in Figure 5 persist even after we control for structural factors that change the calorie needs of the rural population and for diet diversification? When we perform a statistical analysis to answer this question we find a robust and highly significant negative effect of the share of non-food essential expenditures on per capita calorie intake; we interpret this as suggesting that the food budget squeeze is an important factor driving declines in average calorie intakes. In quantitative terms, we

find that a 1% increase in the share of monthly expenditure on non-food essentials is associated with a 1% decline in calorie intake after controlling for changes in real expenditures, calorie needs, and diversification of diets.

Note that ordinarily we would expect the relationship between the share of the monthly budget devoted to nonfood essential expenditure and per capita calorie intake to be positive. Even though growth in real per capita incomes is accompanied by an increase in the share devoted to essential services like education, health care, etc., this is seldom accompanied by a decline in calorie intake. This is because people's incomes grow to accommodate both needs (food and non-food) and a fall in the real price of food ensures that a lower share of household expenditure requires to be devoted to food. Therefore, when an increase in the share of non-food essential expenditure leads to a decline in calorie intake, it is a perverse and worrisome outcome.

Referring back to the coercive explanation that calorie intake is declining because people are able to spend less money, our results show, on the contrary, that even as rural expenditures increased during this period, they did not increase enough to accommodate both, the increased need for spending on non-food essentials, as well as an increasing or even sustained nutritional intake.

As we have already pointed out, our analysis also throws up another important factor that drives the calorie consumption puzzle: food grown at home for consumption (as opposed to sale). This factor is extremely important for a developing country like India where even today a large portion of the consumption of poor households, especially in rural areas, is met from non-market sources. More than 60 percent of milk, about 40 percent of wheat, 30 percent of rice, 11 to 18 percent of seven common pulses, and 14

percent of eggs, and a large portion of common vegetables consumed in rural India in 2004-05 came from home produce (NSSO, 2007).

The increasing penetration of the market in rural areas reduces the proportion of food consumed out of home production (and other non-market sources like forest, rivers, etc.). But if people can no longer access wheat grown at home, fruit from the forest or fish in rivers, it is not necessary that they will purchase these goods from the market. There may be other more pressing demands on their scarce money income. This will result in people spending more money but not acquiring more calories, because the money is spent on other necessities like sending their child to school, commuting to work or paying for a mobile phone.

5. Is the food budget squeeze "voluntary?"

At this point an argument can be made that even if declining calorie needs are not solely responsible for reduced calorie intake, the reduction is still voluntary because people are choosing to spend more on education, health, and other non-food items. On the basis of our analysis we cannot directly rule out such an explanation. However, given the low absolute level of real expenditure on food as well as number of calories consumed by the majority of the rural Indian population, we do not think the non-coercive or voluntary explanation can be the whole, or even the major part of the, story.

How can one distinguish between voluntary and forced reduction in calorie intake? One way might be to take a calorie norm as the dividing line. That is, declines in nutritional intake among those who already consume less than some basic minimum may be taken as coercive or involuntary declines. As noted earlier, the absolute level of calorie intake for the bottom eight deciles (i.e., 80% of rural Indians) in



2009- 2010 was below the minimum ICMR norm of 2320 Kcal per capita per day (for males involved in sedentary activities). Therefore, we hypothesize that the majority of the rural population in India is consuming lower calories because they are being coerced to do so due to the combination of a food budget squeeze and declining access to non-market sources of food.

We would also like to point out that disentangling coercive from non-coercive factors is not straightforward. For example, consider the following scenarios. It is reasonable to suppose that people are voluntarily spending more on education because they believe this is the way to ensure economic security for their children and social respect for their families. But the increasing unviability of agriculture as a source of income and the precariousness of informal employment, which are structural factors, also play a role in increasing the allure of formal sector jobs, for which school education is a must. Second, people may spend more on health care not only because

preference for allopathic care is on the rise but because the public health-care system is in decline. This is again a mixture of involuntary (structural) and voluntary changes. Third, people could be spending more on transportation because of a decline in rural livelihood options (a structural factor) and increased pull of urban jobs and lifestyles (a taste based factor). Thus, in most realistic situations a combination of the two would be in operation. Separating out the coercive from non-coercive factors and testing their relative strengths would be an instructive exercise for future research.

6. Conclusion

We have argued in this article that the decline in calorie intake across rural classes in India is correlated with an increase in spending on non-food essential items such as education, health, transportation and other essential services. While rural incomes have indeed increased (after adjusting for inflation) they have not increased fast enough, with the result that people are

cutting back on food to accommodate other expenses. In our analysis we do not find a significant effect of declining calorie needs or of the diversification of diets on reduced calorie intake.

The failure of the government in the neoliberal period emerges clearly from this analysis. An important factor is stagnant or even declining public expenditure on social services in the post-reform period (Mooij and Dev, 2004; Joshi, 2006; Tilak, 2004). For example, throughout the 1990s, social sector expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, was lower than that in the late 1980s. Even though per capita social services expenditure did show an increase of 54% in the period 1990 to 2001, after disaggregation it is apparent that the share of secondary education in central government expenditures showed a 9 percentage point decline while share of spending on central government hospitals and dispensaries fell by 7 percentage points. And these numbers do not even touch the question of quality that by all accounts is in decline. As people flock to more and more expensive private schools and hospitals these expenses will only mount.

To this must be added the well-known problems of agricultural policy that have forced farmers to migrate greater and greater distances for poorly paid jobs in the urban and rural informal sector. While such a transition can increase MPCE or GDP, it can also mean a real decline in living standards, since the increases in income are spent on traveling rather than on food.

Clearly, a policy evaluation that focuses purely on rising incomes or spending would result in a favorable report card for neoliberal policies. But in the phenomenon of declining per capita calorie intake we have a different type of evaluation. One that points to the failure of government policy in securing even a basic minimum of nutrition (by its own standards) to its citizens, even as their incomes are growing.

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Congo is possibly the most mineral/resource rich country in the world — overflowing with everything from diamonds to oil — though its people are among the world's poorest, due to generations of corporate plunder of its wealth.

Silence Over The New Congo War

✱ **Shamus Cooke**

The last Congo war that ended in 2003 killed 5.4 million people, the worst humanitarian disaster since World War II. The killing was directly enabled by international silence over the issue; the war was ignored and the causes obscured

because governments were backing groups involved in the fighting. Now a new Congo war has begun and the silence is, again, deafening. President Obama seems not to have noticed a new war has broken out in the war-scarred Congo; he appears blind to the refugee crisis and the war crimes committed by the

invading M23 militia against the democratically elected government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

But appearances can be deceiving. The U.S. government has their bloody hands all over this conflict, just as they did during the last Congo war when Bill Clinton

was President. President Obama's inaction is a conscious act of encouragement for the invaders, just as Clinton's was. Instead of Obama denouncing the invasion and the approaching overthrow of a democratically elected government, silence becomes a very powerful action of intentional complicity on the side of the invaders. Why would Obama do this? The invaders are armed and financed by Rwanda, a "strong ally" and puppet of the United States. The United Nations released a report conclusively proving that the Rwandan government is backing the rebels, but the U.S. government and U.S. media cartoonishly pretend that the issue is debatable.

The last Congo War that killed 5.4 million people was also the result of the U.S.-backed invading armies of Rwanda and Uganda, as explained in the excellently researched book "Africa's World War," by French journalist Gerard Prunier. In fact, many of the same Rwandan war criminals involved in the last Congo War, such as Bosco Ntaganda, are in charge of the M23 militia and wanted for war crimes by the U.N. international criminal court. The current Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, is a "good friend" of the U.S. government and one of the most notorious war criminals on the planet, due to his leading roles in the Rwandan genocide and consequent Congo War.

A group of Congolese and Rwandan activists have been demanding that Kagame be tried for his key role in the Rwandan genocide. As Prunier's book explains, the Rwandan genocide was sparked by Kagame's invasion of Rwanda — from U.S. ally Uganda. After Kagame took power in post-genocide Rwanda, he then informed the U.S. — during a trip to Washington D.C. — that he would be invading the Congo. Prunier quotes Kagame in Africa's World War: "I delivered a veiled warning [to the U.S.]: the failure of the international community to take action [against the Congo] would mean that Rwanda would take

action... But their [the Clinton Administration's] response was really no response at all" (pg 68). In international diplomacy speak, such a lack of response — to a threat of military invasion — acts as a glaring diplomatic green light. The same blinding green light is now being offered by Obama to the exact same war criminals as they again invade the Congo. But why again? The Democratic Republic of the Congo's current President, Joseph Kabila, helped lead the military invasion during the last Congo war. As a good stooge, he delivered Congo's immense mining and oil wealth to multi-national corporations. But then his puppet strings started to fray. Kabila later distanced himself from U.S. puppets Rwanda and Uganda, not to mention the U.S. dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The IMF, for example, warned Kabila against a strategic infrastructural and development aid package with China, but Kabila shrugged them off. The Economist explains: "...[The Congo] appears to have gained the upper hand in a row with foreign donors over a mining and infrastructure package worth \$9 billion that was agreed a year ago with China. The IMF objected to it, on the ground that it would saddle Congo with a massive new debt, so [the IMF] is delaying forgiveness of most of the \$10 billion-plus that Congo already owes."

This act instantly transformed Kabila from an unreliable friend to an enemy. The U.S. and China have been madly scrambling for Africa's immense wealth of raw materials, and Kabila's new alliance with China was too much for the U.S. to bear. Kabila further inflamed his former allies by demanding that the international corporations exploiting the Congo's precious metals have their super-profit contracts re-negotiated, so that the country might actually receive some benefit from its riches. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to 80 percent of the world's cobalt, an extremely precious mineral needed to construct many modern technologies, including

weaponry, cell phones, and computers. The DRC is possibly the most mineral/resource rich country in the world — overflowing with everything from diamonds to oil — though its people are among the world's poorest, due to generations of corporate plunder of its wealth.

Now, a new war is underway and the U.N. is literally sitting on their hands. There are 17,500 U.N. peacekeepers in the DRC, not to mention U.S. Special Forces. The invading M23 militia has 3,000 fighters. What was the U.N.'s response to the invasion? The New York Times reports: "United Nations officials have said that they did not have the numbers to beat back the rebels and that they were worried about collateral damage, but many Congolese have rendered their own verdict. On Wednesday, rioters in Bunia, north of Goma, ransacked the houses of United Nations' personnel'. If Obama and/or the U.N. made one public statement about militarily defending the elected Congolese government against invasion, the M23 militia would have never acted. Human Rights Watch and other groups have correctly labeled the M23's commanders as responsible for "ethnic massacres, recruitment of children, mass rape, killings, abductions and torture." But at the U.N. the Obama administration has been actively protecting this group. The New York Times continues:

"Some human rights groups say that Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations and a leading contender to be President Obama's next secretary of state, has been far too soft on Rwanda, which is a close American ally and whose president, Paul Kagame, has known Ms. Rice for years. The activists have accused her of watering down language in a Security Council resolution that would have mentioned Rwanda's links to the [M23] rebels and say she also tried to block the publication of part of a [U.N.] report that detailed Rwanda's covert support for the M23." It's likely that the Obama administration will jump into action as soon as his M23 allies complete

their military objective of regime change, and re-open the Congo's military wealth to U.S. corporations to profit from. There are currently talks occurring in U.S.-puppet Uganda between the M23 and the Congo government. It is unlikely that these talks will produce much of a result unless Kabila stands down and allows the M23 and its Rwandan backers to take over the country. The M23 knows it's in an excellent

bargaining position, given the silence of the U.N. and the United States government.

If the war drags on, expect more international silence. Expect more massacres and ethnic cleansing too, and expect the still-recovering people of the Congo to be re-tossed into massive refugee camps where they can again expect militia-sponsored killings, rape, starvation, and the various

barbarisms that have accompanied this especially brutal war, a brutality that grows most viciously in environments of silence.

The writer is a social service worker, trade unionist, and writer for Workers Action (www.workerscompass.org) He can be reached at shamuscooke@gmail.com

Principles for a Balanced Economy

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"This book introduces Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's Progressive Utilization Theory, an alternative economic vision that is radically different from both capitalism and communism, yet incorporates important elements of both. This new economic model extends the existing democratic ideals into economic sphere and suggests that economic democracy is the cornerstone of a progressive and balanced economy. Sarkar's economic principles are rooted in universal spiritual vision incorporating ecological insights with efficient green technologies. His ground breaking world view grants not only the economic and political rights of people, but also the rights of nature

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--Dr. Sohail Inayatullah, Professor, Graduate Institute of Futures Studies, Tamkang University.

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--Johan Galtung, Founder of UN Institute of Peace Studies



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Also available in bulk to sell to Proutists and others at half price plus shipping. Minimum - 5 copies at \$5 each.

This book introduces P. R Sarkar's Progressive Utilization Theory, an alternative, economic vision that transcends both capitalism and socialism yet incorporates important elements of both. This new, economic model extends the existing democratic ideals into the economic arena and suggests that economic democracy—more balance between the local and global economy, fair wages, worker ownership, and environmental sustainability—is key to the formation of a progressive and balanced economy. Sarkar's economic principles are rooted in a universal, spiritual vision incorporating ecological insights with efficient, green technologies. His ground-breaking worldview grants not only the economic and political rights of people, but also the rights of nature. "This book clearly explains P.R. Sarkar's alternative economics—the Progressive Utilization Theory. The recent Global Financial Crisis challenged business-as-usual, and the principles herein answer that challenge by giving us a glimpse of the future—a post-capitalist world economy." —Dr Sohail Inayatullah, Professor, Graduate Institute of Futures Studies, Tamkang University

The author of the book may be reached at 828-649-9408 (W) 649-9304 (H) 989-6228 (Cell)

GMR Group and Maldives Controversy



The precise point of Maldives' civil court was no tax or fees can be charged without express approval of their parliament

Maldivian cabinet declared the agreement with Indian infrastructure giant GMR to develop Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (INIA) void, and has given the company a seven day [contract stipulates 30 days notice to vacate] ultimatum to leave the country. Maldives is a tiny nation of atolls in Indian ocean, and India plays a larger than life role in its affairs. Yet, it was forced to take such extreme step. Why? Reports in Indian newspapers severely lacked details. The Hindu said, "The government reacted strongly to the decision of the Maldives government to terminate the agreement with the

GMR Group by promising to pursue the issue with Male as it thought politics had intruded into what was a purely commercial matter". Politics plays role in everything and Indian government should know that. But what caused Maldives to react so strongly even though it must be well aware it won't sit well with New Delhi. The agreement with the GMR Group-Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad consortium was signed on June 28, 2010 with the Nasheed [previous president who was toppled in a coup and replaced with an interim opposition President Mohamed Waheed] administration. US\$ 511 million investment to develop and operate the airport is touted as biggest foreign investment in Maldives and is some 25% of its GDP.

The search for information

from Maldivian sources though paid rich dividends. Apart from the usual sound bytes about contractual terms, obligations and legal challenges, the Minivan News attributes following remarks to Arun Bhagat- GMR Executive Vice President & Group Head of Corporate Communications. "The company would further like to state that it has taken all measures to continue operations at the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport thereby ensuring that this vital gateway to Maldives is kept open....We have no plans to go. We have 23 more years here and vowed that the cabinet's decision would have no effect on the operation of the airport....The defence force in this wonderful country is well geared to ensure smooth operation of the airport". Imagine a company executive making these assertions [if true] in the face of an internationally recognised Maldivian Government's categorical decision to hold the contract null and void, and asking the company to vacate from the country in 7 days. Leave aside the merits of the case for a moment, but look at his confidence in Maldivian defence forces, who he expects to back GMR group against Maldives' government. Imagine now if a Walmart or an IKEA were to make same statements about its investments in India; were in future an Indian government was placed in a similar predicament as today faced by Maldives' government.

GMR and Maldives' Government are taking the dispute to arbitration in Singapore and we leave the contractual finer points to arbitrators to settle. I have culled below some interesting facts as reported by JJ Robinson for Minivan News. His article must be commended for its command over facts, lucid presentation, and coverage of probably all points of views. It should be a textbook case study for many Indian journalists to emulate.

In late 2011 the then-opposition Dhivehi Qaumei Party (DQP) filed a successful Civil Court case blocking GMR from charging an Airport Development Charge (ADC) – a US\$25 charge for outgoing passengers stipulated in the concession agreement – on the grounds that it was a tax not authorised by parliament. Nasheed's administration chose to honour the original contract, and instructed GMR to deduct the ADC revenues from the concession fees due the government, while it sought to appeal the Civil Court ruling.

However, the Nasheed government fell a month later and the opposition inherited the result of its court victory, receiving a succession of bills from the airport developer throughout 2012, despite the government's insistence that the January 5 letter from MACL outlining the arrangement was no longer valid.

In the first quarter of 2012 the government received US\$525,355 of an expected US\$8.7 million, after the deduction of the ADC. That was followed by a US\$1.5 million bill for the second quarter, after the ADC payable eclipsed the revenue due the government. Combined with the third quarter payment due, the government now owes the airport developer US\$3.7 million.

The net result of this is that the Maldivian government now has to pay GMR for running the airport. On this basis it is likely that the Maldivian government will end up paying about MVR 8 billion

(US\$519 million) to GMR for the duration of the contract.

The GMR-MAHB consortium narrowly beat Turkish-French consortium TAV Holdings-Aéroports de Paris Management (ADPM), scoring a final Net Present Value (NPV) score of 495.18 to the runner up's 454.04 at conclusion of the bid.

GMR's win was based on playing to the government's highest-scoring factors – fuel share revenue and upfront payment – at the expense of non-fuel related airport revenue.

Public Private Partnerships [PPP] have a way of ultimately socialising the costs and privatising the profits, however lucratively in public-interest they are initially made out to be. What happened in case of fees levied by GMR in case of Delhi Airport is worth remembering here. CAG had observed in August this year, "The approval of the Ministry, and later of the AERA, for the levy of development fee (to bridge the funding gap) was a post-contractual benefit given to the DIAL. This was neither envisaged in the request for proposal (RFP), nor included in the provisions of the OMDA or the State

Support Agreement. This led to an undue benefit of Rs. 3,415 crore to the DIAL, at the cost of passengers". Even earlier in April 2011 the apex court had held, "A two-judge bench held that development fees cannot be levied or collected on the basis of just authority letters issued by the central government but only if there was clear approval from the airports economic regulatory authority. Consequently, Mumbai airport has been barred from levying the fees, while Delhi airport will be able to continue to levy the fees". This was precisely the point of Maldives' civil court- no tax or fees can be charged without express approval of their parliament. The contract signed by Maharashtra Government with Enron Corporation comes to mind too as it favoured the US company over Indian interests. Both Congress and later after making lot of noises against it, Shivsena-BJP government had blessed it. It is said that a single clause in the contract - ramping the Dhabhol plant to peak power generation within 2 hours of notice, which Enron could not meet on several occasions-; and Enron's bankruptcy in USA ultimately saved the day for Indians from that white elephant.



Sea plane terminal and Male international airport

National Convention of PBI On April 13 and 14

New Delhi : In a meeting of the national committee of Proutist Bloc India (PBI) held on 27th January 2013 at Prout Bhawan, New Delhi, it was resolved to hold the national convention of the party on April 13 and 14 at Delhi.

Representatives had also arrived from other states including Vidarbha (Maharashtra) and Odisha for this important meeting.

The meeting was chaired by National Chairman of the Party, Subhas Chand Tyagi. Notable amongst the present in the meeting were General Secretary of the Party, Rajesh Singh, Publication Secretary , Pranav Koul and Treasurer , Anandam.

Vikesh Beniwal (Haryana),Madhukar Nistane (Vidarbha) and Kanhu Charan Behura (Odisha) also actively participated in the deliberations.

It was also resolved to stage one day Dharna (sit-in) on 15th April to press demand for according the most favoured status to the states of Odisha and Bihar besides Vidarbha region of Maharashtra state.

Haryana, Vidarbha and Odisha will also hold their state convention after the national convention.

International Seminar on PROUT



A three-day international conference was organized by ISOL Foundation, New Delhi from 10th January, 2013 at one of the prestigious B-School in India -- Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar popularly known as XIMB.

Delegates from Austria, Estonia, France, India, Israel and Spain participated in this program. Delegates continuously emphasized on the need of spirituality today Each vertical line of society requires holistic approach for the well being of all.

On 11th January, 2013 , Prout activists Pradeep Sharma from Bilaspur, Chhatisgarh and Kanhu Charan Behura from Bhubaneswar, Odisha were felicitated by ISOL Foundation for their contributions in the field of rural development and poverty alleviation programs (based on Prout ideology). Dr. Miriam Subirana from Spain and Ashok Maitra were also felicitated for their contributions in the field of research and corporate leadership respectively.



Concluding day of the Conference, began with remembering Swami Vivekananda on his birthday.

Two lectures were delivered---first by S N Sahu, Member Rajya Sabha and then by Ashoke K. Maitree.

Organisers were highly impressed by earlier presentation on Prout, and therefore they allotted complete 1st session to lectures and presentations on this new philosophy by Proutist thinkers and activists.

The session was chaired / moderated by Rajesh Singh .Presenters included Kanhu Charan

Behura who gave insight into Economic Democracy, and Pradeep Sharma who laid emphasis on the practical side of the implementation of Prout . Then Antarang Anand Yogi gave an impressive presentation on the philosophical aspect of PROUT .

Delegates were responsive, and gave thundering applause to the presenters. In informal chat foreign as well as Indian delegates evinced keen interest in PROUT.

In other presentations every speaker emphasized on the need of ethos, cardinal values and spirituality for the well being of society in general and humankind in particular.

PIL filed by PBI Activists, Vidharba Region against corruption in Mahatma Gandhi Self Employment Guarantee Scheme (MREGS)



Public Interest Litigation filed in the High Court of Nagpur against crores of Rupees corruption in MREGS.

Self employment opportunities for rural backward classes and poor labourers under the Mahatma Gandhi Self Employment Guarantee Scheme (MREGS), in the Vidharba region is steeped in corruption, involving crores of Rupees of public money. Works that was to have been done by poor men and women was done by machines. The contractors and their agents who lured them, misused their job cards, obtained false signatures and thumb impressions and thereby made a windfall at the expense of these poor rural people - the intended beneficiaries. This was brought to the notice of the District Collector Yavatmal by the Dhame Andolan (movement) by Madhukar Nistane organizer Proutist Bloc India Vidharba region. Government officials at very high levels including the Chief Minister and Forest Minister Maharashtra were informed in writing.

As these complaints fell on deaf ears and Government failed to take notice, PBI moved the Mumbai High Court Nagpur bench and filed Public Interest Litigation No. 2135/2012 Add. This PIL had immediate effect. Collector Yavatmal conducted a full enquiry into this corruption and took action against the concerned forest officials and 34 other persons under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. Criminal cases were also filed in the Police Station Yavatmal.

The immediate arrest and suspension of the concerned officials was demanded.

UPSF Demostration, Khagaria, Bihar



Gogri (Khagaria, Bihar) :The activists of Universal Proutist Students Federation formed Block committee of Gogri Block to work for the welfare of the students and for sincerely taking up their cause . The committee is headed by Nitish Kumar Pathak.

Under the leadership of Nitish Kumar Pathak, students also staged a dharana (sit-In) before the office of Gogari block. and submitted a charter of 11-points demand.

The demand included totally free education till the highest level. Government should act only as the funding agency. There has to be absolutely no interference in educational matters.

The speakers highlighted the woes of the student community and exposed the corruption prevalent at various levels of the government.

Those who spoke on the occasion included : Virendra Kumar, Rahul Kumar, Ajay Kumar, Rintu Kumar , Pankaj Samrat, Pawan Kuma, Purusottam Kumar, Kiran Deo, Kanhaiya Kumar amd Santosh Kumar.

Lush, Green Beauty Lies Before Me

RAKTIM KISHALAY--,
ÁMI RAKTIM KISHALAY---
SOJHÁ PATHE CALIÁMI,
BÁNKÁ PATHE KABHU KABHU NA--Y---
RAKTIM KISHALAY—
ÁMI RAKTIM KISHALAY---

ÁMÁR SUMUKHE ÁCHE SHYÁMAL SHOBHÁ---
ÁMÁR DUPÁSHE ÁCHE ARUÑ ÁBHÁ---
UNCU SHIRE CALIÁMI,
NICU SHIRE KABHU KABHU NA--Y---
RAKTIM KISHALAY—
ÁMI RAKTIM KISHALAY---

ÁMÁR BÁHUTE ÁCHE VAJRER BA--L
ÁMÁR ÁNKHITE ÁCHE DRIS'TÍ VIMA--L
SOJÁ KATHÁ BHÁVIÁMI,
BÁNKÁ KATHÁ KABHU KABHU NA--Y---
RAKTIM KISHALAY--,
ÁMI RAKTIM KISHALAY---

A reddish tender leaf I am,
A reddish tender leaf.
The straight path I walk,
Never, ever on the crooked path.

Lush, green beauty lies before me
Crimson lustre radiates from my sides
I walk with head held high
Never, ever with head down.

My arms have the power of thunder,
My eyes see clear and pure.
Straight thoughts I think
Never, ever crooked thoughts
I am a reddish tender leaf.

(Translated from Bengali original)



Shri. Sonia Gandhi
Chairperson, UPA



Dr. Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister

Realising
Dreams
Building
Futures

T



**Better
Connectivity**
Cover 46,000
habitations
connected through
all-weather roads

N



**Scholarship
Schemes**
Scholarships to
about 63 lakh
minority students
and 48 lakh SC
students in 2011-12

A



**Mid Day Meal
Scheme**
Over 10.54 crore
children being
provided hot-cooked
meals in schools

M



**Sarva Shiksha
Abhiyan**
28,000 primary
schools and 6000
upper primary
schools opened

R



**Universal
Immunisation**
2.5 crore children
vaccinated

I



**Janani - Shishu
Suraksha Karyakram**
Over 1 crore
pregnant women
benefitted

B



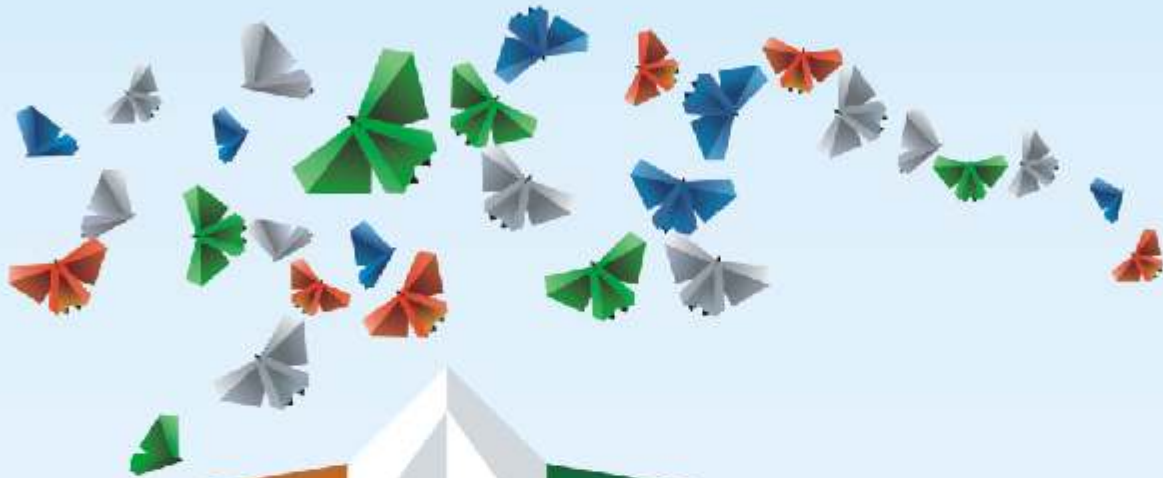
विकास की कहानी भारत निर्माण की जुबानी



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Happy
Republic Day



Smt. Sheila Dikshit
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Delhi



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & PUBLICITY
GOVERNMENT OF N.C.T. OF DELHI