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Towards a New Theory

and

The Role of Social Mobilization Groups

by Sunil Sahasrabudhey

In this paper an attempt is made to provide a theoretical frame-work for a consistent understanding of radical politics in this country. First of all the attempts to mobilize people on radical questions can be divided into two parts: One political and the other non-political. A strict division of this kind may even be questionable but I shall like to stick to it with the straight forward and ordinarily understood meanings of 'political' and 'non-political'. The exclusion from consideration of non-political mobilization is simply to keep the subject matter of the paper within manageable bounds and ought not to be taken to imply any implicit faith or value.

The radical politics, generally speaking, does not yet constitute a dominent trend in the national political life. However it can be clearly and distinctly divided into two parts. One consists of the mobilizational attempts of groups and organizations

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more or less localized at different places. The other consists of the peasant agitations. In the former we may count organisations like various CP (M-L) groups, Lohia Vichar Manch (LVM) and Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (hence forward referred to by 'Vahini'). Where as the latter includes, say, the agitations of the peasantry in Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra at present. Once again calling the activities of the above mentioned groups radical or turning the peasant agitations as of fundamental value may be disputed. In fact these very groups and activists may be reluctant to unconditionally call other's activities radical. I shall prefer however, not to get bogged down here by a debate on what constitutes radical politics, radical mobilization or radical activity. For firstly it will amount to a considerable digression and secondly part of my answer to what may constitute radical politics, will come through the theoretical consideration that are to follow.

As is my understanding, the peasant agitations are the precursor of that impending radical social movement which is likely to transform the Indian Society [illegible] and perhaps do more. The radical

mobilizational groups do not all have clear sympathies with the peasant agitations for a variety of reasons. The idea therefore is to explore the social bases of such groups which may explain their behaviour, and the state of non-development and non-unity and thus lay the basis for developing an understanding of a comprehensive and exhaustive politics of radical change.

Before we move on to the theoretical consideration just a few words about the choice of the groups for consideration. To day the CP (M-L), LVM and Vahini are precisely those groupings which are doing radical politics, whose ways of thought constitute trends of thought present in society and yet who do not play any significant role in national politics. The CP (ML) and LVM represent that aspect of communist and socialist traditions respectively which has not yet come to terms with the powers that be whose oppressive character is not in doubt. The CP (ML) groups taken together may be said to exhaustively represent such an aspect of the Indian Communist tradition but the same cannot be said of LVM. There are other splinter socialist groups who may not identify themselves with

LVM and also may not be with any of the leaders who have already taken clearly the compromising line. But LVM is the largest of such groups. In the summer of 1980 it made an effort at Bangalore to build a new organization, Samta Sangathan, but it has not really taken off yet. Vahini does not really represent any clear political trend historically identifiable. In a sense it may be said to belong to the socialist tradition and yet JP's Sarvodaya mix has introduced important differences. I have chosen it for our consideration because it is the radical successor of the Bihar Movement which can be said to constitute the real background in which Janata Party could be formed and the Indira Party defeated in the 1977 Lok Sabha Elections. So the importance of Vahini.

My understanding of the character of these groupings is based on the knowledge of their activity and extensive discussions with the activists and leaders over a period of five years now. It provided me with opportunities to understand their political character in great detail because almost invariably such discussions were held with the objective of trying to find what is common between us (I represented

the g. oup associated with Mazdoor Kisan Kranti) and if possible work out common activity. My experience is also substantially enriched by the discussions held by and experiences of, other members of our organisation.

The basic contention of the paper is that these radical mobilization groups attempt to mobilize the most oppressed of the social classes but in fact end up representing only a section of the middle class. The class they attempt to represent cannot yet stand up on its own and the class they actually represent does not have any concept of future society in so far as that is not the class which will be the bulwark of such a reconstruction. Thus neither the class they attempt to represent nor the class they actually represent constitutes sufficient social basis for a united political movement. This explains the state of non-unity and non-development of such groups. And as we shall see further, these groupings can establish a harmonious relation with the peasant movement provided, they give up their claims of leadership, for, the class they actually represent is not the vanguard class. But let us not get down to establishing these

propositions.

The Theory of Bahishkrt-Paschimikrt Divide

The colonial expansion and later, the imperialist development restructured the Indian society completely. It ruined and finished the old classes and brought into existence, new ones. The capitalists, the bureaucracy, the industrial workers and the urban middle classes all constitute the new classes. The peasantry did naturally exist in traditional India also but after the British invasion and reorganisation of Indian agriculture, the peasantry as a class was transformed completely. For the nature of a class is infact determined by its relation with other classes and the state. Apart from such changes a deeper phenomenon took place which may be called the imperialism of categories. This made educated Indians look at the Indian society through the western spectacles. The political and economic categories developed to understand the western society and its history were used to understand the Indian society also. There was an intrinsic falsehood in such an approach and the indigenous approach, traditional or non-traditional, always turned out to be more powerful and more real. The Nehruvian and the Gandhian approaches illustrate the

point abundently. Today a self-conscious non-traditional, non-modern approach has become possible because the class that is to create a non-traditional, non-modern society is coming into its own, slowly becoming conscious of its capacity and destiny. I would myself like to classify my approach as one such approach.

The British policy divided India fundamentally into two parts. The first part consisted of those who found a place in the new system based on western industry and westernised value-system. This can be called the Paschimikrt Samaj. The other part consisted of people who found no place in the dominant parts of the new system. This may be called the Bahishkrt Samaj. By and large the urban society is Paschimikrt and the rural people are Bahishkrt. It is no emotional identification but is arrived at starting with the first principles of Marx's thought. There will be no difficulty in doing this if one accepts at the outset that the political and economic categories developed by Marx were expressely meant to be the analytical tools for a socio-historical understanding of the Western society. And that the modern development of Indian society has little in common with capitalist development in the West. To

mention a few very striking dissimilarities:

1) The change from traditional to modern in India was not a product of struggles within our society; thus the change was alien to start with.

2) The series of changes that changed India from traditional to modern were all reactionary. This is substantiated by the fact that such changes unlike in Europe were never popular. The history of 19th century India is the history of peasant revolts and cultural opposition.

3) Unlike Europe, the peasantry here did not disintegrate spontaneously under the thrust of capitalist development. And instead transformed itself into a 'new' class, peasantry again. Now let us see the argument in skeleton.

The British policy first ruined Indian agriculture and the coupled industry. Thus rupturing the traditional system. In place of this a development mode was envisaged which could provide market for the British goods and later for investment of capital in addition to the direct loot of the indigenous product and raw materials. This involved:

1) keeping peasantry constantly at its labour
and
2) developing urban classes which would stand for the British ways in general. These urban classes were constituted of those who found a place in the opportunities created by the new industry, the new administration, the new educational system, the system of judiciary etc.

This was the Paschimikrt Samaj which gave credence to the British Rule first and later mustered enough strength to challenge it.

The oppression of the peasantry was of a new type. The peasant belonged neither to the traditional system nor to the modern. Not only that a far greater part (sometimes 9/10) of its produce was taken away by the British rulers - but that his productive activity itself played a subordinate role now. In traditional India agriculture was the most wide-spread, but not dominant. It was now at the service of the dominant metropolitan mode. Thus the peasantry belonged to an economic system whose role was to serve the growth of another dominant system. This made the peasantry economically Bahishkrt.

→ and also dominant mode of production. ~~Fact now~~
~~Note~~ It was ~~still~~ now the most wide-spread

As a natural corollary the social values of these people gave way to westernised values which constituted the ideological basis of the new development. Their value system also assumed a secondary position thus making them Bahishkrt socially too. Thus it is not merely that the modern development divided the country into Paschimikrt and Bahishkrt Samaj but a specific relation came to subsist between these two parts. Bahishkrt Samaj was in the service of the Paschimikrt Samaj.

The leading sections of the Paschimikrt Samaj were opposed to the British rule because they wanted to have their own control on government policies and therefore on the mode of development. They were not opposed to the nature of development initiated by the British. The Bahishkrt Samaj, however, stood in total opposition to the new system and the new mode of development, economics, politics, culture, everything. For, it was this new mode which had stripped it of everything that it possessed and made it Bahishkrt. The world views of the two, the Bahishkrt and the Paschimikrt Samaj find their clearest expression in the thoughts of Gandhi and Nehru. What is most significant to note is that before independence this Bahishkrt Samaj is not conscious of its Bahishkrt nature

and its relation with the imperial power is mediated by the local authority like the Zamindars. Absence of the direct relation with the central power is in fact one important reason why the rural masses remain unconscious of their Bahishkrt state. The changes that have taken place after independence have made the rural masses conscious of their Bahishkrt state and this, from the point of view of social change, is perhaps the most important difference between pre-independence and post-independence India.

Post-Independence India

Independence meant the rule of the Paschimikrt Samaj or rather the leading sections of the Paschimikrt Samaj - the big bourgeoisie. This meant industrialization at a far greater speed than in the colonial period and alongside the spread of western values at practically the neck-break speed. In the colonial period the British rule was generally afraid of the Paschimikrt Samaj gathering enough strength to overthrow it. Since greater industrialization would have recurrent increase in strength of the Paschimikrt Samaj it was kept at a low key by the British. But independence meant removal of all such extraneous considerations. Thus the policy of the government

after independence in fact flattened the Paschimkrt Samaj. At the same time the abolition of landlordism and the agricultural policy gave rise to the development of a section of the peasantry. Thus, almost two decades after independence there was general political stability. The reason simply was that the Paschimikrt Samaj was stable as a class due to increase in numerical strength even if there may not have been any significant increase in the real income and the Bahishkrt Samaj was not yet conscious of its Bahishkrt nature and hence could not initiate new political processes.

Mid-way through the sixties new contradictions started emerging. A section of the peasantry finds itself close to the Paschimikrt set up being still outside it. This is the upper stratum of the peasantry whose economic condition has improved through the use of modern technique. It is this section which starts raising its head 1967 onwards and we find that the politics of the country thereafter is primarily determined by the contradiction (struggle) between this peasant class and the industrial big bourgeoisie. Even today this peasant class is part of the Bahishkrt Samaj - socially definitely so and economically finding itself on the verge of entering

the Paschimikrt set up. But as we shall see later the Paschimikrit set up is hardly in a position to incorporate new classes in it. Nevertheless this peasant class, in it's struggle against the industrial bourgeoisie, attempts to mobilize the entire peasantry on the rural-urban and farm vs. industry divide. This makes the entire peasantry conscious of it's Bahishkrt nature. In fact this is the process that is on thrcugh the peasant agitations. These agitations ought not to be seen as price-movements. Their identification lies in the dynamic of their demands. A dynamic which is still open ended in so far the agitating class is not yet fully aware of it's destiny. These agitations may be seen as being in continuity with Gandhiji's movements. Gandhiji represented a Bahishkrt Samaj which was not conscious of its Bahishkrt nature.

The poorest sections of the rural workers do not yet identify themselves with these peasant movements. There are Harijans and the farm labourers. The radical mobilization groups attempt to represent these poorest sections. But since these poorest sections have not become conscious of their Bahishkrt nature because of their role and place in the production process, they do not yet have a basis of their own to stand up and assume the position of

leadership in the impending change.

The affect of the post-independent development on the Paschimikrt Samaj has been almost equally significant. By the mid-sixties the westernized development process came to a point where on the rate of flattening of the Paschimikrt Samaj started falling. This meant that the rate at which the aspiration of the urban middle classes were rising became higher than the rate at which new opportunities were being created. This is the time since when the problem of educated unemployment came to existence. It may be reminded that it is in the mid-sixties that the first engineering college strike takes place.

This fact of a section of the Paschimikrt Samaj being thrown out of the dominant system is of great significance. These classes had come into existence and grown as part and parcel of the new set up. Thus this phenomenon has consequences of civilizational dimension. Unemployment of the educated is the measure of the strength of this section which is being thrown out of the system. It's political reflection is chiefly the student politics. The radical modernization groups

in fact represent this section of our society. This section of the Paschimikrt Samaj which has no more any place in the dominant system can be said to be the natural ally of the Bahishkrt Samaj in the impending transformation. Let us, then, before proceeding to the question of the social basis of the radical modernization groups, consider some important features or characteristics of this section of the Paschimikrt Samaj.

(1) Economically it is being thrown out of the system but socially and culturally it is part of the system. This situation is exactly opposite of the upper stratum of the Bahishkrt Samaj which is outside the system socially and culturally and on the verge of entering the system economically. It may be noted that economically a section may be thrown out or incroporated in the system in a short time, say a generation, but for the same to happen socially or culturally is sure to take a long time, say several generations.

(2) The economic Bahishkrtness becoming deeper and wider day by day makes clear, partly to itself, that it is impossible to regain the old position in the system. This has the inevitable result of questioning the value-system which constitutes the theoretical basis of this system. Emergence of a section of the intelligensia, which is refusing to accept the 'established' or 'received' truths about the fundamentals or philosophy of development, technology, science, etc. is a clear manifestation of such a situation. The talk of alternatives spreading into newer and newer areas of human knowledge and exercise is precisely this.

(3) There is a certain rootlessness about this class. It is perhaps, because it has never known any ideas other than those western and thus simply does not have any starting point for the creation of a set of non-western ideas. This is resulting, on the one hand, in a reconstruction of 'tradition' and on the other working with ideas like democracy and equality under the illusion that the content of such ideas is totally general.

(4) It struggles on questions of fundamental importance but on it's own it is unable to take the struggle towards fundamental change. The reason is in (3).

(5) It has the capacity to reject all that is modern-western but has no capacity to work out the positive basis of the new society. In fact on it's own the clean society that it can imagine is only a cleaner version of the western society.

(6) It does not have clear sympathy with the movements of the Bahishkrt Samaj because it is incapable of sufficiently radical thought. Although it has moorings for a radical change it's thought pattern is still considerably dictated by the leading sections of the Paschimikrt Samaj. Thus it is led to see traditional content in traditional forms of oppression. This leads to it's imagined closeness with the lowest sections of the rural society and blown up and distorted constructions of the contradictions ~~of the contradictions~~ between the

the upper and lower strata in the rural society.

(7) Two features of the student politics in the last decade are most notable: One, it's widespreadness and two, anarchy and valulessness prevailing in it. This first is because the action of the Paschimikrt Samaj that is being thrown out of the system is coming into greater and greater contradiction with the system. The reason for the second is simply the inability of this class to find a radical mode of liberation on it's own. The student politics can find a long term direction only when it is coupled with the movement of the Bahishkrt Samaj; today the peasant agitations.

These contraditions by themselves lead us to the conclusions stated in the beginning with regard to the nature and state of the radical mobilization groups. Nevertheless we may go into some detail now.

Social Basis of the Radical Mobilization Groups

The activity of all the three groupings, the CP (M-L), the LVM and the Vahini, involves organising the rural poor.

As we shall presently see the LVM is slightly different from the other two. The CP (M-L) has been organising the rural poor against the local rich whom they consider zamindars or feudal land lords. The main activity of the Vahini has been organising the poor against the Mahanth of Bodh Gaya in Bihar. These mobilizations are done basically on the question of land, which they both appear to consider the fundamental question of the Indian revolution. The LVM, however, has been attempting to organise the rural youth on the question of unemployment which, indeed, in my opinion is a far more fundamental question than the land question. In fact the land question is only a special case of the unemployment question. But the LVM too over-rates the importance of the contradictions within the rural society and very often organises the rural poor against the rural rich.

I do not want, here, to go into the details of the theoretical frameworks that emerge or are expressed in their activity. My concern, here, is to focus attention on the fact that they in reality represent that section of the Paschimikrt Samaj which is being thrown out of the system. It is revealing to note the nature of the difficulty they face once the organisation

and mobilization proceeds to measurable lengths in some areas.

The C.P. Reddy group of Andhra Pradesh has been organising rural poor in one of the talukas of the Karimnagar district. It has, for a long time been declared as 'disturbed' under the Disturbed Areas Act. The activists involved in the organization work there and also the leadership openly admits that their struggle has reached a state of stalemate, that they have successfully waged struggle against the landlords (called 'Dora' there) but are unable to turn this struggle against the state. The Vinod Misra group has been involved in organising rural poor against the local rich in the Bhojpur area for several years now. They have been facing a similar difficulty. Their Eleventh party conference held some time in the last months of 1979 redefined the tasks. In the four tasks mentioned the last one talks of organising the rural people directly against the state. They see such a development in terms of the necessity of broad overground mobilization. But what cannot be missed is the growing realization among them that 'anti-feudal activity does not amount

to 'anti-state' activity. The inevitable theoretical consequences is that the ruling class is not feudal. But they cannot draw such conclusions. Because such a conclusion for them would mean that the country has become capitalist and the revolution will be socialist. They are prisoners of the imperialism of categories. They on their own cannot liberate themselves from alien thought patterns, for they, ultimately, represent that section of the middle classes which is being thrown out of the system. Since this class is incapable of independent development it's representatives are incapable of developing a new and real theory of social change and hence cannot give up a well knit theory that they are working with.

The case of Vahini is not very different. In the summer of 1980, the entire leadership resigned expressing it's inability to build an organisation that can become the instrument of change. It is no case of individual or organisational failure. Seen in a wider context it becomes immediately apparent that the rural poor, whom the Vahini attempts to organise and represent does not as a class constitute sufficient basis for independent political organisation. The Bihar movement, in fact, is

the most outstanding example of the movement of that section which is being thrown out of the system. Vahini represents the radical moorings of the same but is so strictly a prisoner of the imperialism of categories that as an organisation it cannot be expected to change itself into representing Bahishkrt Samaj.

The case of LVM, as stated earlier, is slightly different. Greater stress on the question of unemployment reflects a broader outlook and some grasp of the fact that modern-westernism is the primary evil. Compared to CP (M-L) and Vahini it also has clearer sympathies with the peasant movement. Yet the basic vascillation is far too clear. It's leadership (Kishan Pattanaik in Samayik Varta) has gone to the extent of calling, at one time, the student movement in Orissa more important than the peasant movement. It very clearly identifies the Hindu tradition as an evil on par with the modern-western system. All this finds a clear expression in it's activity. It is surely not as clearly a prisoner of the imperialism of categories as CP (M-L) is but it's insistent emphasis on 'equality' and 'democracy' gives the impression that

it, as an organisation, shall not be able to cast off the imperial network of categories.

This section of the socialists does not present itself as a well knit organisation. Not because, as they think, the socialists are traditionally weak on 'organisation' but because it represents a wider interest. Although it attempts to represent the poorest section of the rural society and ends up representing that section of the Paschimikrt Samaj which is being thrown out of the system, still it has certain comprehension and feeling of the new and conscious trends developing in the Bahishkrt Samaj. This is finding expression in Karnataka.

In conclusion I only wish to state that a far reaching and consistent politics of radical social change can be developed only on the basis of a judicious combination of the interests of the Bahishkrt Samaj and that section of the Paschimikrt Samaj which is being thrown out of the dominant system. The radical mobilization groups can have a great value in this process provided they see themselves not as leaders

but as participants, not as pathfinders but as path clearers.

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BETWEEN QUESTION AND CLARITY

The Place of Science in a People's Movement *

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INTRODUCTION

Whatever I am going to say this evening is based upon the collective experience and insight gained by the Kishore Bharati Group in the field of development and social change since 1972. Located in village Palia Piparia of Bankhedi Block in the eastern tip of Hoshangabad District of Madhya Pradesh, the Kishore Bharati Group has conducted a wide-variety of experiments concerned with economic growth, social organisation, youth involvement, health and education, both formal and non-formal. Although the economic development and health programmes have been concentrated mainly within Bankhedi Block and surrounding villages, the educational and youth involvement work has allowed us to interact not just with the people of Hoshangabad Disgrict but far beyond with varuous groups of people in other parts of Madhya Pradesh as well. The focus of all of these activities has been to explore the fundamental causes of the severe poverty, exploitation and disparity in our society, and to evolve ways of resolving these contradictions. The strategy has been to subject all of our experiences to exhaustive scientific analysis with the purpose of evolving general principles which could have wider social application. This exercise of building up theoretical understanding through field-level practice has been further enriched by relating whatever we have learned with what Government agencies, other voluntary groups, and people's movements have been learning in different parts of the country. For this enrichment we must thank those hundreds of activists and thinkers who have more than willingly shared their experiences and analyses with us, and thus have made us a part of the nation-wide struggle for social justice and development.

One more remark seems necessary by way of introduction. My talk this evening will draw heavily upon the experiences of others, including those of the Government agencies, voluntary groups and people's movements. These experiences are used here as case studies for bringing out contradictions in our society and for evolving hypotheses for further experimentation. Nowhere these case studies are presented as personal criticism of people who are working in these organisations. I must convey my feelings of fellowship to all such people for they too, just like us, must be engaged in their own battles against injustices, irrationality, stagnancy and other mechanisms of backwardness within their own organisations. Through this talk, I hope to do my little bit in breaking the isolation of these people and thus place their battles in a national perspective.

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FIVE EXPERIENCES

Let me begin with a meeting to which I was invited last year around this time to review the Science and Technology (S&T) component of education in the context of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to make recommendations to the Planning Commission to make S&T education more relevant to the socio-economic needs of Indian society. The Chairman of the meeting began by inviting the experts to make their recommendations. One after another, the experts started reeling off their views on various schemes and ideas which need to be implemented. After three such statements, a couple of us intervened and inquired whether a critique of the S&T component of education in previous Five Year Plans was available. Of course no such critique could be produced. We then suggested that the meeting should first attempt to find out the manner in which the previous Plans had failed to relate the S&T education to the needs of society. Only then would we have a scientific basis for making fresh recommendations, we argued. What amazed us was total lack of interest in the entire body of national experts who had gathered there to spend even a few minutes on this question. Judging the mood of the meeting, the Chairman had to escape the dilemma by announcing, "We all know what was wrong with the previous Plans. We must now begin afresh and make new recommendations." The meeting then went on merrily for the next four hours, each expert making a fresh recommendation, often totally unrelated to what was said by others, and fully oblivious of the fact that what was being recommended by him or her had already been implemented in one form or another in the previous Plans. Whenever one of us tried to point this out, there were hurried attempts to hush up such uncomfortable questions so that 'we make the best use of the valuable time of the experts.' At the end of the meeting I wondered whether these scientists and educationists would have picked up a research problem without surveying the previous literature. Obviously not. Why was then this scientific practice of analysing the previous experience before beginning a new piece of research work so blatantly ignored at this meeting on S&T education? Why didn't this unscientific approach disturb the national experts assembled there for the very purpose of improving science education? The story of this meeting is typical of all the meetings which I have had a chance to attend during the last several years - be it on adult education, or on rural development, or on bonded labour, or on collective management, or on

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appropriate technology, or on the role of voluntary agencies. In all of these meetings, there has been a commonality - a complete lack of interest in analysing the historical experiences not only of others but also their own, a general unpreparedness to learn from the past, and yet there has been an eagerness to make quick recommendations unmindful of the fact that these so-called new ideas have been part of the nation's previous experience. One is struck by the absence of scientific methodology at such high echelons of Indian bureaucracy and technocracy. How does one explain this contradiction?

Let me take another example. In 1969, I attended a UNESCO workshop of a small group of molecular biologists and biochemists at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. At our request, a special meeting was convened to discuss the implications of the recent developments in the field of genetics on the policy of malaria eradication being followed in India and other Third World countries. Some of the leading authorities on malaria eradication from a national level agency were called to discuss this issue. You would all recall that this was a time when highly disturbing reports regarding the reappearance of malaria were being received. The heady dream of seeing an India free of malaria was already being doubted. There was sufficient scientific basis to face the unpalatable fact of mosquitos resistant to DDT appearing on the scene. The biologists referred to the genetic mechanism ofthe appearance of drug resistance. It was explained that mutations leading to drug resistance appear randomly at very low frequencies, maybe one in a million. The drug may wipe out all the sensitive organisms except the mutant. The mutant would then reproduce making the drug ineffective. It was also explained how the simultaneous use of two or three drugs would reduce the probability of the appearance of drug-resistant mutants by a million times or more. The practical output of this theoretical understanding would be to add one or two more insecticides to the DDT spray, and thus save the country from the appearance of resistant mosquitoes. The malaria experts were amused, to say the least.

The seniormost amongst them politely pointed out that their concern was with practical programmes of eradication and not with biological theories, which, though founded on scientific lines, were of value only within the confines of laboratories. He further explained that the National Malaria Eradication Programme had been sanctioned and blessed by funds and technical guidance from WHO, the DDT spray

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programme was running at full steam and no changes could be undertaken on the basis of theoretical concepts. When pressed by the biologists, the experts reiterated that even if a few resistant mosquitos had appeared, it would not matter since the programme was nationwide. "A few resistant mosquitos must not cloud our view," they stressed. The biologists lost the argument, but as all of you know, resistant mosquitos have won the day! Why is it that the seniormost scientists working for malaria eradication ignored scientific arguments and biological facts? It is difficult to believe that they were not familiar with the genetic arguments advanced by the biologists. Why is it, then, that the malaria experts, and also such an august body as WHO, pressed on with DDT spray when scientific theory belied the very basis of the programme? What is the fundamental reason behind this irrationality? It is unbelievable that even now DDT spray is being piously applied by malaria workers all over the Indian countryside, when the entire body of scientists, not to speak of the public, know that mosquitos are fast turning resistant. Equally unbelievable is the fact that respectable international aid programme continue to support and encourage this totally unscientific waste of the nation's resources, and continue to buttress the attrition of Indian manpower. And probably even more disturbing is the knowledge that leading technocrats and opinion-builders of the nation have turned a blind eye to this contradiction in the management of one of the crucial health problems.

Let us be sure that we are not talking of isolated instances. We are in fact referring to a national pattern. Let us take a third example.

The textbooks recommended by a leading national agency carry a chapter on population to generate awareness amongst the children regarding this critical national problem. We have analysed the population chapters threadbare. These chapters talk of the accelerating rate of population growth which negates the fruits of increasing production and thus creates poverty. The chapters argue that India's poverty problems could be resolved merely by controlling population and by increasing production.

The thesis being presented in these textbooks does not explain why India's godowns are full of grains, while multitudes, who in fact produce the grain, remain undernourished and even die of hunger. These textbooks do not refer to the problem of distribution of resources, disparities in society, and the extremely low purchasing power of the people living below the poverty line. A couple of years ago, at a training course for 400 science teachers of Hoshangabad District, we asked the

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teachers to conduct a survey of malnutrition in Hoshangabad and surrounding villages. The objective was to train these teachers in scientific methods of data collection and analysis on the basis of a problem existing in their own environment. When given this project, the teachers laughed, for they had read in their school textbooks that Hoshangabad District was surplus in wheat. How, then, could there be any malnutrition, and that too in and around the district headquarter of Hoshangabad? Maybe you would find cases of malnutrition in some remote tribal villages, one of the teachers pointed out. However, we pursuaded the teachers to go ahead with the survey. Within hours reports started pouring in regarding children suffering from severe malnutrition right in the midst of the town. By evening, the teachers had data to prove that malnutrition was characteristic of harijan and tribal sections of the villages. We had then the scientific basis for raising the next question, "How is it that these children are suffering from malnutrition, while each village of the region is exporting wheat?" And then, suddenly, the brighter teachers asked, "Why is it that the textbooks teach that poverty is chiefly a result of population growth? negating the fruits of production?" should our textbooks not explain to children the percolation or lack of percolation of the benefits of increased production to the people living below the poverty line? How is it that our textbooks have managed to ignore this basic malaise of our society, namely, the fruits of increased production do not reach the poor, despite being available in so-called abundance? Does it not make you wonder that a single scientific survey enabled the Hoshangabad teachers to see through the population-production myth being promoted in our textbooks, while the irrationality behind this myth has escaped the attention of a leading national agency given the task of educating India's children.

I would now like to take up one more example to substantiate the point which I am making. Three years ago, I was introduced to a British Council expert in the office of one of the heads of the departments of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

The British Council expert explained that he was in India to advise NCERT on audio-visual aids, especially on the production of slide-cum-tape modules. I inquired whether he was aware of the conditions in Indian schools which lacked funds for buying even chalk and <u>taat-pattis</u>.

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or of the fact that most of the schools were beyond the reach of electricity and worked in single rooms often loaned to them by the grace of a local feudal landlord. The British expert showed awareness of all this. I naturally, then, wanted to know the logical basis on which the British Council wanted to take up such an irrelevant activity in the Indian school system The expert had no answer. Yet, during the last three years, the British Council programme has grown and spread. Hundreds of science education workers and experts have been trained and have become busy in producing fancy slide-cum-tape modules feverishly all over the country in teacher-training institutes and other science education centres. At a meeting of teacher-educators in Jabalpur last month, a number of such modules were exhibited with great pride, for these represented the entry of the teacher-training institutes into an advanced technology framework, having been given a large amount of modern equipment such as expensive cameras, projectors, and tape recorders under a foreign-aided programme. When anyone tried to find out what use would be made of these prize exhibits, there was always an uncomfortable silence. Another shocking effect of this kind of activity also emerged at the Jabalpur meeting. The language of the module was so highly sanskritized that it was totally incomprehensible to the primary school children for whom the module was prepared. Even the advice on better nutrition showed no awareness of the conditions of poverty from which these children came, since the module advised the children to eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, milk products and meat! When the attention of the experts was drawn to these gaps, a village teacher quipped, "Why do you worry at all? This material would never reach the primary school anyway." This simple truth so well understood by the village teacher was apparently beyond the comprehension of the national experts and international aid agencies who are behind this programme. The irrationality of this activity is further emphasized by our knowledge that the audio-visual teams presently engaged in producing these expensive modules have neither shown any interest in the past nor ability for producing simple wall charts for classrooms! Suppose a question was raised in the Lok Sabha regarding this national wastage of energy and diversion of valuable resources, how would NCERT explain the implementation of a programme which ignored the socio-economic conditions of Indian schools?

From what I have said so far, an impression might be emerging that unscientific traditions and irrational thinking characterize only the highly educated elite and thus constrain

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only the national level agencies. The irrational processes in fact seem to pervade the rest of society as well. Ten years ago I attended an All India Conference of Sarvodaya workers at Nasik in the august presence of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. The conference had decided to start concentrated programmes for strengthening the Gramdan movement. Each State was asked to select three Districts for special effort so that the energies of all the cadres could be concentrated to show successful results. After this general session each State unit met separately. At the Uttar Pradesh meeting, the State-level secretary asked the workers to propose the names of three such Districts. No one dared to speak. The secretary then suggested that Balia District should be the first to be selected 'because JP was born in this District'. He went on to propose that Agra could be the second District since the President of the State unit hailed from there. And the third District should be, of course, one to which he belonged. It was amazing the readiness with which almost 300 Sarvodaya * workers raised their hands affirming the proposal. No one questioned the criteria of selection. An entire year's programme had been planned without any reference to the socio-economic conditions in a particular region, or to the availability of manpower, or to the potential response of the people. Why is it that the mere birth of Jayaprakash Narayan becomes a valid basis of selecting a District, and that this makes sense to hundreds of trained cadres? Does it not show a critical gap in the training of these workers or possibly in the entire tradition of Sarvodaya?

CONSTRUCTING THEORY FROM PRACTICE

Let us now try to understand the basis of this wide-spread irrational and unscientific behaviour in our society It is only with this understanding that we can hope to build up a programme to resolve the crisis. I recall at this moment the first training course we organized in 1972 for 40 village science teachers of Hoshangabad District. On the very first day we asked the teachers to measure the length of a table lying before them. A metre stick in hand, each teacher went up to the table and carefully measured its length and recorded the reading on a paper slip. At the end of the exercise the readings were transferred from the paper slips to the blackboard. Suddenly there was a lot of whispering amongst the teachers. Several of them stood up and protested against the results. The readings showed tremendous variation - these varied from 98 cms to 108 cms. A second attempt was made. This time the variation was reduced. The readings

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now varied from 100 cms to 106 cms. On the third attempt the range of variation was from 101 cms to 105 cms. However, the truth was that the variation remained. It could be reduced by practice and improved skill, but could never be made zero. There was a great deal of hue and cry amongst the teachers. How could it happen? Science was concerned with eternal truth, one teacher philosophised. "How could the truth be variable?" another demanded. Obviously neither the table nor the metre stick was changing in length, most of the teachers insisted. Year after year we have repeated this exercise with fresh batches of teachers until it has become an accepted feature for about six hundred teachers engaged in science education in the District's more than two hundred middle schools. That variation was intrinsic to all scientific observation is a concept which has been culturally and philosophically one of the most unpalatable concepts for our science teachers.

The question is, therefore, whether such variation in observation is a phenomenon confined to natural sciences alone, or whether such variations characterise social sciences as well. We now have evidence of two kinds of variations in observation in social sciences. The first one concerns sampling errors. As an example, an interesting story needs to be told. Two years ago we organised a youth camp to study the impact of severe drought affecting Madhya Pradesh. Some of the youth had surveyed the effect of drought on employment conditions. The data collected by them were being examined. One of them from the village Kamti remarked that there was hardly any unemployment problem in his village, for his data showed that labour was not available for digging wells. He gave precise figures of the wells awaiting completion. Immediately, another young fellow from the same village showed his disagreement He also produced data on the large-scale migration of the landless and marginal farmers from the same village to find employment on railway lines and on PWD roads. A detailed analysis followed. It was revealed that both the young men had presented correct data. Then what was the truth about unemployment? The difference in the two positions turned out to be the result of the different socio-economic background of the two persons - one of them hailed from a rich farmer background, while the other was a small farmer living in the poorer part of the village. The first one found it difficult to get labour because his people either underpaid or did not pay at all, and also because they could not ensure

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long-term employment. The second one, being closer to the reality of poverty had first-hand experience of a different kind. The particular social background of the first observer constrained his view, since it emerged from observations of partial reality of the richer few. Thus in social sciences, observational differences are often a result of the way samples are collected which in turn is a consequence of the socio-economic differences in the backgrounds of the observers. It is our contention that such errors can be corrected by scientific training as we were able to do during the youth camp two years ago.

There is a second source of observational differences, however, which seems to be beyond the realm of scientific training. Let us consider an example of this. I had an opportunity to be a member of a small team sent by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India in 1978 to Orissa to do developmental planning for a cluster of five villages in Puri District. During our stopover in Bhubaneshwar, the Government experts briefed us on the results of their survey of the same cluster of villages. We were told that the primary need of the area was for developmental programmes, especially a large-scale cattle development effort involving artificial insemination centres, fodder cultivation, veterinary services and cattle feed supply networks. However, during our own survey, we were struck by the drought conditions and the extreme poverty of the region. How could such a drought-stricken area support a cattle development programme, we failed to understand. We stopped by at number of landless peasants working on the fields of others, and asked them, "Suppose the Government is willing to undertake programmes according to your needs, what would you like the Government to do for you?" One of them pointed to the barren hillock nearby and suggested that the hillock be afforested. Another suggested that the contract of the local minor forest produce, such as mahua, should be subdivided into small contracts and be given to the poor people on bank loans, so that the rich contractors from the north did not take away their wealth. The third pointed out that the large tracts of the unused Government land, as well as the land belonging to the rich people, be redistributed amongst the landless. Not one of them even mentioned a cattle development programme. What then was the basis of the briefing given to us at Bhubaneshwar? When pressed with our questions, the Government experts told us flatly that we had been talking to the wrong people. They took us to the homes of a couple of rich farmers who gave us good refreshment and of course asked us to recommend cattle development programmes to the

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Government in New Delhi. Here was an example of observational differences in social sciences whose basis must be understood. When viewed from the perspective of rich farmers and the vested interests of Government experts, large-scale and well-funded development programmes appear to be the need of a region. However, when viewed from the perspective of massive poverty, redistribution of resources and changes in management practices of the existing resources appeared to be the need. There is a wealth of evidence to show that such differences are related to the vested interests dominating the social structure. Scientific training can be of little help in such cases.

It is our experience that, whenever confronted with economic interests and questions of socio-political power, scientific processes often reach their limits. We have gone deep into this subject, and have been amazed by the wide-spread influence of this type of observational differences on the very directions and priorities of rural development. We first became aware of this malaise of development programmes through one of our own experiences. We had organised a small cattle development programme, including a cross-breeding service, in Bankhedi in 1972. We had been advised by some of the leading-most authorities concerned with milk co-operatives and cattle breeding that milch cattle was the most suitable cottage industry for generating massive rural employment. Successful examples of Amul in Kheda District of Gujarat and of Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundation at Uruli Kanchan in Pune District of Maharashtra had often been quoted to us. After three years of this work, we looked at our data to see who were the people who had benefitted from the cross-breeding service. We found that most of the beneficiaries were well-to-do farmers and successful lawyers or banias from a nearby town. A small number belonged to the middle farmer class. No one had come forward for cross-bred cattle from the marginal farmer and landless classes. "How would such a programme help the rural poor?" we wondered. We were upset by these data and decided to check with another local voluntary agency also involved with cattle breeding. Their experiences matched with ours, although this agency worked in an irrigated region and had easy access to the markets of the towns. However, we were continuously reading newspaper reports and hearing seminars in which a reputed voluntary organization was claiming that the benefits of cattle breeding are distributed amongst all classes of the rural population. We then decided to look at the registers kept at the insemination centres of this voluntary agency. There was a big gap between the public claim by this agency and the data in its registers. Here, too, the poor sections of population were again excluded from the cattle breeding benefits. Why, then, did this voluntary organisation as well as several important Government agencies

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continue to present cattle development programmes as a means of solving rural poverty? Nowhere do we read analyses showing the differential impact of cattle development on rural people. Why is it that our observations do not match with the observations of several leading agencies of the nation while the reality in all such experiences is the same? It appears as if there is a conscious effort to supress and mutilate certain kinds of observations in social sciences. There is growing evidence to this effect. Last year, All India Radio, Bhopal interviewed us. During the interview we narrated our experience of cattle development. The first part of the statement referred to the number of beneficiaries, to our attempts to popularise fodder and to spread knowledge of animal husbandry. In the second part of our statement, we pointed out how the programme had failed to make any impact on rural poverty. The taped interview was taken away by AIR and we we were dumbfounded when it was broadcast a week later. The first part of our statement presenting a glamorous view of our work was broadcast, but the second half was methodically excluded. Supression of scientific observation was clearly in evidence. This experience of ours should help in understanding the experience I have narrated from Orissa. It is not a question of a lack of scientific method in our thinking. It is clearly a question of confrontation with vested interests which prevent scientific processes.

Besides the matter of scientific observation which I have discussed, the second dimension of the method of science is concerned with analytical thinking, or the logical process. Let us examine its role in social sciences. Once again I would like to share one of our experiences with you. Along with our cattle development programme in 1972, we introduced a new technology of digging irrigation wells in our area. These wells, called ring wells, are made up of prefabricated concrete rings which are sunk in the ground and are able to tap the aquafer in the same way as tube-wells. Inexpensive, technologically within the means of a rural community and constructed within two weeks, ring wells are a text-book example of appropriate technology. Ring wells have spread in more than 100 villages and about 500 such wells are already irrigating approximately 5000 acres of land, generating new employment and changing one-crop zones to two or three-crop zones. Despite these optimistic observations, our group subjected the data to further analysis. This revealed in 1977 that the wells had then increased the annual agricultural production of the area by Rs.12.5 lakhs. Out of this additional annual income, Rs.9.5 lakhs had gone to the 300 farmers who then owned the ring wells. The remaining Rs.3 lakhs were distributed amongst a couple of thousand of farm labourers. Obviously much more

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had gone to the landed few and much less to the large number of landless in the area. We concluded thereby that the production of ring wells, though benefitting the region in an absolute sense, was at the same time increasing the gap between the rich and the poor The realisation of this limitation of agricultural development as a means of solving rural poverty forced us to explore alternatives. We examined the case of cottage industries as an instrument for generating rural employment. A number of exploratory projects such as carpentary and manufacture of electric chokes were undertaken. In addition, markets were surveyed to assess the potential of selling a variety of cottage-industry products ranging from soaps to agar-battis. The size of local markets for indigenous shoes and ready-made clothes was also assessed. The results of this entire exercise were compiled and analysed. We discovered that a total of about twenty cottage industries could generate jobs for only about 100 poor families in Bankhedi Block consisting of 125 villages and more than 1 lakh people. Obviously a drop in the ocean. We also found out that most of the transactions in the village markets involved the well-to-do and the middle classes. The poor, despite their vast majority, had only a small share. Analysis also revealed that the limited potential of cottage industries in rural areas had little to do with the lack of knowledge of modern technology, or with low trainability, or with meagre managerial skills, but it had more to do with the limited capabilities of markets. The low purchasing power of the vast majority of the people living below the poverty line and the domination of village markets by competitive goods from urban middle-size and monopolist industries defined the boundary conditions of the rural marketing system. Despite this glaring reality, the Government agencies and several voluntary groups continue to glamorise the role of cottage industries in rural development. Why has this reality been so systematically ignored by so many groups and agencies over the last several decades? Why is it that this simple analysis of the limitation of cottage industries has not been presented from public platforms by the Government Departments of Industries and a large number of voluntary groups? Is it that the educated elite and the national leaders are incapable of the needed logical exercise or is it that the socio-economic crisis and the insoluble problems of rural poverty make it too dangerous to scientifically accept this reality?

What concerns us this evening is not the limitations of cattle development, or of irrigation programmes, or of cottage industries as instruments for solving India's poverty,

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but the fact that an analytical view of rural development problems is not being shared with the people of this country. Our brief experience has revealed to us that the rural society is critically divided into two sections - a small minority of the rich and middle-level farmers which siphons off the benefits of development programmes and has vested interest in their continuity, and a vast majority of the landless, marginal farmers, and artisans which is excluded from this process and is generally not influenced by what goes on in the Planning Commission and the agencies or Departments concerned with Industry, Development, Science and Technology. Whenever somebody preaches rural development, we always want to understand whose development is being talked about. Is one referring to development of the moneylender or of the rich farmers or of the marginal peasants or of the landless labour? When such analysis is negated, it leads to the typical confusion which is reflected in such questionable phrases as the rural - urban gap, or planning from below, or community development, or the panchayati raj, or people's participation. Such phrases presume the existence of a homogenous community or imply that the poor do not exist in cities and the rich do not live in villages. It is our contention that as long as scientific analysis of India's development experience is avoided or suppressed, the basic premise of the entire planning process shall remain untenable.

Regarding scientific analysis, there is often loose talk about this process being the exclusive preserve of the educated elite. Our experience of non-formal education has given us sufficient evidence to challenge this grave misunderstanding. I am reminded of a brief interaction with a representative of Khadi Gramodyog Commission who once met me accidentally in a bank office. He was looking extremely unhappy. On enquiries he revealed that his main job was to popularise the electriaally operated potter's wheel, nicknamed "Power Chak". He was disturbed because, despite his hard work, no potter was willing to accept a power chak, although he was offering subsidies, low interest credits and all other necessary support. I asked him if he could explain his failure to popularise what he called appropriate technology. He said that the people of this District were uneducated and did not understand modern technology and, therefore, rejected the power chak. He had reached a conclusion which was typical of what is widely accepted by the educated elite. I decided to help him to unravel the situation. On being questioned, he readily accepted that the potters he had met in villages had difficulty in selling

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what they produced on their chak, and therefore were often without business. I asked him to explain how the power chak, meant for increased production, would help a potter who was already unable to sell his products. What was the potter's problem - the market or his ability to produce? The Khadi Commission's representative gradually began to see the logic and accepted that the Commission's example of appropriate technology was, after all, not so appropriate. The uneducated potters on their own had conducted a logical analysis of the conditions which constrained them from earning more, and, therefore, had a scientific basis for correctly assessing the role of power chak in their lives, something which the experts in the Khadi Commission had failed to do. Let us consider a recent experience. A group of about one hundred landless and marginal farmers from an adjacent village approached us last month to explore a new path for solving their problems of poverty - they needed land, rights to certain minor forest produce and demanded a fair share in the distribution of Government - controlled sugar. They had decided to organise themselves and challenge the control of the feudal forces on their lives. We pointed out to them the risks involved in this path and drew their attention to how their attempts to improve their conditions could be squashed by the joint action of the local landlords, the revenue authorities and the police. This was of course already well-known to them. We demanded to know from them what they felt was their bargaining point. One of their leaders, who could not even sign his name, gently pointed out, "It is we who produce goods and they consume only what we produce for them. If we stop working, they shall starve. This is our bargaining point." We have accumulated a series of such experiences which show that the poor people who suffer oppression and exploitation have remarkable abilities for participating in a growing analytical process and have often amazingly correct analysis of the obstacles in the path of their own development.

FRAMING HYPOTHESES FOR FURTHER TESTING

From all this, we would like to postulate five significant hypotheses. These are being postulated in the hope that these will accelerate experimentation and further testing to evaluate their validity or the lack of it. At this stage, these may be regarded, at best, as tentative and partial.

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i) Correct observation and scientific analysis are essential tools for comprehending the socio-political reality around us.

ii) There are more ways than one of observing the reality in social sciences. What aspect of the reality one perceives is critically related to one's cultural and economic background. In contrast, the process of observing and analysing reality in the natural sciences is dependent only on the scientific skills of the worker, and not on his or her class background.

iii) The ability to make correct observation and to conduct analysis in the natural sciences can be developed through training. However, in the field of social sciences, the attempts to improve observational skills and analytical abilities often do not succeed when there is a clash of vested interests. Thus there are inherent factors in the social sciences which limit the application of the scientific method.

iv) The potential for the scientific processes is not confined to the elite and the educated sections of our society. Such potential exists amongst the oppressed and the uneducated people and can be further enriched through training and experience.

v) The process of socially relevant planning is one in which the planners work with the oppressed people to develop a scientific basis for observation and analysis. Without establishing such a process, the dichotomy between today's development and social change programmes, on the one hand, and the lives of the oppressed people, on the other hand, will never be bridged.

DEFINING EDUCATION

These hypotheses help us to define the role of science in building a people's movement. As we understand it today, the primary role of science is in enabling the people to comprehend the socio-political reality of their environment through the scientific method so that their struggles for justice and development can be planned on the basis of reliable data and logical thinking. The process of education is thus defined as the process of spreading the method of science amongst the people to enable them to

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understand the obstacles which prevent their development and to successfully plan their struggles for justice.

If the role of science in people's movement and the educational process as understood by us today is acceptable, we may then contend that it would be essential to spread the scientific method for the purpose of training cadres and creating people's organisations. How is this theoretical understanding of the role of science and of the educational process to be implemented in field situations? What have been the experiences in doing such work? What are the obstacles in developing this educational process with people? In order to explore answers to this question we must first break down scientific method into its essential elements: desire to know or inquisitiveness, observation, data collection, analysis and inference are some of the elements on the basis of which an educational programme may be conceived. Let us take a concrete example. Early this year we organised a youth camp around the problem of tuberculosis in villages. The young participants were asked to survey the incidence of tuberculosis, its relationship with the working and living conditions of the people, the role of the National TB Control Programme and limitations imposed by social structures on the treatment of the disease. For several days the participants toured villages in teams, collected data, listened to agonising stories of whole families being wiped out by the disease and of the role being played by Government doctors, private practitioners and fewdal forces. The entire data was compiled teamwise and then the teams were asked to make a list of all the problems which they had perceived during the survey. From these teamwise lists a common list was then prepared, on the basis of which a detailed discussion followed on the causes of TB, of its high incidence amongst the poor people and of the inability of the Primary Health Centres to play an effective role in the treatment. The discussion focussed on the reasons behind the non-percolation of the benefits of the National TB Control Programme and what it reveals about the structure of village society. On the basis of this analytical understanding, the youth camp concluded that there was no use in starting a parallel medical service while a fullfledged national programme existed. It was much more important to make the people aware of the facilities available under the national programme and to enable them to demand their share in this. This example of educational process shows us how a group of young people planned the next phase of their activity by applying the scientific method to their experiences.

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OBSTACLES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

During our experience of spreading scientific method amongst the oppressed people, we have identified five major obstacles, namely,

1. Information gap,
2. Tendency to follow traditions,
3. Fatalism,
4. Fear of reprisals by the vested interests, and
5. Inability for abstraction.

Let us take these one by one.

It is a general experience that lack of information amongst the oppressed people is often a great limitation in understanding their own reality. When this gap is fulfilled, ability to comprehend reality builds up quickly. This is exemplified beautifully by the work of Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) In Calicut District. KSSP took up the problem of pollution caused by a well-known rayon factory in the village of Walcad near Calicut. This factory, located on the banks of the river Chaliar, has totally polluted the river as well as the air. The people of Walcad village have suffered heavily in their health, in their farming and in many other ways. Yet for years, they accepted their state of affairs with only grumbling and not much more. KSSP encouraged the medical students of Calicut Medical College to organise a health survey. The survey revealed a high incidence of a praticular lung disease caused by the presence of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. KSSP then sent a team of biologists, chemists, geologists and engineers. The team prepared a massive report and took colour slides of the polluted river and finally prepared a technical plan for controlling pollution. On the basis of all this, KSSP conducted intensive evening classes for several weeks to share this rich information with the poor people of Walcad village. When we visited this village last year, we were amazed to see how technical terms such as sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, percentages and solubility had become part of the common idiom. The evening classes soon led to the demand by organised villagers that the factory implement KSSP's technical plan for controlling pollution. The long-drawn struggle eventually cornered the powerful industrial group which had no logical way of escaping from this demand without losing its credibility in Kerala. The technical plan is now being implemented and the people of Walcad have at least won their first battle.

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The second obstacle of the educational process is the deep-seated tendency to follow tradition. I am reminded of a play prepared by two young villagers of Rohna village near Hoshangabad. These boys belonged to an area which has been affected in a major way by the famous Tawa irrigation dam. The Tawa Programme has led to many unanticipated problems, such as creation of water-logged areas, loss of fertile soil and lack of drainage. In addition, the Government passed an Act according to which every farmer in the Tawa command area has to accept land-levelling operations conducted by the Government agencies. The expense of this operation is charged to the farmer. Of course, bank credit is extended to cover the charges normally amounting to Rs.2000/- upwards to Rs.4000/- per acre. The farmers feel tremendous hardship because of being forced to accept this indebtedness. The play prepared by the boys referred to this problem. In the first few acts they presented the collusion of the revenue officials with the local landlord in persuading the villagers to accept a plan of reconsolidation of land holdings before undergoing levelling operations. In the process, the landlord corners most of the fertile land earlier belonging to the poor farmers and the revenue official takes his bribe. Later on the play focusses on the indebtedness caused by the land-levelling operations and has a scene in which the Tehsildar is helped by the police to force the villagers to pay their first instalment when their crops had failed due to fertile soil being disturbed by land-levelling. So far the act shows a close relationship with the reality which exists in the villages of this region. In the last act, the play shows the villagers pleading with the District Collector for relief. The Collector is extremely helpful, is disturbed by the inhuman acts of his Tehsildar and of the corrupt revenue officials. He promises immediate relief and orders suspension of the erring officials. We asked the boys whether the last act matches with the real experience. After hesitating, they accepted the fact that the Collector never acts the way he is shown in their play. Why then did you show this untrue picture of the Collector? One of them explained that all stories and films end well and therefore they must end their play also on a happy note. The second pointed out that it would look very bad if the seniormost official of the District is not shown favourably. They had been taught to show respect towards authorities. Having shown some challenge towards the lower officials, they eventually decided to fall in line when the Collector's turn came, lest their elders reject the play.

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The third obstacle is the deep-rooted fatalism in our society which often restricts the growth of scientific process. I am reminded of a Basod (a harijan bamboo worker) who earns his livlihood by making bamboo products. I once saw him without work at a time when he should have had a big supply of bamboo from the local forest depot. When quizzed, he explained that all the bamboo had been sent to the distant paper mills at Nepa Nagar. This uneducated Basod obviously was well-informed. I prodded him, "How come one paper mill takes all the bamboo away, while thousands of poor Basods like you are deprived?" He was emphatic, "Nepa mills are more powerful than all the Basods put together". I asked him if there was any way in which the Basods could balance the power of the Nepa mills and demand their share of bamboo. He said it would be possible only if they got organised and approached the forest depot collectively. I asked him, "Why don't you do this?" He said, "No, it is not possible. We will never get together. It will take no less than God to bring us together on a common platform. Therefore, this year bamboo is not in our fate." Having given a series of logical and well-informed statements, the Basod finally reached the end of his scientific process. The limit was clearly defined by God and fate together.

The fourth obstacle is the fear of reprisals by the vested interests. The impact of this fear cannot be fully appreciated unless one is involved in the daily lives of the oppressed people. Two years ago, we proposed a programme to a group of Rajhar Adivasis of a nearby village through which they would be able to gain rights to grow lac on Kausam trees which happens to be their particular profession followed through generations. So far they had acted as daily wage labourers and grew lac on behalf of big landlords or contractors. Their long-cherished goal was gaining rights to grow lac on their own. Yet when confronted with an opportunity to gain these rights, no one came forward. We learned later that our evening meeting with the Rajhars was followed by severe threats of being beaten up or lynched by the local landlord, who also happens to be the Sarpanch, in case they insisted on going ahead with the programme of growing lac. Most of these Rajhars are either indebted to one of the feudal families in the village or work on their farms as labourers. The feudal families were concerned that their economic and political control would be weakened if the Rajhars gained economic independence. For two years we waited for the Rajhars to respond. No amount of scientific analysis of the causes of their poverty and of the manner in which owning of the lac business would alleviate the same

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would help bring out a response. And then, suddenly, an unplanned and a totally unrelated incident changed the entire picture. In the month of May this year, the Government - controlled sugar was distributed in the village, as usual, unfairly, the poor people being deprived of their fair share by the Sarpanch or the landlord. For the first time, in local history, a group of villagers gathered courage and approached the landlord to seek justice. Incensed by the collective courage shown by the villagers, the landlord got a couple of adivasis beaten up. There is nothing unusual about such indidents whichhave been traditionally accepted passively. This time, however, we intervened. The Sarpanch was forced to call a public meeting at which he tendered unconditional apologies. Those of you who have personally experienced feudal India would probably appreciate the impact which this meeting must have made on the minds of the poor people. What two years of continuous discussion with Rajhars and all the application of analytical thinking could not bring about, was achieved suddenly by the emotional impact of the sugar incident. For once there was a real experience to show the people that the feudal power was after all not invincible. The limits of scientific method were thus broken. The Rajhars came forward last month to join hands with other oppressed people of the village to become organised, to break out of a century-old feudal framework, and to gain their rights to grow lac on the Kausam trees. The scientific processes can once again be initiated and taken to new heights.

The fifth and the last obstacle is the problem of abstract thinking. Let me again refer to the work of KSSP in Walcad village. Towards the end of our visit, we informed the Walcad people that there was an identical problem of river pollution in Shahdol District of Madhya Pradesh where a paper mill owned by the same industrial group had polluted the Sone river downstream. The Walcad people showed no interest. Shahdol and the Sone river were too far away, too remote to have any meaning for them. We then asked them if they perceived any relationship between the local rayon factory and the Government in Trivandrum. Again there was a disturbing silence. Trivandrum did not have much meaning in their local struggle for justice nor could they see any possible relationship between the factory and the Government far away. Here is a problem of inability for abstract thinking which is going to constrain the building of a people's movement more severely than has been probably anticipated or consciously understood so far. Yet there is evidence that the potential for abstract thinking does exist amongst the oppressed people. An example needs to be cited.

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In Thane district of Maharashtra an Adivasi movement called Bhoomi Sena has taken lead in seeking justice for the oppressed people. Representatives of about 100 village-level Tarun Mandals once gathered to plan for their next strike, against the rich farmers, for better wages. An educator raised an interesting question, He wanted to know how do the Tarun Mandals look upon other sections of society, namely* peasants, and landless labourers, and so on. Each representative one by one, gave his perception of who is a friend of the movement and who is not. Stories were narrated of incidents bringing out the character of various groups. All of these statements were recorded, analysed and an amazing inference was drawn. The conference concluded that the middle level farmer is not a friend of the movement, since he employs others to do farming just as the rich farmers do. However, the small and the marginal farmers who work on their own farms as well as seek employment along with the landless in lean season must be considered friends, since they are also exploited just as the landless are. Some one pointed out that the poor farmer is in fact exploited twice - once when he seeks khaoti (a form of loan) in the lean season from the money-lender along with the landless, and the second time when he seeks loan in the form of seeds to do his sowing. The conference therefore reached a new understanding: in the next strike, small farmers would be persuaded to join hands. Here is an example of the possibility of abstraction from simple experiences, of building up general principles from daily lives. This process of generalization and creating principles from practice would be a critical dimension of spreading the scientific method.

TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

If we can learn how to overcome the five obstacles to the educational process which I have listed, we can then see a powerful and growing process of education emerging. If the methods of science can thus be made part of people's thinking, there is hope that the domination of the educated elite and of the vested interests in the field of planning and development can then be challenged by the common people. If the oppressed people gbegin to subject the policies of the nation to scientific analysis, there is hope that a constraint can be placed on the irrationality revealed in the S&T education meeting held under the auspices of the Planning Commission, on the unscientific planning of critical health programmes such as malaria eradication, on the myth being promoted in our school textbooks about the population growth being the prime cause of India's poverty

* small farmers, middle

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and on the introduction of irrelevant activities, such as the slide-cum-tape modules, in our school system and so on. There would be then hope that the personality cult and sycophancy reflected in the Sarvodaya conference and similar feudal tendencies prevalent in national life would no longer be quietly accepted. Scientific criteria would necessarily be demanded from the leadership for its statements, acts and decisions. If the critical dimension of abstraction could be added to the analytical processes of the people, the people of Walcad village would be able to relate their oppression with the oppression of the people of Shahdol, and the linkages between the industrial group owning the rayon factory in Walcad, on the one hand, and the Governments in Trivandrum and New Delhi, on the other hand, would become clear to the people of the country. People's organisations built up through scientific processes, hopefully, will not limit their struggles to demands for merely better wages or land, but would instead struggle for ways of creating and sustaining a society relatively free of disparities, exploitation, stagnating heirarchies, and other manifestations of socio-political backwardness. This would then mark the creation of a People's movement with a difference.

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Varanasi,
January 1981

CONTEMPORARY STUDY CIRCLE - I

INTRODUCTION

Four individuals - Vikasbhai, Datta Savle, B.N. Juyal, and Dunu Roy - met at Varanasi on 25th January,1981 for two days. Others - Kishore Deshpande, Dileep Kamat, S.D. Dange, Srilata Swaminathan, John Kurien, and Biplab Halim - had also been invited but could not come due to other commitments. The meeting had been called to find out if there was a need for studying contemporary events in a historical perspective to develop a theoretical understanding of Indian Society. While everybody could not come, the four of us felt that we could at least start the discussion. What follows is a summary of what we thought and talked of over a rambling two days.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS:

There were a number of questions that we raised about the reality around us. Among them :

1. Within the voluntary groups there appears to be a shift in some areas from Developmental Work to Organisational Work. Is this a cyclical mode ? Are there differences between one region and another?

2. In a stagnant economy, tensions seem to emerge and political actions seem to deteriorate. How are they related ?

3. The actions of the State in a stagnant economy are determined by socio-political processes. What are these processes ? How are they related to the actions of the State ?

4. Examples of Tamilnad, Bihar, Charan Singh, land ceilings, fragmentation of land, Ryotwari, Zamindari, Wet zone and dry zone, indicate that there are important regional differences. There appear to be two broadly defined regions :

   a. Where capitalist growth in agriculture is taking place.
   b. Where agriculture is stagnant.

   Why does no growth take place beyond certain limits in the first area, and why is there no challenge to stagnation in the second ?

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5. In tribal areas, where integration into the market has not taken place, there are agitations against the intrusions of market forces. Some sections demand the development of the production forces. The capital for this is made available from public sources. The agricultural surplus is not reinvested in agriculture by these sections. Some of these movements appear to be spontaneous. Others are underlaid by specific interventions. But when a demand is posed, why don't associated demands also emerge? Why doesn't the agitation go beyond certain specific limits?

6. Why have the Parties not succeeded in formulating problems of the separate sections within the peasantry and mobilising them as separate identities?

7. What is the phenomenon of the "Mafia"? What forces use it? What is it's linkage with political processes?

8. What is the character of the Congress?

9. On these and other issues what are the limitations of Party-based analyses and modern behavioral systems analyses?

10. How do we begin to understand all these questions?

THE QUESTION OF METHOD

1. We can proceed from the micro- to the macro-level or from the macro- to the micro-level. Probably both are necessary.

2. All data, case-studies are presented within a framework. Hence, even to see the correlations between various factors, theory is necessary.

3. Considering the regional differences, regional studies would be necessary, as also inter-regional/inter-sectoral linkages.

4. Manifestations - as struggles, agitations etc. - arise out of the conflict between the process of social change and the obstruction to it. By studying the manifestations, therefore, we can study the causes underlying them.

5. Even a plurality of understandings of a conflict should be acceptable as a basis for going further.

6. How do we apply this broad method to specific events and hone it further ?

THE QUESTION OF ORGANISATION

1. Firstly, such a study as we anticipate cannot be conducted on an ad-hoc basis. It will need regular and systematic, continuing discussions.

2. The material for the discussion has to be collected. How will this be done? By asking others to help, or by doing it ourselves? At this time what is the material available and what is its relevance? Macroanalysis will be limited if we focus only on our own experience. We will have to consult other secondary sources. So scenarios will have to be built up in order to provide a basis for discussions.

3. The scenarios should be built up around issues of contemporary importance because a) it is important to understand such issues in order to deal with them; b) they also provide the basis of their historical development for study. Thus we are also able to understand how the Parties view such issues and what actions they take. Then we can go on further to make our contribution.

4. Such a contribution is useful only if it reaches out to and makes sense to the independent left groups. So far these groups have mainly depended on oral exchanges to share ideas and experiences. Written matter could now supplement the verbal sharing. Is our perception, that groups and individuals prepared for such a debate, correct ?Only experiment will show. If, in the first phase, we pose the issues for discussion and invite other individuals to take part in regular debate, and if they accept, then we can say that our perception has been correct.

5. How do we proceed further, specifically ?

THE QUESTION OF SPECIFICS

1. On method :-

   a. take up the study of tensions in the development of productive forces;

   b. establish the link between investigation in a historical context with empirical data;

   c. agree that different areas may need different perceptions and conceptions, so attempt interregional studies;

   d. in the macro-analysis, take into account 3 factors -

      i. world situation
      ii. indigenous (national) progressive forces
      iii. historical roots of social and economic stagnation;

   e. attempt a critique of existing theoretical formulations to establish their adequacy /inadequacy, and then proceed further, if necessary.

2. On issues:- (suggested)

   a. Farmers' agitations in different regions;
   b. Environment-related agitations (pollution, social forestry etc.);
   c. Industrial labour movements.

   For a start, we propose the first issue be taken up.

3. On responsibility :-

   For collection of material on -

   a. Historical roots;
   b. State policy and response
   c. Political party and front organisations' response

   and presenting a analytical summary -

      i. Datta - Maharashtra
      ii. Vikas(through friends in T.N.) - Tamilnad
      iii. Juyal - Uttar Pradesh
      iv. Dileep - Karnataka (will you do it,Dileep ?)

4. On schedules :-

We propose 3 to 4 meetings in a year - say, once every 3 months. The first could be held in Anuppur, Shahdol, M.P. Two possible dates are : 1st week of May, or 4th week of May. Which one is more suitable ?

5. On possible participants :-

We suggest :-

Datta Savale	B.N. Juyal
Vikasbhai	Primila Lewis
Dunu Roy	Srilata Swaminathan
Biplab Halim	Lalit Khanra
Gouri Chowdhury	Dileep Kamat
Nalini Nayak	Kishore Deshpande
John Kurien	S.D. Dange
Javed Anand	I. Rodriques
Abhijit Mitra	Datta Bhonsle
Krishna Kumar	Nripen Bandopadhyaya

Others may join in depending upon interest and response, and whether such theorisation is really seen to be useful. Maybe, we will make a mess of it . Let's see!

...

Kindly acknowledge receipt and send your comments to:

Vikasbhai
Post Bag-5
Rajghat,
Varanasi-221001

Dev 6 : 4

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DALITS, DALIT LITERATURE AND WIDER SOCIETY: A NOTE*

S. P. Punalekar
Centre For Social Studies, Surat

I

The term Dalit as it has historically evolved stands for definite social groups comprising the untouchables, tribals and other backward classes.[1] Some extend the scope of the term to include Muslims and Christians also. They are considered at par with the SCs, STs, and OBCs on the ground that they are persecuted minorities.[2] Briefly therefore, the stress is on social persecution or social exploitation. Dalitism is conceived as rooted in culture, traditions and ideology of the oppressive dominant group. The dominant reference group is oftentimes Hindus and their Brahminical ideology, social practices, etc.

II

Literature has various forms and theoretically it has possibilities of serving social movement in more than one way. One important objective of any dynamic literature is to help accelerate social change or transformation. Such literature becomes socially relevant. Examining from this perspective, the Maharashtra society has distinct literary traditions, compared to many other states.[3] And there are definite historical forces behind such traditions also.[4] We

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* Paper presented at Colloquium on Dalit Literature organised by Gujarat Lokayan at ICSSR, Bombay on 12-13 December, 1981.

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may not dilate on them here.

Since around late 19th century, a group of intellectuals in Maharashtra addressed their literary efforts towards unjust social customs and practices. Some wrote on backwardness of Hindu society and lack of national spirit and perspective. In later period, such literary efforts increased inspite of the opposition from the orthodox section of Hindu community. Agarkar, Kolhatkar, Gadkari, Patwardhan, etc. can be cited as examples, whose serious or popular writings aimed at social reforms. Broadly, the emphasis of their literature was on social reforms and on acceptance of 'new' or 'modern' values in the place of or with partial modifications of 'old' or 'traditional' values and practices.[5] This also implied changes in the social institutions like marriage, religion etc. Writings of those with reformist orientations did project the drawbacks of the then prevailing social system and practices, and thus sharpened the awareness of the younger and thinking generations.

But it has also to be noted that alongside these literary critical productions, other far-reaching structural changes were also occuring. Primarily, they were due to the spread and intensity of British rule.[6] Market economy and industrialisation, new politico-administrative structures including education, legal institutions etc. were the products of British rule. These were taking their roots in Indian society. To a substantial extent, the structural changes brought about by these modern institutions in various parts of the country helped the social reform activities to widen their impact. Their message became receptive.

Thus, awareness created by the reformers was sustainable in empirical context of change in the basic socio-economic spheres. Ideas and realities became mutually re-inforcible and complementary. On similar fortuitous grounds impact of some of the contributions of Phooley and Ambedkar can be examined. They and many other untouchable leaders

crusaded against untouchability practices with a missionary zeal. They staunchly pleaded for access to secular institutions including participation in political structure. For upliftment and amelioration of the untouchables, they themselves opened institutions to test their ideological position. They succeeded a great deal because their demand was in conformity with the imperatives of modernisation within a colonial framework.[7]

I do not mean to belittle the efforts of Phooley and Ambedkar. Their contributions to the cause of the untouchables are indeed noteworthy and historical. I want only to emphasize the potency and relevance of equally crucial factor i.e., structural or institutional base and material changes brought about by modern, secular forces. If we grant the validity of this situation, it is clear that the material base or structure has also to be reckoned with. In other words, one need to locate the structural features of society on or around which the literature is focussed.

In the context of above argument, the Dalit literature has to be viewed in a broader perspective encompassing the structural aspects of both the Dalit and non-Dalit society i.e., wider society. This means the socio-economic position of the Dalits, their material status and aspirations; their day-to-day relationships with other people and their level of consciousness etc. In a essing social relevance of Dalit literature, we need to see around and take note of any changes or differentiations occuring within Dalit society or sections of Dalit society. Ignoring them would be disadvantages to the whole spirit of the social movement of which Dalit literature is an important constituent.[8] Those concerned with the Dalit liberation must examine the Dalit literature on this axis.

III

In Maharashtra, Dalit literature has secured unique place. It has distinct symbols and traditions. It identifies itself as a revolutionary force with ideological moorings in Ambedkarism, Marxism or both. It distinguishes itself from the mainstream literature on the ground that the themes, idioms and projected appeal/message of the mainstream literature are devoid of Dalitism i.e., facets of socially exploited existence.

Dalit poetry, novels, short stories have made distinct contributions to our knowledge of how Dalits live, think and feel. The Dalit literature has covered various dimensions of Dalits' lives: their humiliation and exploitation in urban and rural areas; negative evaluation of their status by the dominant upper castes on ascriptive criterion; brutal attacks and atrocities on their person and property, etc.

There is evidence of immense sensitivity and empathy in the Dalit literature. Style and language is often in conformity with poignancy of events. Its psychological appeal is clear to the core. The meaning is clearly articulated without mincing of the words. Evidently, there is honesty of feeling about what the writers have to convey. These are, to my mind, desirable qualities of any healthy dynamic literature. The Dalit literature shows the promise in that direction.

Dalit literature is out to reveal. It is open and not secretive. It believes in straight-forwardness. It seeks an honest appraisal of the social relationship between the groups; between the majority and minority; between the social oppressor and the oppressed. Commitment to these values has helped the Dalit literature in avoiding weird abstractions and ideological emptiness which has been the bane of large part of the mainstream literature. The qualities of Dalit literature need to be developed and strengthened. It can rouse the masses for action. It has these potentialities.

But at the same time, one has to remain alert about the direction the literature may take in the absence of broad ideological consensus on radical premises. As far as Dalit literature is concerned, no one can dispute its descriptive richness. But then the description has to have a framework of meaning. That means the purpose for which the literature is produced. What is the objective goal of Dalit literature ? What does it seek to achieve ? These questions are important and they need discussion.

As far as my limited knowledge goes, the Dalit literature is broadly a protest literature.[9] It protests against humaliatory social conditions including atrocities on the defenceless Dalits. It protests against the disabilities and injustices perpetrated by the social system or social order. It protests against the ritual hierarchy and misuse of power. Hence Dalit literature is described as part of Dalit protest movement.

The protest literature does have its usefulness. It urges upon the people to awaken and perceive; to redefine and rediscover their status and identity. The Dalit literature has certainly helped to bring about this identity consciousness among the Dalits. New awareness and awakening is evident at least among the urban Dalits. They have become conscious of their person; their self-respect and dignity. This is indeed an important advance over the previous state of affairs where there was nothing but insults and humiliations. Liberation does demand a feeling of protest and revolt against the existing social situation. That situation may be of untouchability or any other discriminatory social practices.

It must be mentioned that the Dalit literature has helped the Dalits, especially the Scheduled Castes, in their movement towards equality in social and cultural spheres. The literature brought to the attention of the middle class non-Dalits, their woes and grievances; their resentment and capabilities as sensitive writers on issues that were left

mostly untouched by the 'Bhadra' or established literary persons. Their protest literature persistently rejected the present society which, according to them is caste-based and its cultural traditions and values, which are inegalitarian. This raises a question as to what type of alternative society they are envisaging. To this aspect, we turn now.

IV

Dalit literature and wider Dalit movement envisage a non-exploitative society based on full recognition of one's freedom and equality. Dalit literature does espouse these goals. This raises a question as to the root causes of social exploitation and also the forces perpetuating these exploitative features. Oftentimes, the causes are located in the religion/religious hierarchy or culture of the dominant castes. Such an interpretation leads the writers to concentrate its attack solely on the religious scriptures and practices. Caste system becomes their chief whipping horse.

Is caste at the basis of production relations in our society ? Can the problems of Dalits be solved if the religious equality is achieved ? The mission of the saint poets was exactly this. Did they succeed ? Is religion an organising principle of social system ? If caste or religion constitute a cultural system or a superstructure; then can the superstructure be changed without bringing about basic changes in the foundations i.e., class relations ? These questions require examination of the philosophies of Phooley, Ambedkar and Marx and their practical value in the struggles of the Dalits.

Secondly, the impact of secular forces need to be given the importance that is due. Dalit writers come from the educated class. Education gave them capacity and insight to question the assumptions of dominant group and their culture.

This means the expansion of education is a necessary task. The Dalit masses must secure education. Why the literacy or education is not expanding significantly among the Dalits and even among non-Dalits ? In which class or classes in Indian society, the illiteracy is dominant and all-pervasive and why ? We must ponder over these questions.

Similar are the issues concerning urbanisation, industrialisation, migration and mobility concerning Dalits. It would not be correct to say that economic changes have not taken place affecting the status of the Dalits. There is an upward mobility among some scheduled caste groups. Some socially backward groups are economically advancing. Economic changes has brought about definite social changes in their status, inter-group relationships and power. There is a small but vocal elite class among the Dalits also.

V

These trends indicate the slow but definite changes toward modernisation; towards a secular society. But the forces are not sufficiently strong. What are the reasons behind economic backwardness or uneven development ? Has it anything to do with the persistence of social exploitation ? I think these questions need to be explored by the Dalit intellectuals and others concerned with the wider Dalit movement. And while exploring these questions, one can discover links between the Dalits and wider society and a common framework of their social situation. And perhaps, this might help us to evolve a common strategy of action.

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Science, authoritarianism, culture

ASHIS NANDY

I

M.N. ROY was always certain that he was fighting for the modern world. He was openly anti-traditional and openly a rationalist who sought to transcend his culture. But is this the whole truth about him? Does commitment to one's culture have to be explicit and aggressive? Or could it also be implicit and unconscious? When Roy as a young revolutionary, running from the

*This is the M.N. Roy Memorial Address, 1980, delivered at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, on March 21, 1980, under the title, 'Science, Authoritarianism and Culture: On the Scope and Limits of Isolation Outside the Clinic.' I am grateful to Giri Deshingkar for his detailed comments and suggestions on an earlier draft. I regret that the lecture could not be published, as such lectures usually are, under the auspices of the Indian Renaissance Institute for reasons not unconnected with the contents of the lecture. I, however, thank C.R.M. Rao of the Institute for sustaining my faith that M.N. Roy not being a Royist, would never have employed any thought police either to protect the purity of his ideas or his public image.

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colonial police, changed his name from Narendra Nath to Manabendra Nath, was it only carelessness that he retained in his new name the meaning of the old? Or was it a clue to his deeper awareness of the need to recognise continuities and traditions? In his later life, when he used the concept of cultural renaissance, did he mean what he said or did he have only a naissance in mind?

One discipline's trivia are always another discipline's lifeblood and I venture the guess that Roy here was hinting at a psychological process which has always been a marginal strain within the experience of modernity, namely, the affirmation of traditions and cultural continuities in the face of the homogeneity that the modern world seeks to impose in the name of universalism. Is such affirmation a pathology, a shared irrationality or a handicap which an old society must overcome to enter the modern scientific world? In this lecture I shall try to amplify one possible answer to this question, exploring in the process one aspect of the linkage between modern science, authoritarianism and culture.

II

The story begins in Europe when the mindless blood-letting of the first world war created a new awareness of an old psychopathology. As the range of human violence and the role of modern science in that violence began to weigh on the social conscience, a number of European intellectuals woke up to the dangerous human ability to separate ideas from feelings and to pursue ideas without being burdened by feelings.

It was Sigmund Freud who first gave a name to this ability. He called it isolation. He described it as an ego defence, a psychological mechanism which helped the human mind to cope with unacceptable inner impulses and external threats. According to Freud, the individual sometimes isolated an occurrence by cauterising it emotionally and by preventing it from becoming a part of his significant experience. The occurrence was not forgotten: it was deprived of its affect.[1] This did not, Freud granted, really free ideas or actions from feelings. It merely substituted conscious associations by unconscious ones and displaced the effect to other ideas or events. Freud also noted that there was particularly heavy use of the mechanism of isolation in the psychopathology which went by the generic name of obsession-compulsion.

Afterwards two second generation psychoanalysts, Anna Freud and Otto Fenichel, were to define isolation more formally. Here is Fenichel on the subject, at his textbookish best:

> 'The most important special case of this defence mechanism is the isolation of an idea from the emotional cathexis (load of feelings) that originally was connected with it...In discussing the most exciting events, the patient remains calm but may then develop at quite another point an incomprehensible emotion, without being aware of the fact that the emotion has been displaced...
>
> 'The normal prototype is the process of logical thinking, which actually consists of the continued elimination of affective associations in the interest of objectivity ...Compulsion neurotics, in their isolation activities, behave like caricatures of normal thinkers... they always desire order, routine, system.'[2]

Such a definition, however clinical it may seem to its innocent author, already verges on social criticism. It implies that order, routine and system are not absolute values; any over-commitment to them is an illness. It also implies that objectivity, and the separation of the observer from the observed, is not an unmixed blessing; it can sometimes hide fearsome passions.

Psychoanalysis was not alone. At about the same time that the young discipline was forging the concept of isolation, the surrealist manifestos of Andre Breton and his associates were tilting against conventional rationality and indirectly attacking the growing use of isolation in modern life.

Salvador Dali for instance 'absurdised' in his art and life exactly this pathology. His watches which melted and his men who refused to be fully human were but instances where the lost affect was made to re-enter social perceptions, to shock or to entertain. Many years afterwards George Orwell was to be scandalised when the middle-aged Dali put into his memoirs, with obvious relish, the following account of Dali at the age of six: While crossing the hall I caught sight of my little three-year-old sister crawling unobtrusively through a doorway. I stopped, hesitated a second, then gave her a terrible kick in the head, as though it had been a ball, and continued running, carried away with a 'delirious joy' induced by this savage act.[3]

Orwell correctly guessed that Dali's pathology tied up with the pathology of a period and quoted a rhyme popular round about 1912 to make his point. As if to prove Orwell right, Dali's naughty book dutifully became a best-seller.

Within a decade or two, a number of movements in literature and the arts caught up with the same pathology, often brilliantly, though rarely self-consciously. For instance, many of the comic devices of Bertolt Brecht can be read as attempts to tear away the mask which isolation allows the industrial society to wear. When one laughs with Brecht one also laughs at the subversion of the defence of isolation. If one pierces isolation by looking at it from the outside, Brecht seems to say, one confronts either psychopathic hypocrisy or sheer self-deceit.

Those of you who have seen this year's superb Hindi version of *Mr*

1. Sigmund Freud. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1962), Standard Edition, Vol. 20, London: Hogarth, 1959.

2. Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, New York: Norton, 1945, p. 156.

3. Quoted in Orwell's 'Benefit of Clergy, Some Notes on Salvador Dali' (1944), *In Decline of the English Murder*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, pp. 20-30.

Puntilla (1940) will know that it is the story of a businessman whose personality is split. He is a heartless calculating machine when sober: humane and lovable when drunk. When sober, pathological is. lation is the main feature of his self. When drunk, the feelings he dissociates from ideas and actions re-emerge into his consciousness and get reattached to his ideas and actions. That this happens only when he is drunk is, of course, Brecht's final comment on the psychopathology of the modern society.

Let me give another example from the popular arts. Charles Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), a black comedy set against the collapse of values in inter war Europe, makes subtle use as well as criticism of the mechanism of isolation. The movie tells the story of a lovable psychopath who marries and then charmingly kills his wives for money. In comic style, Chaplin off-sets this isolation against the larger isolations taking place in the European society and against the isolation that the movie induces in the viewers. As we isolate the acts of murder from the emotions they should arouse, we laugh at Chaplin's murders and sympathise with his hero, who does on a small scale what societies do on a grander scale.[4]

It was this awareness in Chaplin's folk philosophy which found its clearest expression in Orwell's essay on the use of the English language to sterilise thinki g and to cover up violence and cruelty:[5]

> 'In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defenced, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face...thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*.'[6]

Orwell wrote this in the mid-forties. Roughly at around the same time, based on two major empirical studies, some psychologically-sensitive Marxists detailed the tendency in the individual fascist to overuse the ego-defence of isolation. Erich Fromm described the authoritarian person not only as sado-masochistic but as having a mechanical, rigid mode of thinking characterised by heavy use of isolation. Fascism, he said, thrives on the objectification of persons and groups.[7]

Theodor Adorno and his associates, too, wrote about the '.. empty, schematic, administrative fields' in the mind of the fascist and about the constriction of his inner life[8] The fascist, they said, partitioned his personality into more or less closed compartments. He had a narrow emotional range and he rejected emotional richness, intuitions and the softer side of life in general. He admired organisations and their formal hierarchies and he sought security in isolating hierarchical structures.[9]

Later, operating from a different vantage ground, Hannah Arendt was to enrich this description with the help of her portrait of Adolf Eichmann, a plainthinking, hard-working, bureaucratic killer who saw his genocidal responsibility as a problem of efficiency, organisation and objective planning.[10] Arendt recognised that Eichmann was the final product of the modern world — not because he established a new track-record in monstrosity but because he typified the evil that grew out of everyday isolation rather than from satanic psychopathy.

Thus, ever since the first world war, sensitive minds in the modern world have warned us of the dangers of affectless sanitised cognition. And, by the midfifties it had become clear to many that fascism was the typical as well as the ultimate pathology of the modern world, for it merely took to logical conclusion what was central to modernity, namely, the ability to partition away human cognition and pursue this cognition to its deadly extremes.[11]

III

Only one area of modern life escaped the full thrust of the critique of isolation: modern science. There were reasons for this. Modern science was structured isolation. The values of objectivity, rationality, value-neutrality and inter-subjectivity were definitionally the values of the modern scientific worldview. And these values *did* heavily draw upon the human capacity to isolate. Moreover, there was a latent awareness in the society that science was, at times, isolation at its best and at its most exciting. Theodore Kroeber, a relatively unknown psychologist, once described objectivity as a coping mechanism,

4. For the younger g neration I might give the examples of Stanley Kubrick's more recent efforts to build black comedy on isolation in *Dr. Strangelove* and *A Clock-work Orange*

5. 'Politics and the English Language' (1946), in *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, Penguin, 1957, pp. 143-157.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

7. *Escape from Freedom*, New York: Holt, 1941.

8. *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper, 1950.

9. All these traits were seen as aspects of the obsessive-compulsive personality of the fascist. And I have already mentioned that in his earliest formulation of the problem Freud had posited a close bond between isolation and obsession-compulsion.

10. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, New York: Viking, 1963.

11. The specific pathology of commodity fetishism becomes here a part of the pathology of non-specific fetishism, seen not merely as a feature of industrial capitalism but as the pillar of the modern worldview itself.

which was the healthy counterpart of the defence of isolation.[12]

Science as a personal search for truth and as a means of human self-realisation seemed to be a form of this creative objectivity. It could not seem that isolating to many. The attacks of the artists, writers and the fashionable mystics, in contrast, were bound to wash off as eccentric responses to the creative isolation of modern science.

Moreover, a part of the attack on science was diverted to technology. As the dehumanising and mechanomorphic aspects of technology became obvious after the first world war, there emerged the view that questions of ethics applied mainly to technology, not to science. This was certainly the argument of the major social critics who shaped the popular response to science. Take for instance the two literary figures who helped to bring us up in the first half of this century: George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. Shaw wrote a savage indictment of modern technology in *Major Barbara* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*. But he also wrote fiery tracts pleading for more modern scientific management of societies. Wells' science fiction could be read as a trenchant critique of a science contaminated by human greed and violence. But when it came to social problems, he became a votary of scientism.

Implicit in such an attitude was the belief that while the context of modern science and its applications were faulty, the content or the text of science was liberating. In fact, the problem, as it was diagnosed by the dominant modern view, was that the objectivity of science had not yet fully informed the social uses of science. That is, while the scientific estate had used isolation, it had not isolated deeply and widely enough: irrationality still dominated many sectors of human life, and these sectors were waiting to be liberated by the further growth of the scientific temper.

Predictably, a majority of scientists were faithful to this line. Not so predictably, many social philosophers and social scientists chipped in with the same analysis. They valiantly tried to solve the social problems of science by promoting more science. The new credo was: the content of modern science is universal and amoral but its social context is often parochial, value-loaded and evil. Modern scientists, too, can sometimes be self-interested scoundrels. Change the social relations of science and you will have finally an ethically pristine, fully liberating, modern science.

IV

Today, in the second half of the twentieth century, another response is conceivable — in fact indispensable. Older, tired and wiser, we can now take courage to affirm that science has already built a structure of near-total isolation where human beings themselves — including all their suffering and moral experience — have been objectified as things and processes, to be vivisected, manipulated, controlled or corrected. According to this view, the 'irrationality of the rationality' in organised 'normal' science is no more an empty slogan. It is threatening to take over all of human life, including every interstice of culture and every form of individuality. We now have scientific training in modern sports and recreations; our everyday social relations and social activism are more and more guided by pseudo-sciences like management and social work and by fourth-rate pseudo-technologies like transactional analysis and T groups.

Our future, as we all know in this society, is being conceptualised and shaped by the modern witchcraft called the science of economics. If we do not love such a future, scientific child-rearing and scientific pedagogy are waiting to cure us of such false values, and the various schools of scientific psychotherapy are ever-ready to certify us as dangerous neurotics. Another set of modern witch-doctors have taken over the responsibility of making even the revolutionaries among us scientific. In fact, scientific study of poverty has become more important than poverty itself. Even in bed our performance is now judged according to the objective criteria of some highly scientific how-to-do-it manuals on love making.

Such a process has continuously justified our ability to freeze or 'fix' a subject for study and to place it at a 'distance' to evaluate. In its more extreme form it has sometimes become what Fromm calls necrophilia, the passion to kill so as to freeze and love.[13]

The importance of this second position—which says that the social problems created by science cannot be handled within the format of the existing culture of science — has grown because the idea of more science for curing the ills of science no longer enthuses anyone except the 'committed' over-professionalised scientists and their faithful page boys among the wide eyed rationalists in the social sciences. It has become too obvious that the slogan of internal criticism and the search for the hair of the dog to cure dogbite are merely a means of avoiding criticisms from the outside and a ploy to establish the scientific worldview as the ultimate standard by which other forms of consciousness are to be judged.

I shall not go into details here, as I have discussed this issue in another recent essay.[14] Let me however give a rather well-known example. Paul Feyerabend, no lover of astrology himself, examines at one place the response of 168 modern scientists, 18 of them Nobel laureates, who signed a statement hostile to astrology.[15] He shows that none of the 168 had cared to study astrology before attacking it. Some of them, when contacted by journalists, were unashamed that they knew nothing about astrology. That of course did not stop them

12. 'The Coping Function of Ego Mechanisms,' *The Study of Lives*, R.W. White (Ed.), New York: Atherton, 1963, pp. 178-198.

13. *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Connecticut: Fawcett, 1973. See also George Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences*, the Hague: Mouton 1967.

14. See my 'Science in Utopia: Equity, Plurality and Openness.' Paper written for the Third Meeting of the group on Alternative Visions of Desirable Societies to be held at Mexico City, 1981. Mimeographed.

15. 'The Strange Case of Astrology,' *Science in a Free Society*, London: NLB, 1978, pp 91-96.

from passing a scientific judgement on the subject Evidently, they were unwilling to apply their rational scientific method to areas outside science.

Feyerabend also alleges that the statement shows a total ignorance of the relevant aspects of modern science. At any rate, he asks, why does one need 168 signatures instead of one, if the arguments are so good and so conclusive.

It is time we had greater mutuality than that shown by these 168 scientists in the world of knowledge. If we give science the right to criticise systems and nonsystems extraneous to science, let us at least restore the legitimacy of criticisms of science from the viewpoints of the non-scientists Let us at least grant that a part of the ethical and social restraint on modern science must now come from outside science, from the totality of human experience. Until now, giving full autonomy to modern science has meant giving full autonomy to the traditions of the modern scientists. I suggest that if one chooses to operate on the basis of traditions, there are better and more holistic traditions to fall back upon.

Unhappily, the idea of external control on science seems like a denial of free thought to many. Discredited by the clumsy, cruel and sometimes tragic battle waged against science by the medieval church, the idea of external control seems dangerous even now, when science is regnant in the world. But could it be that the church in its obscurantism was expressing, without knowing it, its fears of a system of knowledge freed from the leash of ethics and social conscience, however faulty that ethics and however rigid that conscience? The answer may well be 'yes' today when we face a different configuration of social forces, when science is a part of the global Establishment, when unorganised religion has been marginalised and organised religion is currying favour with science. Today, we have to decide anew what we want to defend and whose pathology has become more unsafe for human survival and liberation, that of scientific rationality or that of its 'irrational' subjects?

V

The problem I am posing is, I hope, clearer. I am suggesting that when the world of uncritical traditionalism faced the first onslaught of organised modernity, the principle and practice of isolation played a major role in it. Modern science at that stage was a creative, and modern authoritarianism a pathological, use of the ability to isolate. But, gradually, over isolating organised science has become another pathological correlate of the demise of traditions and the erosion of cultures, the bogus claims of the rationalists and the liberals notwithstanding.

The moral of the story is this. Modern science can no longer be an ally *against* authoritarianism. Today it has an in-built tendency to be an ally *of* authoritarianism. We must now look elsewhere in the society to find support for democratic values.

Why has something which began as a movement of protest become a part of the Establishment? How is it that, even after this, the modern world continues to vend science as a cornered voice of dissent struggling against heavy odds? Why do we ignore the all too visible fact that modern science now owns the world, and that even the so-called radicals, who reject constructive criticism in other areas of life as reformism, stick to the rules of science when criticising science? (Do we have to be religious when criticising religion? Do religions, in spite of their alleged authoritarianism, expect their critics to be religious?)

Any answer to these questions must admit that modern science is both a social institution and a search for new meanings and for more aesthetic and orderly structures of cognition. In its early halcyon days, it was the second aspect of modern science which predominated. In Europe, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the scientist was claiming the right to search for another truth and adopt another mode of contemplation and self realisation. But that was a hang-over from the days of classical science and the scientists recovered from it soon enough to produce, by the end of the nineteenth century a formidable organisation and a strong support-base for it.

Within another five decades, the scientist has almost totally given up his role as a lonely dissenter and critic of the Establishment cosmology. So much so, that to see him now as a weak, unorganised but brave fighter against obscurantism can spell disaster for all of us.

When science was primarily a search for self-realisation, however arbitrary or subjective that search might have been, it allowed for plurality. Now that organised science reigns supreme, there is little scope for the individual scientist to protect his individuality as a scientist. Over-organised science has now managed to do the impossible: it has become simultaneously a market place and a vested interest. It has an organisational logic independent of the creativity of the individual scientist but dependent on — and subserving — his material interests. It is this which has preempted basic internal criticism in science. No scientist can now say anything about scientific choices which could be presumed to be uncoloured by his interests or taken at face value.

To put it differently, modern science claims a special status for scientists so far as the goals of science are concerned. But, paradoxically, it refuses to recognise that scientists have a vested interest in science. Add to this the fact that science does not admit criticism from the outside and one gets an idea of how the domineering presence of science in society has made the laity the prisoners of a small group of professionals who, unlike the political elites in their position, are relatively exempt from criticisms, checks and competition.

This totalism of modern science is further strengthened by the modern world's ability to produce a total socialisation of the individual through uniformising education and mass media. Ultimately it is the

scientists who decide not only what should be done with science or, as is more and more the case with many scientific societies, with social life in general, but the laity too consider such control to be proper.

Increasingly, scientists are taking over the world with the enthusiastic approval, in fact, on the demand, of the non-scientists in modern societies. The traditional cultures, not being driven by the principles of internal consistency and parsimony, did allow the individual to create a place for himself in a plural structure of authority in the name of the collectivity. In such cultures the individual always had some play vis-a-vis the institutions he worked with. For instance, a guru's truth may have been a false consciousness of many but, traditionally, one man's guru could always be another man's anti-guru. Such fragmentation of the world of gurus was presumed by every disciple of every guru. So there were at least varieties of false consciousness competing for the allegiance of the believers.

Such multiplicity is not granted by modern science which, because it presumes universal norms and unitary truths, must reject all gurus, and claim religious allegiance to one truth and one form of liberation. So you have religion after all but without different forms of godmen, revelations or prophets which enriched the traditional religions.

Finally, take the four charming pluralities science accepts. In each case, there is an implicit but irrevocable principle of hierarchy as well as a totalist vision of social consciousness. First, there is the classical science and the modern sciences. The former is seen as a heroic, but earlier and inferior, stage in the evolution of true knowledge, the final stage of which is presumed to be modern science. Here classical science and its ideology are fitted in a hierarchy as a museum-piece, not as an alternative view of nature and humanness.

The second plurality is that of modern and non-modern non-western traditions of science. Here the surviving traditional sciences are seen as semi-scientific reservoirs from which modern science may have to pick up insights and practices, rejecting the rest as so much mythology and magic. The borrowing by modern medicine of the drug reserpine from Ayurveda does not imply any respect for the philosophy or the structure of Ayurveda; it implies some openness towards some specific findings of Ayurveda for reasons of practical utility. It is no different from the respect we show an alert child who accidentally finds a misplaced railway ticket which the elders should have found in the first place but, through a series of accidents and oversights, did not.

The third plurality is internal to modern science; it is the plurality of competing theories. It, too, has no intrinsic legitimacy. If science has more than one explanation of a phenomenon, the scientific expectation is that only one of them will finally win and establish its hegemony or otherwise a new theory will emerge and supplant all the competing theories. Usually, of course, there is one dominant theory in existence; this is held by the scientists in the fashion of, to use Thomas Kuhn's over-used theory again, a totalising dogma.

The fourth plurality, too, is an internal one. Scientists grant legitimacy to the differences between what J.R. Ravetz calls the mature and the immature sciences. Though theoretically any kind of science can be immature, in practice the social sciences are classified under that rubric, mainly because of their paradigm-surplus nature. In fact all paradigm-scarce disciplines are definitionally put into the class of the mature sciences *a la* Kuhn. This is done irrespective of the fact that the strength and critical power of the human sciences lie in their paradigm-surplus nature which allows these sciences to provide wider social choices and to maintain a certain openness of vision.[16] It seems, the main function of this division between the mature and the immature sciences is to avoid critical social sensitivity close to the centre of the imperium of science.

The pluralities of science, therefore, are no pluralities at all. Perhaps it is necessary for modern science to have them in exactly in this form for its progress. But to be a part of such a culture of science and to manage it requires a complex of psychological skills that are most frequently found in the authoritarian personality.

VI

I have said that modern science was once a movement of dissent. It then pluralised and democratised the world of ideas. I have said that it is now the centre-piece of the Establishment cosmology and can function neither as an instrument of basic criticism nor as an expression of scepticism and self-doubt. I have also said that modern science, at its best, was once a creative response to a psychological problem, the pathological response to which was authoritarianism. I am now suggesting that modern science, which began as a creative adjunct to the post-medieval world and as an alternative to modern authoritarianism, has itself acquired many of the psychological features of the latter. In fact, it is now moving towards acquiring the absolute narcissism of a blood-thirsty Caligula.

Modern science began by giving a dissenting meaning to the man-nature system. It was not only a different ideology but also a different perspective on the human condition. It disturbed the older world image not by being unconditionally true but by demystifying those aspects of the pre-modern cosmology that had become stale, ritualistic, self justifying and incompatible with changed human experience.

The critique turned into an onslaught on human survival when science proudly opted for all-out tough-mindedness.[17] What was first

16. I have discussed the problem of these pluralities in some detail in my "Science in Utopia," *Op. Cit.*

17. The word is not mine; I have borrowed it from modern psychology which uses it to indirectly distinguish the more scientific from the less.

a new consciousness and a quality of thinking slowly became institutionalised — and 'concretised' — as a thing and as an independent reality, in fact the only reality. This reduced objectivity to objectification. Especially in the life sciences (for example in medicine and the social sciences) the affirmation of a clear distinction between the observer and the observed was bound to bring in mechanomorphism by the backdoor. Behaviourists J.B. Watson and B.F. Skinner have only taken to its logical conclusion this process of objectification. How far they derive their legitimacy from the promise of scientific control over human fate is obvious from the fact that behaviourism remains the official ideology of both western modernism and Soviet Marxism.

The moment one says this, the natural scientists are apt to harangue one on particle physics and Werner Heisenberg (And then the social scientists join them with Freud's concept of counter-transference or with Claude Levi Strauss on the savage mind.) As if the culture of these subdisciplines among them constituted the mainstream culture of modern science Actually, modern science, as we know it, will collapse if it gives up the dichotomy between the observer and the observed. The difference maintained between the expert and the non-expert and between the scientist and the layman are but special cases of this basic dichotomy.

This is the other side of the pathology which many psychologists have identified as a basic feature of fascism Fascism, too, cannot do without all-round objectification and without the idea of a leadership representing the true interests of the masses as well as a superior cognition. At its most benevolent, fascism sees citizens as subjects whose subjecthood is no different from that imposed on the laity by science The sometimes-creative distance between the scientist and his subject of study becomes here the vulgarity of self-declared elites — 'revolutionary vanguard' in some versions of Marxism — manipulating the socalled immature masses, with their unripe social consciousness, towards a better future. Modern science at this plane is a part of a more general theory of imposed liberation: material, cultural and spiritual.

It is therefore not a paradox of our times that to contain science we might have to fall back on what has been directly or indirectly one of the main targets of modern science, namely, cultural traditions. It would be a natural consequence of the attempt to protect the plurality of human consciousness.

Likewise, to contain authoritarianism, specially within the framework of a participatory system we may have no other alternative but to provide a critique of the modern industrial society which will not arise out of modernity and yet make sense to the contemporary man who lives in modernity. In so far as the various versions of scientism cannot provide this criticism and in so far as modern science is inextricable from modern consciousness, here also we may have to fall back on the traditional worldviews and theories of life.

But what kind of traditions and which worldviews? I cannot hope to discuss in this one lecture the traditions which renaissance science criticised or the traditions which survived this criticism. But I think I can assume some knowledge in you about the isolating, heartless, frozen aspects of traditions in general. After all, the last two hundred years of Indian life has been primarily a struggle against these aspects of Indianness Cultural traditions too can become, as post-medieval science so dramatically revealed, ritualised, self justificatory, non-contemplative, a means of perpetuating structural violence and hidden and not-so-hidden oppression.

If I have succeeded in arguing that both modern science and modern authoritarianism depend heavily on the human capacity to isolate, I should also add that traditions too are constantly pushing us towards further isolating their contents. It is probably in the nature of any complex cultural system to seek self-perpetuation through isolation. Let us not forget that the main role of rituals, as Freud himself pointed out, is to isolate.[18]

The question of choice of traditions is, therefore, not a question of choice from among the myriad elements of traditions, as believed by many good-hearted reformers who regularly exhort us to retain the good traditions and reject the bad. It is a matter of choice between two broad types of traditions, the critical and the non-critical, or, if you like, between the contemplative or self-analytic and the non-contemplative or non-analytic.[19]

In the first half of this century Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy wrote his brilliant critique of the modern civilisation. He contrasted the assumptions of this civilisation with the traditional vision of man — humane, contemplative and just. He thus took to an elegant conclusion the critique initiated by Carlyle, Ruskin, Blake and Tolstoy on the one hand and a galaxy of non-western thinkers on the other.

However, even if one grants the premise, as I do, that everyone has the right to project a utopia into the past, Coomaraswamy's tradition remains homogenous and undifferentiated in the name of wholeness and internal consistency. His nostalgic defence of *sati*, for example, never honestly takes into account many of those who were forced to commit *sati* for the sake of the charming and romantic theory behind it. Often, as I found out when working on the subject, they died without the benefit of Coomaraswamy's beautiful evocative theory By refusing to consider this intellectually dull issue, Coomaraswamy's traditionalism ceases to be critical. It demystifies modernity to

18. See Freud, *op. cit.*

19. I have in mind the meaning of 'analysis' that emerges from the works of Philip Rieff on Freudian ethics. See specially his *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Uses of Faith After Freud*, New York: Harper, 1968. Such a meaning in some ways ties up with the concept of criticism as used throughout this paper. Though neo-Freudian and neo-Marxian in origin, such a concept does have a great degree of cross-cultural validity.

further mystify traditions.[20] He can be said to be promoting here a new form of isolation.

Similarly, one may concur with Coomaraswamy that the position of the untouchables in the caste system was better than that of the industrial proletariat in the modern world. But this can be an empty statement for many of those at the receiving end of the Indian system. When we see the untouchables opting for proletarianisation in contemporary India, can we summarily reject their choice as a function of false consciousness? How then are we different from those who draw a clear line between the scientist and the technocrat on the one hand, and the layman on the other, or between the high and the low which authoritarianism cannot do without?

I am afraid Coomaraswamy's traditionalism not only does not leave any scope for anti-traditionalism but, also, inspite of being holistic by design, it does not allow any creative critical use of the modern consciousness. It remains partial because modernity is alien to it not only ethically but also to some extent cognitively.[21] (I am convinced without any evidence that if Coomaraswamy did not have that odd middle name, if he did not have to disown his mixed origin and bicultural consciousness, he probably would not have defended Indian culture so uncritically.)

Today, when there is all-round revival of interest in cultural vision, these have become vital issues. Commitment to traditions, too, can objectify by drawing a line between a culture and those who live by that culture, by setting up some as the true interpreters of a culture and the others as falsifiers, and by trying to defend the alleged core of a culture from its periphery. Such an approach always underestimates the folk as opposed to the classical, the contextual as opposed to the textual, and the reinterpreted as opposed to the 'professionally' interpreted. As in science, so in culture. A closed system tends to become a vested interest, sometimes in the name of openness.

Take, for instance, some of the new models of Hinduism produced in India during the 150 years; they often accept Hinduism but reject the Hindus. Such traditionalism leads us to the stand of Vivekananda who defended the texts and symbols of Hinduism fully but considered the Hindus fallen and sought to improve them by giving Hinduism an institutional structure borrowed from Christianity and the West. He supported the traditional symbols and institutions of Hinduism and attacked most reformers of Hinduism, but he also tried to Christianise Hinduism by erecting a church, by accepting the idea of proselytisation, by introducing a sacred book and an organised priesthood. He openly sought to create a western society of the Hindus to pay the Imperial West in its own coin.[22]

The philosophy of Hindu nationalism, based on a vulgar reading of *Hindutva*, is the *reductio ad absurdum* of such pseudo-traditionalism. Its whole aim is to disown the Hindu as he is and to improve his character, morality and potency so that he resembles the westerner and the Muslim, and finally defeats them at their own game. In their self-hatred as defeated Hindus, the Hindu nationalists want to rewrite Hinduism as a proper religion, well-organised and well-bounded. Such an approach rejects the idea of cultural autonomy as well as authenticity and in the name of protecting Hinduism judges the Hindus by norms alien to them. No wonder, Hindu nationalism is basically an urban, semi-westernised, middle-class phenomenon.[23]

The origin of such nationalism has been best explored in Rabindra Nath Tagore's novel *Gora*, which tells the story of an ultra-Hindu who turns out, towards the end of the novel, to be the abandoned child of an English couple. An accident of a life history here becomes a symbol of a deeper cultural equation. Gora however proves himself a truer person than those he symbolises. At the end of the novel he opts for the wisdom of a more inclusive Hinduism, not as a compromise but as a superior form of Hinduism.

I like to believe that Tagore here is hinting at another kind of tradition which is contemplative as well as self-critical, which does not reject the experience of the modern world but incorporates it. Such a tradition refuses to give primacy to the needs of pure cognition at the expense of the wholeness of consciousness and it refuses to build a community's self-concept in response to outsiders either through imitation or through compulsive rejection. Nor does it try to be the alter ego of other cultures as a means of winning self-esteem. Even in defeat, it refuses to lose its authenticity, though it incorporates the experience of 'defeat' as relevant.

Not being a Gandhian, I can say without being apologetic that Gandhi represented such a concept of critical traditionalism aggressively. Not being a Maoist, I can also say, even in these post-Maoist days when he is no longer in fashion, that that fortunately-half-educated peasant probably had some inkling of what was involved in such a defence of traditions. But not being a Marxist, I can say with some trepidation that Marx, as opposed to many later-day Marxists, was more or less a complete prisoner of nine-

20. See my 'Evaluating Utopias' in Eleonora Masini (Ed.), *Visions of Desirable Societies*, Vol. 2, London: Pergamon Press, in press. Shorter version in *Mazingira*, 1980, No. 12.

21. This never happens with authentic traditions which Coomaraswamy theoretically supports. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, for instance, take into account the modern consciousness in the form of the personality types represented by demons and *asuras* and by individuals like Ravana and Karna. That these types are rejected should not blind us to the fact that they are also considered seriously and even respected and used as correctives to the types generally favoured.

22. See my 'Psychology of Colonialism: Sex, Age and Ideology in British India,' *Psychiatry*, in press.

23. A pathetic expression of this ideology was Nathuram V. Godse, the assassin of M.K Gandhi. For an analysis of the clash between two forms of Hinduism protesting differently against colonialism, see my 'The Final Encounter: The politics of Assassination of Gandhi,' *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980, Chapter 4.

teenth century scientism. In spite of his seminal contribution to the demystification of the industrial society, he did not have a clue to the role modern science had played in the legitimation of such a society.[24] The product of a more optimistic age, he faithfully put science outside history. That is why Stalin is not an accidental entry in the history of Marxism. He remains the brain-child of Marx, even if, when considered in the context of Marx's total vision, an illegitimate one.[25]

The authentic critical traditionalism I am talking about does not have to see the modern world or modern science as alien to it, even though it might see them as alienating. It sees modernity and modern science as parts of a new tradition which could be used for critical purposes within the earlier traditions and their long-term concerns. Such a traditionalism insists that modern science recognise itself as only one of the many traditions of science. Such traditionalism uncompromisingly criticises isolation and the over-concern with objectivity, but it never denies the creative possibilities of individual objectivity.

Wisdom recognises continuities as much as change; it recognises optimality and limits of applicability of concepts and character-traits. As in the clinic, so in the culture, Ultimately, intelligence and knowledge are poor — in fact, dangerous — substitutes for wisdom.

VII

Perhaps I may be able to make my point better by remembering a brief and 'trivial' episode in the life of M.N. Roy. It is said that once when he was ill during his last days, Roy insisted that his American wife, Ellen, wear, while nursing him, a red-bordered white sari as his mother used to do in his childhood. Others have disputed the veracity of the story. Being rationalists, they evidently see the irrationality of any rationalist as dangerous spicy gossip. That a person may not choose to work with objectivity in all situations seems to them not merely vulgar; it is a fall from humanness itself.

But should objectivity work in all cases? I suggest to you as the final comment of this lecture today that when Roy reportedly fell from his rationalism by seeking a symbolic reaffirmation of his private concept of motherhood and mothering, he was merely admitting the continuities in the symbols of nurture and *caritas*. He was admitting some of the undying concerns of his culture and some of the continuities in the cultural communications that go on among human beings who are ready to 'listen.' That is, on the one hand he was accepting the limits of the conventional concept of rationality, on the other, he was being true to the full meaning of his own faith that human reason and morality expressed the harmony of the cosmos.[26]

That is why Roy wanted his wife to be content with not only the institution of nursing and the hard reality called medical after-care, but also wanted these institutions to be given meaning with the help of the traditional symbols, feelings and aesthetics associated with them. He was recognising the mysteries called maternity and wifeliness and probably accepting Thomas Mann's maxim that 'It is love, not reason, which is stronger than death.' He was de-isolating.

That is why I want to believe that this disputed episode in Roy's life is true. Admitting that such an episode could take place in his life is another way of admitting that Roy was showing, in his apparent irrationality, his superior cognition and his superior wisdom, if not a higher form of rationality itself.

24. A third-generation Marxist like Jurgen Habermas has done better in this respect. See his 'Science and Technology as Ideology' in *Toward a Rational Society*, London: Heinemann, 1977, pp. 81-222.

25. See on this subject Leszek Kolakowski, 'Marxist Roots of Stalinism', and Mihailo Marcovic, 'Stalinism and Marxism.' In Robert C. Tucker (Ed.), *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, New York: Norton, 1977, pp. 283-319. On the roots of technocratic Marxism in the positivist Marx, see Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1971.

26. *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. 2. Calcutta: Renaissance, 1955, p. 301.

Dec 6:6.

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DOCUMENT

A Statement on Scientific Temper

On July 19, 1981, at the Nehru Centre in Bombay was released a document by P. N. Haksar, along with Dr Raja Ramanna and Dr P. M. Bhargava, under the title, "A Statement on Scientific Temper".

In the Introduction to the document, Dr Raja Ramanna says :

"The nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to Jawaharlal Nehru, more than to any other, for the sustained growth and many-sided development of modern science and technology in India, as viable instruments of social transformation. The need of the time is the diffusion of science and technology into the societal fabric at all levels. This can only be achieved by promotion of what Jawaharlal Nehru chose to call the Scientific Temper — a rational attitude, the importance of which he emphasized time and again. Indeed, the Scientific Temper has to be fostered with care at the individual, institutional, social and political levels."

In his Foreword to the document, P.N. Haksar writes:

The Nehru Centre arranged for some of us to assemble together in a quiet corner of our country to share our common concern at the accelerating pace of retreat from reason. The venue of our meeting was Coonoor, so lush and green and full of promise as our entire land is.

For four days and nights, from October 22-25, 1980, we discussed and debated what needed to be done to halt the process of decay of reason and rationality. I had the honour of presiding over the deliberations. The end result of it all was a Statement on Scientific Temper.

That Statement was subsequently shown to others. It was further refined. We now present this Statement as revised. We are not unaware of its inadequacies. However, it is our earnest hope that the Statement will generate a wider debate and discussion in our country.

There are more than two million scientists and technologists in our country. In addition, we have a large number of economists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists, lawyers, doctors, administrators, management specialists and teachers who, in one way or another, apply the scientific temper and scientific methodology in pursuit of their respective professions and disciplines.

If the Statement succeeds in generating a nation-wide discussion, it will also, hopefully, generate a movement for the much needed second renaissance in our country. The first renaissance inspired the struggle for freedom. The second must of necessity provide the necessary fillip for the re-structuring of our country embodying the aspirations of our people.

Only in the measure we succeed in installing Scientific Temper as the dominant ethos of our collective being, can we hope to face the accumulating problems of our national existence. We must understand that it is not going to be easy. We shall have to do a great deal of heart-searching ourselves.

It is often argued, with seeming profundity, that while scientific temper is alright, it does not satisfy humanity's spiritual needs; that the entire realm of art and music, poetry and drama fall outside its ambit. In answer to such critics, I can do not more than remind ourselves of how Jawaharlal Nehru resolved the seeming contradiction between our material and spiritual needs. In *The Discovery of India*, he defines in the following terms his own attitude:

The real problems for me remain problems of individual and social life, of harmonious living, of a proper balancing of an individual's inner and outer life, of an adjustment of the relations between individuals and between groups of a continuous becoming something better and higher, of social development, of the ceaseless adventure of man.

In the solution of these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning, according to the method of science, must be followed. This method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, for art and poetry and certain psychic experiences seem to belong to a different order of things and to elude the objective methods of science.

Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purposes of science. But always we must hold to our anchor of precise knowledge tested by reason ... we must beware of losing ourselves in a sea of speculation unconnected with the day-to-day problems of life and the needs of men and women. A living philosophy must answer the problems of today.

1
Preamble

THE history of humanity bears witness to periods of enlightenment as well as to periods of darkness. It bears witness to the rise and fall of civilizations. Through all the vicissitudes of time the knowledge gained by humanity has retained a quality of indestructability. Viewing the entire panorama of the universal history of mankind, one becomes conscious of a continuous but forward movement towards greater knowledge, and to an increasing capacity of human beings to exercise control over their environment.

While humanity as a whole accumulates knowledge, there is no guarantee that the availability of such knowledge will, by itself, enable every country to use it successfully for its own advancement and the well being of its people. There are examples in history where predominant social, political, cultural and value systems inhibited the absorption of knowledge resulting in periods of stagnation, decay and retreat from reason, rationality and science. Though the Renaissance began in Italy, and Galileo, the harbinger of modern science, was an Italian, adherence to obscurantism enforced by the Church led Italy to losing the benefit of the Renaissance which fertilized Northern parts of Europe. The Renaissance

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and the Reformation then combined together to revolutionise thought as well as society.

In our own country too we have known of periods of creativity when the spirit of enquiry led to the accumulation of scientific knowledge; there was creativity in literature, music, arts and crafts. However, we have also known of periods when the spirit of enquiry got extinguished. During those long stretches of time everything was reduced to unquestioning dogmas and to the performance of dead rituals. There was deadening of curiosity and questioning. There was only passivity and acceptance. And finally, we were overtaken by the greatest of disasters—our complete colonisation and subjugation to British imperialism.

Contemplating our decline, decay and subjugation, some of our best minds began asking themselves why and how it all happened. This spirit of enquiry and questioning gave birth to a wide social cultural movement which we call the Indian renaissance. The best Indian minds in the pre-independence times insistently propagated the need for the people to think independently and fearlessly, and to question traditional beliefs. This effort, in time, produced a critique of the colonial system. Out of this critique was born a powerful national movement for our liberation. The British imperial system, aligning itself with the vested interests, endeavoured to counter the broad stream of nationalism by encouraging revivalism and obscurantism. And though Indian renaissance never elaborated a critique of our entire ancient society and unfortunately made compromises, the urge to acquire knowledge and the scientific outlook remained strong. The spirit of questioning ultimately overwhelmed an imperial system which seemed so powerful and even immutable.

There is a wide awareness in our times that we are living in a scientific age of great discoveries in science, affecting and moulding both our material and social existence. It is indeed remarkable how a comparatively small number of physical laws seem sufficient to explain a great part of behaviour of matter, right from the huge and massive heavenly objects located at the very edges of outer universe to the minute regions of atoms and atomic nucleus. In life sciences, we are in the midst of far reaching, even revolutionary, changes. The entire history of humanity shows that it is the scientific temper which not only created and promoted science, but also gave humanity the means to affect the natural and social environment. It is, therefore, the scientific temper which is the most precious heritage of humanity. It is the result of incessant human labour, search and struggle.

Jawaharlal Nehru gave an impetus to Scientific Temper by setting before the people the target of catching up with the rest of the world with the help of science and technology. He unfolded the perspective of leap-frogging the centuries. Implicit in such a vision was a vast change in the intellectual climate of our people. Our Constitution and the subsequent Resolution on Science Policy were predicated upon the assumption that our ancient society needed basic changes. However, there was not enough appreciation of the relationship between the objectives to be achieved and the methods as well as the instrumentalities appropriate for bringing about the desired changes. No systematic and sustained effort was made to work out, specifically and concretely, what needed to be done to build a society which is animated by a spirit of enquiry rather than passivity and acceptance. The result of this lack of directed efforts was accommodation, even compromise, with the forces of obscurantism and with the existing inegalitarian social and economic structures. Failure to give mass dimensions and appropriate institutional forms to Scientific Temper, more specially to our educational system, led to the erosion of confidence in our capacity to mould our destiny.

In such an environment, Scientific Temper is beleaguered and besieged by deep rooted structures of an ancient society with superimposed colonial structures. Consequently, there has been frustration of our hopes of optimising the results of the application of science and technology for our national reconstruction. Inevitably, such frustration has encouraged a search for and reliance upon authority. Inevitably too, there has been a growth of tendencies to escape into magical beliefs and instant solutions. Even science and technology are being offered not as methods of enquiry or value systems but as magical cures for our ills, reminding one of the time when Roman intellectuals sought refuge in Levantine magic. There is inadequate appreciation of the close interaction between science and technology and society and of the fact that the benefits of science and technology can reach the people only if the socio-economic conditions are conducive. If the cultural environment, socio-economic conditions and institutional structures inhibit the spirit of enquiry, the desired results can never be achieved.

The gravity of our predicament is increasing day by day. While we rank high among the industrialised countries in the world and are the third largest country in the world in regard to the stock of manpower trained in science and technology, we are close at the bottom of the list in terms of per capita food consumption, longevity, health care and general quality of life. We have all the technology available right now within the country to give water, food, shelter, and basic health care to our millions. And yet we do not. Something has gone wrong. The logic of planning and the logic of our socio-economic structure are at variance. Hence, our failures and disappointments.

In such an environment, there is an erosion of belief in the capacity of human faculties to solve national problems through a systematic critique of the existing social situation. There is a cancerous growth of superstition at all levels. Rituals of the most bizarre kind are frequently performed often with official patronage. Obscurantist social customs are followed even by those whose profession is the pursuit of scientific enquiry. Our entire educational system works in an atmosphere of conformity, non-questioning and obedience to authority. Quoting authority of one kind or another substitutes enquiry, questioning and thought.

Obscurantism and irrationalism practised by a hierarchy of authorities, has the predictable effect of reinforcing retreat from reason. Voices raised against

such a state of affairs get silenced. The decision-making processes are increasingly being divorced from any rational purpose or design. There is no long-term perspective based on ascertained facts and scientific analysis. Adhocism, whims and the narrowest of considerations take the place of well-planned programmes. Priorities, if any, are fixed without sufficient data-base and without any attempt at scientific evaluation of national needs, potentialities and feasibility of implementation. Mere slogans tend to be used as a substitute for action and for creating an illusion of achievement. Dramatic crash programmes are launched. These, inevitably, crash. There are no prespective plans. Even Five Year Plans have been reduced to annual exercises of allocating funds.

As our country enters the last two decades of the 20th century, the need to move forward is becoming ever more insistent. We either overcome the obstacles or we shall be overcome by unreason and dark reaction. We must understand the meaning as well as the imperatives of Scientific Temper, representing as it does, humanity's assertion of being in charge of its destiny and not a passive victim of malevolence or benevolence of stars. To do so, we need to actively combat beliefs which erode Scientific Temper and undermine its growth. Only then shall we illumine our darkening national horizon and provide our people, once again, with a vision and a method for translating that vision into reality. Such a vision must have a Scientific Temper as its integrating bond.

2

Attributes of Scientific Temper

SPREAD of Scientific Temper in society is much more than the spread of science or technology. Scientific Temper is neither a collection of knowledge or facts, although it promotes such knowledge; nor is it rationalism although it promotes rational thinking. It is something more. It is an attitude of mind which calls for a particular outlook and pattern of behaviour. It is of universal applicability and has to permeate through our society as the dominant value system powerfully influencing the way we think and approach our problems—political, social, economic, cultural and educational.

Scientific Temper involves the acceptance, amongst others, of the following premises:

(a) that the method of science provides a viable method of acquiring knowledge;

(b) that human problems can be understood and solved in terms of knowledge gained through the application of the method of science;

(c) that the fullest use of the method of science in everyday life and in every aspect of human endeavour from ethics to politics and economics — is essential for ensuring human survival and progress; and

(d) that one should accept knowledge gained through the application of the method of science as the closest approximation to truth at that time, and question what is incompatible with such knowledge; and that one should from time to time re-examine the basic foundations of contemporary knowledge.

The method of science, therefore, constitutes a regenerative process for collecting information and processing the collected information to create meaningful patterns leading to an ordered understanding of nature of man himself, his natural and social environment. In this sense, the method of science encompasses all aspects of communicable human knowledge and cuts across all artificial compartmentalisation like natural science, social science, applied science, etc.

The spirit of inquiry and the acceptance of the right to question and be questioned are fundamental to Scientific Temper. It calls upon one to ask the 'how', the 'what', and the 'why' of an object, event or phenomenon. It further calls upon one to exercise the right to question, provided of course, the questioning of an existing theory, hypothesis or statement or social situation is done in accordance with the scientific method and is not merely a bare assertion of one's belief. Scientific Temper is, therefore, incompatible with the acceptance of authorities of all kinds or of 'high priests' who may not be questioned. It leads to the realisation that events occur as a result of interplay of understandable and describable natural and social forces and not because someone, however great, so ordained them. These forces are often complex and intertwined and have to be analytically disentangled.

Scientific Temper is compatible with observation and insight, reasoning and intuition, systematic work and creative impulse. It gives rise to an attitude of mind which while being conscious of vast areas of ignorance, is nevertheless, optimistic about human ability to gradually unravel the mysteries that surround us. In this process, Scientific Temper becomes a part of the culture, a philosophy, and a way of life which leads to pursuit of truth without prejudgement.

Scientific Temper implies the recognition that knowledge often progresses by disproving earlier ideas, beliefs, theories and laws. It considers knowledge as open-ended and ever-evolving. It lays emphasis on verifiability and repeatability, wherever possible, and on the fact that scientific theories, laws and facts allow one to make predictions which can be tested. It recognises that answers to many questions that may be asked at any given time, may not be available at that time. It, then, demands the courage and humility to say, 'I do not know'.

Scientific Temper calls for recognition of the several major differences between the scientific attitude and the theological and metaphysical attitude specially in respect of dogmas proclaimed in the name of religion. There is in fact, essential incompatibility of all dogmas with science. While science is universal, established religions and religious dogmas are divisive. Consider the divisions which exist between Christian, Islamic, Buddhistic and Hindu denominations. Science, in contrast, transcends divisions and is universal.

Scientific Temper has deep emotional content and has, within it, a sense of beauty. That is why considerations based on beauty and simplicity have been often invoked to choose between alternative theories that are otherwise equally tenable.

Inherent in Scientific Temper is a system of value

judgements. The inculcation of Scientific Temper in our society would result in our people becoming rational and objective, thereby generating a climate favouring an egalitarian, democratic, secular and universalist outlook. Consequently, Scientific Temper cannot flourish in a grossly inegalitarian society where 50 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and almost 70 per cent of our people, especially females, are illiterate. Social justice, widespread education and unrestricted communication are, therefore, pre-requisites for spread of Scientific Temper and for optimising the results of science and technology.

3

Role of Scientific Temper

HAVING outlined the essential elements of Scientific Temper, let us survey our national scene. Despite Jawaharlal Nehru's advocacy of Scientific Temper, we are witnessing a phenomenal growth of superstitious beliefs and obscurantist practices. The influence of a variety of godmen and miracle makers is increasing alarmingly. The modern tools of propaganda and communication are being used to give an impression that there exist instant and magical solutions for the problems that confront our people.

In an age when man has travelled to the moon and returned safely, astrological predictions based on the movements of planets or the lines of one's palm or the number of alphabets in one's name, are widely believed. Food fads, irrational health practices are on the increase. In a poor country where millions live below the poverty line, vast amount of wealth is consigned in *havanas* and *yagnas*.

Myths are created about our past. The origin and role of the caste system is explained in a way that would justify it and imply that some castes are inherently superior. The ancient period of our history is interpreted to inculcate chauvinism which is false pride; the medieval period is misinterpreted in a way that would fan communalism; and the struggle of our people for freedom is over-simplified as if it was the handiwork of a few great leaders and the masses of our people did not matter.

While it is important to understand the origin of these unscientific beliefs, the more immediate and pressing problem is to understand the remarkable phenomenon of their persistence and the resulting social consequences.

The sustenance of such beliefs and superstitions must be recognised primarily as a historical and social process. Such beliefs continue, because they have ready relevance to the personal situations of the majority of our people. Vast uncertainties of our daily lives, frustration of hopes and aspirations of millions, denial of any vision which would sustain the spirit drives millions to seek mental equilibrium in faith healing. Thus, when one believes that one's miserable personal situation cannot be improved, acceptance of fatalism becomes natural. Beliefs then rationalise the status quo and breed fatalistic doctrines. In such a situation of social and cultural malaise, a major role of Scientific Temper is to revive confidence and hope and to dispel fatalistic outlook. The campaign to promote Scientific Temper must inculcate values like equality and dignity of all human beings, distributive justice, dignity of labour and social accountability of one's actions. All these are essential for bringing about social, economic and cultural transformation of our country.

The emphasis on the method of science does not imply that science and technology have solutions to all human problems at any given time. Indeed, Scientific Temper warns one against the simplistic view that through the introduction and pursuit of science and technology, most social problems and contradictions will automatically get resolved. The role of reason is to apply scientific knowledge to problems, to grapple with them through the method of scientific inquiry and to work for social transformation inspired by Scientific Temper.

We must equally combat the tendency to treat science and technology as a sort of magic. It should be explained that it is unscientific to believe that if scientific and technological solutions exist to a range of problems, these will be automatically adopted. The nature of social stratification and the power structure in a society prevents the acceptance of such solutions. Technologically, one may be able to grow enough food for everyone, but the pattern of income distribution prevents the benefits of increased food production reaching large segments of the population. When the social structure and stratification prevent the application of rational and scientifically proven solutions, the role of Scientific Temper is to lay bare the anatomy of such social barriers.

If we have to regain our place in the world and are not to be relegated once again to the dustbin of history; if we wish to offer a life of fulfilment to our destitute millions; indeed, if the light of our civilisation is not to be extinguished, we have to undertake, on a priority basis, the task of nurturing Scientific Temper. All of us scientists, technologists, social scientists, educationists, teachers, media men have to

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join hands and undertake this task. We draw inspiration from the way our people in all walks of life joined hands and struggled against colonial domination of our land and of our minds. We believe, it can be done again if only we have the will. And it must be done without any loss of time. Our nation's survival and its future depends on upholding Scientific Temper. Superstition shall not pass and darken our portals.

Participants in Group Meeting and Signatories to Statement are:

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At the function where the document was released, Dr. P.M. Bhargava, one of the convenors, announced that the following had signified their complete agreement with the Statement: Dr M.G. K. Menon; Dr Yash Pal; Dr Romila Thapar and Dr Rais Ahmed.

Bombay
July 19, 1981

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A CASE STUDY ON ORGANIZING AGRICULTURAL LABOURERERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, SELF DEPENDENCE AND PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION.

(ASSOCIATION FOR THE RURAL POOR, SATYAVEDU, A.P.)

I. INTRODUCTION:

THE MOVEMENT UPDATED 1977 TO THE PRESENT

My work among the agricultural labourers could be divided into three periods. I am deliberately presenting a longer Case-Study with detailed information about our conviction, ideology, methodology, programmes, achievements, failures, etc., so as to enable you to understand the magnitude of a People's Movement in the context of social and political transformation. Let those who read this study do something to organise the unorganised rural masses before it is too late. Myself and a group of young people decided to leave the slums of Madras where we have been organising the urban poor and chose to work in the most backward rural areas of Tamilnadu because we felt that the slum dwellers, though poor and powerless were more privileged than the rural poor. Secondly most of the slum dwellers were more interested to solve their day to day issues such as getting water pipes, street lights, latrines, etc., for their slums than transforming the powerlessness of the slum dwellers into fruitful action for building up people's power. Therefore 1974 when five of us left the city, we were sure that the little experience we have had in Madras in the techniques of Community Organisation would help us to analyse the rural situation better and start an effective programme among the landless agricultural labourers. From August 1974 to 1977, I have been organising the landless Harijan agricultural labourers in the [illegible] of the oppressive Blocks of Chinglepet District of Tamilnadu along with four other graduate animators. As a result of regular conscientisation process which included adult education based on issues and key words which have historical significance, study-circles to youth for politicisation, mass cultural action or drama programmes for demythifying the myths, taboos and caste values,

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leadership training for village leaders, etc., we have been able to solidify two thousand harijan agricultural labourers together. Today there exists this mass organisation in the name of Rural Harijan Agricultural Development Association (RHADA) which is completely governed and controlled by the leaders who had no status nor power some years ago.

From 1977 to 1979 about ten of us (animators) went to another Panchayat Union of North Arcot District at the request of the agricultural labourers here. During this three years we have once again conscientised these categories of powerless people on a class basis. They are the landless agricultural labourers, the marginal farmers and the small farmers. But the majority of the labourers in this new place also happened to be Harijans. From our earlier experience, we have learnt many good lessons. Therefore we avoided committing the same mistakes. In the second place we were much clear about our objectives, and as a result, the long cherished movement of the agricultural labourer came into being at the end of last year in the form of Agricultural Labourers Movement or Union on a Tamilnadu level, the Union has three thousand subscribing members in it, and has its Head Office in Vellore (North Arcot District).

At the beginning of 1980, some of us left the old areas and have scattered ourselves into many interior parts of Tamilnadu and Andhra with the purpose of intensifying the rural workers movement which includes the agricultural labourers, artisans, small farmers and other workers such as salt workers, quarry workers, etc. Right now we are working along with six new animators in the border areas of Tamilnadu and Andhra and are convinced that we would be able to make the same impact in Andhra and create a fervour among the rural workers to form an union of their own to fight for their basic rights.

Now let us explain the convictions under which we have been motivating the agricultural labourers movement.

II. CHRISTIAN CONVICTIONS:

We go under the conviction that as Christians. We believe that faith can transform suffering into a deeper knowledge of God's love as it is in the case of Jesus. For us conviction, dedication and commitment are of primary importance. We are convinced that our struggle among the poor is to express the meaning of the Gospel in its fullest means and to identify ourselves with those for whom Christ dies daily on the cross. Theology according to our understanding cannot be used to justify political situations, but to criticise such justifications. We see politics, economics, etc., as decisive spheres for Christian Praxis.

We do not accept the fact that people's faith must pass by way of the ecclesiastical structure where only the ordained are given the authority to decide for the people. We very much support and sustain the ideas of 'House Church', which meet in insignificant places whenever necessary and accept anyone who suffers by the sins of society to understand the cross of Christ in the worldly spirituality and be liberated from his submission to fate, apathy and exploitation. The concept of 'House Church' is to practice the love and forgiveness in a context of unequality, de-humanization, prejudice, envy and strift and restructure a new humanity which is the foundation of the kingdom of God at hand.

We pledge themselves to work together in different areas, where there are oppressed Harijans and Non-Harijans and accept all hardships and difficulties to work with them for total change in their own environment. We would seek no comfort, but accept simple village life according to the poor standard of the villages. We would not exploit and control the villagers, but accept the role of servants among the people. We would lead of Christian discipline based on Prayer, devotion, corporate worship and understand each other with love, trust and confidence.

III. IDEOLOGICAL STANCES:

Ideologically, these graduates are committed to equality and social justice, abolition of privileges and to a non-elitist form of Government at the local and national level.

We are called as 'Animators'. An animator is one who instigates the silent masses to wake up from their 'Culture of silence' and see the world with new realities. He is a catalyser but not a leader. He is a servant of the people but not the master or designer of people's destiny.

Animators do not believe in relief work. They do not like to make compromises by a betraying the poor. They identify and side the oppressed whoever they are rather than siding the powerful and the rich. They are radical and are committed to social transformation through political struggles. They stay with the poorest of the poor in any circumstances instead of using 'hit and run' methods during their work. They are people-oriented and not target-oriented. They believe in a steady, slow and painful process of social change, which is effective and revolutionary. They treat people as subjects of humanisation and never exploit them as objects of welfare and relief. They work with the people accepting their decisions and conditions than imposing their intellectual ideas and goals.

Rural masses are unorganised and are under-privileged when compared to the slum dwellers and industrial workers of the cities. Therefore, they are committed to support and organise the rural poor in the most backward and primitive area of Tamilnadu, India trusting that permanent social change is possible when we attack the infra-structure rather than tackling superficial problems and issues of the superstructure.

The animators do not wish to stick on to one place of work. Since they firmly believe in the aspect of a movement, they would like to move from place to place in mobilising the masses who are undrganised and powerless. By doing this they will never become emotionally attached to any area, but commit themselves to the total precept of establishing justice and truth wherever it is needed most. Therefore they always commit to work in one prescribed area only for a period of four to five years. It is their hope that if a well-planned methodology is being used to mobilise and consolidate the landless it should be completed within a limited time. But during this limited time, they would prepare and train the local leaders to take up their movement work soon after their withdrawl from that area.

IV. PERSPECTIVES OF A RURAL WORKERS MOVEMENT:

1. The problem of the farm workers and other marginal farmers is not regional but national. The beaurecracy and the landed gentry perspectuate exploitation and injustice and squeeze the rural labourers as much as possible and leave them de-humanised and non-permanent poverty stricken conditions. Therefore if we believe in fundamental changes, we must bring these through on mass based organisations of the poor who have to participate fully in this evaluation.

2. The situation of the Harijans, Adivasis and other Backward Caste labourers is not anymore a local phenomenon. There are many upheavels and uprisings among the Harijans and Adivasis all over the country today and there are good signs of people protesting against the present oppressive structures. Therefore by tackling deep rooted caste and tribal problems, and also by organising the rural labourers on economic grounds, we are trying to create a mass class consciousness among the 80% of the rural labourers who would increase their struggles and intentify their commitments for total change.

3. If our goals is set towards socialism, we must aim not only in transforming the economic structures, but also the socio-cultural structures with all their values and norms. This would mean redefining people's cultures, people's history at different periods under different regimes and understanding the revolutionary potentials already existing and trying to establish a new society through struggles by demeriting the set of values and goals of the capitalistic society among the voiceless in the rural areas in a particular historical context.

V. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES WITH WHICH WE ARE POLITICALISING PEOPLE:

Recognition of agricultural labourers as integral part of society where they are accepted as people with dignity and respect.

Building up of labour power through 'Mass Organisations' for effective participation in the political, social and economic spheres at the local, Block and District level.

To consolidate the farm labour (which is the only labour force in our area) on economic issues based on day to day problems of bread and butter and increase and solidify the bargaining power of those who are deprived of cultivation.

To politicalise and organise other landless agricultural labourers other than Harijans and conscientise them to consolidate and participate in struggle which are of a class nature.

To study, analyse and help to liberate the five categories of landless labourers namely (i) Agricultural Sub Landless Labourers on daily wages (ii) Agricultural Landed Labourers with small pieces of land but lack of material resources (iii) Permanent bonded labourers under the clutches of the big peasants and small farmers (iv) Semi-bonded and contract labourers and share croppers (v) Marginal farmers and small farmers who are in perpetual debts.

VI. METHODOLOGY:

The oppressed are made to believe by the oppressor that whatever he thinks and does one in harmony will his existence and therefore pre-destined. But the true motivation through dialogue revoles the fact that unless a man believe that he can change his existence, he would never liberate himself. The animators formulated a methodology for which conscientisation is the basis. Since consciousness determines existence of each individual. We emphasis that there is a disharmony between consciousness and existence. A free person is one who thinks and acts accordingly. It is by this act he is able to bring out all his faculties and find great satisfaction in whatever he does creatively.

Paulo Rixa Freire's approach to cultural revolution for freedom through conscientisation had attracted those graduates to study his philosophy thoroughly and to use some of his systematic methods to bring political and civic awareness among the dehumanised rural labourers. They had framed their own programmes which are suitable to Indian situation and deliberately attempted to demythologise the myths and taboos of the dominated culture and problematize every action by praxis.

Gandhiji's philosophy of education for the liberation of the masses had also been accepted as a source out of which their methodology emerged. Purification of the self and totally committing to the cause of the public, refusing to comply to the system that perpetuates injustices, learning to suffer, struggle together to create a new community, are the essence of Gandhiji's precepts which have been emphasised during the whole course of education and action. The peaceful methods of Gandhi to protest and demand legitimate rights of the people (Satyagraha - a protest for truth) was given prime importance.

Saul Alinsky's techniques of disorganising or organised community to build power has been used as a tactics to organise the powerless to build mass organisations. The techniques of role-plays, analysing case-studies, group dynamics, creating new leadership, pressurizing power structures through non-violent means have all been imbibed with the day to day affairs for problem solving and to construct Harijan power or Labour power.

VII. DEFINING THE OPPRESSED AND THE OPPRESSED LAND HOLDING PATTERNS - AN ANALYSIS:

The following is the land holding patterns of the landed gentry both in Chinglepet and North Arcot District while we began our work in 1977.

I. A feudal landlord is one who do not physically participate in the major agricultural operations. Their income from tenancy and feudal extrations is predominently more than what one gets out of cultivating land. A feudal landlord might possess roughly 200 to 300 acres of wet and dry land or sometimes more.

II. The capitalist landlord is one who does not physically participate in the major agricultural operations but exploits the wage labour in agriculture to a vast amount of surplus. Let us say he derives 50% of his income through labour. The rest he might get through rent. He would possess approximately 100 to 200 acres of good cultivable land.

III. Rich Peasant can be defined as one who phycally participate in the major agricultural operations and is not content with supervision alone. Sometimes you see the rich peasant working on his own farm and saves considerable amount of money by his work.

IV. Progressive Farmers: They are those who are called as capitalistic farmers. This is a new class of farmers who have become more powerful through green revolution and the benefits offered by the banks and credit societies. Most of them are either Panchayat Presidents, or D.M.K. or A.D.M.K. party leaders. Many of them are stanch supporters of the farmers Association.

V. Small Farmers: A small farmer possesses five to ten acres of land and does most of his work by himself and hires wage labourer whenever necessary. He would possess vast acres of dry land and through cash crops he might earn more.

VI. Marginal Farmers: They are those who might hold one to two acres of wet or dry land and are living in perpetual debts.

LAND HOLDING PATTERNS:

After classifying the different class interests of the landed gentry, we would anlyse their political power and social status according to the caste structures in these areas. Then we study the different kinds of agricultural labourers and their wage patterns. With this information on land, it is not too difficult to findout the oppressive situation and the percentage of exploitation. The facts of injustice, atrocities on Harijans, raping of women, burning huts, beating up of the labourers etc., should be collected to decide whether the area should be chosen for conscientisation or not.

In both the Panchayat Unions, the poorest of the poor consist of the agricultural class. These rural poor have been regularly beaten up. Harijan villages have been burnt whenever there had been some resistance by the landless labourers. The landlords controlled five to six Harijan villages and nothing went without the consultation of the so called gounda landlords. Poor wage had been given to the agricultural labourers without any consideration to the Government fixation of wages. The labourers neither demanded

nor protested for higher wages. Many cases of caste discrimination went unnoticed. Each rich peasant had atleast four to five families as bonded labourers. Harijan women had been often assaulted and raped. Most of the landless poor accepted this situation as a reality and never thought of getting out of it. Harijan youth who spoke against some of the injustices were often beaten and threatened with dire consequences. Lands allotted to the poor by the Government have been forcibly or illegally taken by the landed class. The backward villages were kept in inhuman conditions. House pattas were denied to many Harijan villages. Schools were maintained with poor standards. Intellegent children from the landless class were often discouraged to study further. Through the Panchayats have provisions for providing that lights, drinking water facilities, burial ground, etc., for the untouchable villages, they were purposely denied. In most of the villages the elders or the village headmen were dancing to the tunes of the Panchayat Presidents who happened to be from the rich caste hindu groups. Many landless joined hands with the rich and squeezed the poor with high interest. Tenants were often not allowed to continue to cultivate for more than two years. The tenancy rates were exhorbitant. The agricultural labourers were so afraid of the Police that they ran away at the very sight of them.

Therefore when we entered these places we did have enough to handle. It was not too easy to win the confidence of the poor villagers and begin our programme. In many instances, we were suspected and pushed away for the villages by force. The landlord instigated the landless Harijans to drive us away since they branded us as extremists. But in spite of all this, we made our way through and began our regular problem oriented education after picking up the key words frequently spoken by the poor. We lived in the Harijan villages and organising the people day and night. Popular theatres were held to highlight the injustice factors.

Through leadership training, men, women and youth were trained to understand the oppressive conditions. As a result of this tiresome work, many changes had taken place. Let me try to narrate a few of them.

VIII. SOME TANGIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

First of all the wages have increased after prolonged strikes in many villages. Before we went there the wage used to be Rs.3/- for men and Rs.2-50/- for women for all kinds of agricultural work. After three strikes the wages have gone up to Rs.5/- for men and Rs.4/- for women. Through strikes, the labourers learnt the techniques of bargaining, negotiating and demanding. People's organisation began to emerge out of struggles. People have learnt to suffer and also fight for their rights. A few bonded labourers have been permanently released. In each Harijan village the new action committee became politically powerful and began to make decisions affecting their total village development. Youth became more brave and courageous and encouraged others to protest against all illegal holdings of the landlord class. Children began to go to schools regularly. Child labour also to some extent discouraged. People learnt the procedure of solving their problems. They went to the extent of meeting the Taluk head and the District Head when emergencies arose.

IX. OTHER RESULTS:

As a result of our mass conscientisation programme in two separate Panchayat Unions of Tamilnadu, we have touched nearly one hundred and fifty backward villages during the past six years and in each village roughly 50 to 70 adults, both men and women have been benefitted by our problem oriented adult education classes. These adults have learnt atleast to write their names and have learnt to read a little. But they have learnt the way of solving their problems by themselves. They have learnt to resist themselves

from all sorts of oppression. Their civic and political consciousness have increased. They have learnt to become more participating, understood how to make decision and stick on to them, protest and struggle to achieve social justice and have understood the process of forming Action Committees to go out to the Government offices and other places to get what has been denied to backward village such as drinking water, street lights, schools, labour contracts, food for work schemes to benefit the poor, etc. The experience was that the illiterates though show great interest to read and write in the beginning, later on show more interest in solving their problems and learn the skills of governmenting themselves with better values and norms. Therefore the argument that the illeterate have to learn to read and write to organise themselves is false to some extent. We believe that these people in the long run will take up political and social issues on a larger level and serve as a powerful task force. I would call this as making people more human by the process of humanisation.

So far we have trained three groups of people at three different levels.

First of all we have given practical training to nearly one hundred activists, community organisers and Rural Development Workers from all over India. I would say that half of them came from Church related groups. Still we run this training programmes twice a year with a well defined syllabus more relevent to transform local structures.

Secondly we have trained village level animators or cadres and absorbed them in our groups for organising the dramas, study circles and leadership training, etc., for the grass root people.

Thirdly we have so far trained about three hundred village leaders representing various action committees in three different areas and have helped them to safeguard their mass based labour organisation. Discussions on Case-Studies, role-plays, sensitivity training, leadership skills, etc., are some of the subjects which we have used to make leaders more articulate and less oppressive. These leaders have now taken charge of the agricultural labourers movement in Tamilnadu, and to some extent possess a broder perspective towards planning and legislating the labour force at the local and national level. We have so far trained eight theological students during their internship training.

If am I remember correctly, I should say that we must have organised twenty strikes for raising wages, for redeeming illegal land holdings, for demanding justice against beating up of Harijans, raping of women, etc. In each strike atleast ten to fifteen villages participated with firm discipline and well planned strategy. Land reforms were given top priority. Wherever excessive land was available, they were either grabbed or were asked for through legal means. Conciliation and negotiation during strikes were held under the Presidentship of the Police and the Thasildar so that the agreement was enforced again.

Instead of dealing with us protesting against small caste atrocities, we have given top priority to economic issues which benefitted a majority of the people.

A Bhoodan land of hundred acres has been released for the benefit of the landless after a prolonged struggle with the rich landed peasantry who at first gave the land and took it back though the Government has registered it as Bhoodan land donated for the poor.

In six villages people received house pattas after hunger strikes and picketting in front of the Collector or Welfare Thasildar's Offices. They were mostly Harijans.

A Centre to train backward girls not only in embroidery but also in liberation and work was opened in 1976. So far nearly twenty five young women have been trained in leadership skills, animation work, rural comprehensive health, etc. Most of these women are now working in different organisations in Tamilnadu promoting womens movements among the agricultural labourers.

Nine non-formal schools were opened for children between the age of six to fourteen wherever there were no schools. Two schools were declared exclusively for Cow-boys. The syllabus for non-formal education for the children was carefully prepared by the animators mainly to re-introduce a vocational training which would enable them to remain in their village after some education and work for the development of the rural areas.

Today there are fourteen groups which are working in various parts of Tamilnadu using the same ideology, methodology and programmes with the aim of organising the rural labourers.

Ten bonded labourers have been released during the emergency through banks and rallies.

So far four rallies have been organised to stress and demand the ten charter of demands of the agricultural labourers movement at the District Head-Quarters in North Arcot and Chingleput Districts. In each rally about four thousand rural workers participated and showed their solidarity.

X. AN OVERHAUL ASSESSMENT (FAILURES)

We left both the areas immediately after the formation of the Harijan Labourer's Association and the Agricultural Worker's Movement. Though our conviction was not to dominate the people's organisations, we feel that we should have remained there for some more time. As a matter of fact, the leaders of the movements requested us to stay longer and guide them here and there. But we deliberately refused and shifted to the new areas. While we evaluate the performance of these new organisations, we feel that they lack courage, discipline and perseverance. Some of the leaders have become too parochial. Some are influenced by the right political forces. The Panchayat Union staff and the landlords in convivance with the Police use repressive measures to suppress people's power. But still the struggle goes on. We have now decided to send one animator each to the old areas to enable people to stand firm and continue their struggles for their lost rights.

We used donations from friends in India and abroad to promote their movements. Now the labourers are asked to look after their activities only with their subscriptions. Though this is the best way of making them self sustained, I wonder wonder whether they would run the village programmes such as mass meetings, study circles, dramas, leadership training, etc., without proper financial support. It is too optimistic to think that people's movements would grow without foreign funds if they are on a massive scale. Where we have the right to use all resources, why should not their movements encouraged to do so?

In one area the Harijan Landless Labourers' Association is strong. In another area, the class organisation of the agricultural workers is stronger. But the Harijans do not want to join hands with the Agricultural Workers Movement though it is on State level. They think that their identify would be lost. They would like to remain as a Caste organisations.

In the Agricultural Labourer's Movement, it is too difficult to controll the other caste Hindus taking the leadership roles. Though the majority of the members are Harijan coolies, they are often overpowered by the Caste Hindu labourers. Therefore it is too difficult to propose an equal share in the Governing body between non-Harijan and Harijan Workers.

The Agricultural Labourers' Movement has to spread its wings all around Tamilnadu. This needs committed full-time workers to go all over Tamilnadu and convince various other agricultural movements to join and support the independent movement. In many parts of Tamilnadu the small farmers and marginal farmers are not mobilised. They still remain outside the movement of the working class.

The question of party affiliation often confronts the leaders. Both the left parties - the C.P.I. and the C.P.M. want to enlist the support of the workers. A dialogue has already started. The Organising Secretary of the Agricultural Labourers' Movement himself was a CPM worker. But is it too early to have the support or not is a serious question that haunts the people. The CPI and the CPM have no strong basis in the rural areas. They are afraid of these mass movements among workking class. But at the same time they would like to clinch these organisations under their party banner. To engage in a serious discussion with the party, a group of labour leaders have to be prepared.

How to confront the Farmer's Association is an another important question that has to be discussed on a wider level.

The farmers are now trying to incorporate the agricultural labourers in their associations by telling them that they have included two demands in their ten charter of demands and therefore they have to join the farmers agitations and fight along with them. But the history of the Farmer's Associations during the past two years shows that the agricultural workers have been almost forced to participate in the agitations of the farmers since most of them work in their lands. Sometimes the agricultural workers have been hired daily wages to participate in the agitations. The majority who died in the Police firing during the agitations happened to be the poor landless labourers who were made to stand in the front line and fight against the police and the beaurocracy. In this whole process of politicalising, we find that the leaders of the agricultural labourers movement becoming very nervous and are finding it difficult to counter the Farmer's Associations with a clear cut ideology and also convince the small and marginal farmers in their movement to show their loyalty to the movement then to the Farmer's Association. As animators we wonder whether we should infiltrate into the movement of the workers and remain with them for a longer time to motivate them towards right decisions and confront the reactionary forces in the disguise of radicalism.

So far we have not built up a kind of linkage with all the action groups and voluntary agencies who are working in different parts of Tamilnadu with Harijan and non-Harijans agricultural labourers. Some work on Caste issues. Some work on Class issues. Some use educational processes to organise tribals. Some are using a lot of economic input, etc. But the problem is whether they are all really working for the organising the grass roots or simply for some other reasons is a question. How to bring them together on a common platform and make them confront with this question of People's Movement is still a pending question.

We have not built any financial base to promote or enable the workers to continue their struggle. Since Trade Unions are prohibited from foreign donations it becomes difficult for the movement as to continue many important programmes on a State level. Let us not forget the fact that the members are mostly non-permanent workers with meager wages. So to force them to subscribe heavily is also a problem.

Linkage with other workers movements xkxx all over India has not been done it.

ARP'S PLANNING AND STRATEGY IN SATYAVEDU, ANDHRA PRADESH.

PROBLEMS OF SATYAVEDU AREA:

The border area of Tamilnadu close to Satyavedu is very well developed and ~~there goes on intensive~~ agricultural activities. are intensive There are more than a hundred progressive farmers in this area who possess all the modern machinery and skills for cultivating paddy and they are able to get very cheap agricultural labour ~~force~~ from the borders of Andhra Pradesh. In Tamilnadu the agricultural labourers demand an average daily wage of Rs.5/- whereas in Andhra Pradesh it is only Rs.2/-. Therefore the coolies from Andhra Pradesh prefer crossing the borders and are satisfied even if they are paid Rs.3/- per day.

THE LANDLESS LABOURERS:

Out of the total population of 66,873, eight percent of the people are mostly small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers belonging to different backward caste groups. Most of the poor are employed only for 150 to 200 days a year. The rest

of the days fifty percent cut fire-wood from the nearby forests and sell them for a very cheap price. The others migrate to various parts of Tamilnadu, especially to the fertile parts of Chinglepet District and earn much more than that what they are unusally paid in Andhra Pradesh. Some of the labour force engage themselves in protecting mango orchards and collecting mangoes during March to June every year. But it is estimated that over sixty five percent of the poor in the Block live below the poverty line earning less then Rs.2$/- per person per month. They are clustered in one hundred and fifty fifty villages in the Block of Satyavedu.

The extreme poverty situation of these poor has been the result of a continuing old feudalistic socio-economic structures which kept them poor and ignorant of their rights. Economic and political groups have succeeded in manipulating the poor Harijans and other backward labourers according to their vested interests and never allowed them to participate meaningfully in the political process.

THE LAND HOLDING PATTERNS:

It is true that most of the land in Satyavedu Block is either forest or barren and uncultivable waste. In more than five-hundred hectacres, there are mango or cashew nut orchards which are mostly owned by absentee landlords, who live in big cities such as Madras, Hyderabad, Tirupati and Chittoor. Sometimes their profit in other business and industry is being used to buy cheap land for mango orchards. There a few rich land owners who are still feudalistic nature and there are mostly living near the river bed to where there is ample supply of ground water. The other rich peasants are scattered all over the Block and are politically very powerful. Most of the small farmers are all possessors of dry land and a bit of wet land. They do cultivate bits and pieces, but always become the loosers. They are fully controlled by the rich landed gentry.

The land ceiling legislation during emergency did affect Satyavedu as much as possible. In many places the landless labourers of the Harijan Communities received one to five acres of dry land with are not of cultivable nature. Many big peasants have also divided and sold some of their waste land. But those who own ten acres of land have not substantially contributed to agricultural development in terms of raising any bumper crop. Though the ground water is not so low, proper usuage of ground water has not been done in dry areas. Therefore the non-progressive middle class farmers and who received free Government land still live amidst poverty and debts. The landless ofcourse are the worst suffers. In this context the rural rich control the socio-economic machinery in the whole Taluk by keeping the poor masses under sub-missive condition and squeeze as much as possible through labour force for their benefits.

LONG RANGE GOALS WITH PERSPECTIVES:

1. To continue with the programme of conscientisation to cover atleast forty villages during the next two years to make atleast ten thousand people conscious.

2. To establish action committees in each villages and initiate dialogue on development. To conduct regular training programme for promising youth and try to build new leader-ship for effective participation in socio-political situation.

3. To do extensive study and research about the poor economic conditions of the rural poor and work out a viable scheme for providing land, employment, technical education and other skillful training for the landless masses on collective and co-operative basis.

4. To acquire forest land wherever possible for the sake of the landless and reclaim the land on collective basis for a 'Biological Farming System' with appropriate technological skills already available among the villages.

5. To seek the co-operation of the Government and other agencies wherever necessary to help the poorest of the poor to bring them out of inhuman conditions.

6. To concentrate on health education and women's liberation by appointing a few health workers. Health education itself will be a conscientisation process. Village women will be specially trained to take care of the village health needs. Emphasis should be given to prevention than cure. Child-care will be given top priority.

7. To help rural women to learn their rights and responsibility by forming small women groups in villages for various developmental activities. A small sewing centres to be started.

8. To erradicate mass illiteracy, superstitions, myths, taboos, witchcrafts and other dreadful diseases such as leprosy and tuberculosis and foster to the growth of a new community of respectful citizens.

9. To form ultimately a Landless Agricultural Labourers Union and enable a few leaders to contest in political election at the Block and Taluk level.

10. To start commune type of collective and community farming and make the poor to live self-sufficiently by raising atleast one goat through poultry, piggery or sheep breeding. To provide credit facilities to small farmers so as to enable them to cultivate their

land and raise a sizable income.

11. To enable the leader of the agricultural union to participate in politics and local village panchayat election so that they would take up new leadership and replace corrupt and oppressive caste dominated leadership.

12. To organise short training courses and All India Training Courses to Activists in various action groups and Voluntary agencies throughout the country.

13. To organise seminars for intellegent Social Workers and agricultural experts on Bio-Dynamic agriculture, conservation of forests and soil, rural appropriate technology, etc.

14. To create a link between different action groups in Andhra and offer help and co-ordination whenever necessary.

Place: Satyavedu.

Date : 10-4-1981.

Felix N. Sugirtharaj,
Secretary,
Association for the Rural Poor.

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PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The cry for "People's Participation" has become a popular catchword. It is a slogan that appears to have two faces, particularly in the so-called Third World. The first face is that of national governments and official agencies who have called for "people's participation in development". The second is that of large mass movements and smaller groups calling for "people's participation in politics". Both have emerged out of the perceived failure of national development plans to ameliorate poverty and build strong economies. The first, therefore, calls for people to share in the development process, a reversal of traditional top-down planning. The second calls for people to take the political initiative to transform society. In between these two positions lie a number of possible combinations as shown, in the South Asian region, by the range of the insurgency in Sri Lanka, the national liberation struggle in Bangladesh, farmers' service societies in India - all being termed as "people's participation". The conflict between the two positions is also manifest - as was clear at an FFHC/FAO Asian Regional Workshop held in India in September 1973 and attended by 31 people from 12 Asian and Pacific countries to "discuss, dissect and develop concepts of participation in their countries and in their Region". The lines were sharply drawn at this Workshop between those who spoke of people's participation as a conception of power and those who advanced people's participation as a conception of economic development. Since 1973, events in the South Asian countries have further highlighted the differences and opposition between the two conceptions. But the sporadic and random debate has not really sharpened the analytical tools in the intervening period as each side borrows words and jargon liberally from the other and the words are applied indiscriminately. In the process "participation" has been used as a catchword not only for "development", but for "training", "education",

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"debate", "change", and even "funding" by grant-giving agencies. Consequently, the word "participation" has been distorted in many directions and the word People has lost its social significance. Who are the people ? and what is it that they are supposed to participate in ? are questions that need clear answers if we are to sort out one position from another.

THE PRELIMINARY DEBATE

At the UNRISD "Inquiry into Participation" Asian debate held in India in March 1981, many of the issues brought up and discussed in earlier debates were recovered and placed in a regional as well as historical perspective - at least a systematic attempt was made to do so, in a South Asian context. These issues are presented here in the form of a series of questions:

A. Sri Lanka

1. The movement in Sri Lanka was centred around the contradiction between the traders on the one hand and the primary producers, on the other, over the appropriation of the surplus. This was in the context of minimal landlessness because of the land-distribution programme of a Left Government. Now a second contradiction is emerging between the smaller producers and some larger producers over the control of the producer cooperatives. How will the people resolve this ?

2. The insurgency was suppressed but the young people who led the insurgency are still there in the villages. Thus political consciousness is very much under the surface, particularly with the high degree of education in the countryside. So far the conflicts have been with the local traders. What will happen when the opposition extends to the Colombo traders ?

3. So far the mobilisation has been on economic issues and at a micro-level. How can one guage the macro-level implications and

what can be the nature of political mobilisation ? How will it be affected by the developing contact of the producers with the market ? Can the process be accelerated ?

4. New values and new forms of organisation are created in the small producer groupings. But the healthy trend in the initial stages tends to decay later on. The capacity of the Government to coopt and absorb the developing consciousness is also a major force to be reckoned with. How can the people and the cadre prevent this ?

B. Bangladesh

1. After the national liberation movement the leadership was divided along reformist and radical lines. Some of those who attempted reconstruction efforts in small pockets soon came to realise that without political power, zeal alone is not adequate for overcoming the problems. The radicals considered reforms as efforts to buy time for the ruling class. The reformists dismissed the radicals as word-mongers and non-participants in the liberation war without a mass base. Most of the theories were adopted from the international arena without debate, resulting in many splits, factions, and confusions. What will be the direction of a people's movement in such a context ? Mass based ? insurrectionary ? or gradualism ?

2. One way of answering the theoretical questions was to go to and learn from the people, to understand Bangladeshi society, to live with the peasants and assess their desires. But what is to be the form and content of such studies ? How to relate practice to theory ?

3. Much of Bangladesh's reconstruction is based on massive foreign funding and the presence in Bangladesh of a large number of foreign development agencies. There is the problem of capital formation. How to break the dependency relationships - old and new ? What should be

the nature of the programmes ? - what people need and yet it will be their own programme ?

4. The truggle for land has to be able to fight the repressive machinery, to proliferate, to attack the designs of the ruling elite. Bangladesh has a flat terrain and a subtly repressive State apparatus. Is such a struggle possible in such a condition ? So what is the alternative ?

C. India

1. The relationship between the micro and macro level activities is an important one. An activity that may be directed towards alternative power at the micro-level may also find no place at the macro-level as it is absorbed by skillful government action. Is the activity of participation, therefore, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary ? Since such activity is clearing up things that the system wants cleared up is this activity also what the system wants ? What is the ideological difference ?

2. Amongst many non-government groups there has been a history of the transformation from reformist action to radical action over a period of time. How does this tranformation take place ? How is it related to objective situations of unemployment, poverty, and struggles at the macro- or micro- levels ? Can it be accelerated ?

3. Caste factors have influenced industrial worker movements as much as rural struggles. Caste-based movements are beginning to exert themselves. All this is within the same social formation. So though the Dalits and the middle-class individuals come to understand society through different paths they are rebelling against the same system. How does one understand the symbiosis of different modes of exploitation ?

4. In Indian society, there has been an unsurpassed stability over thousands of years in which the appropriation of surplus took place. The 70 million rich at the top today have a very well-developed industrial structure, a high per-capita income, a large pool of scientific manpower, and adequate foreign exchange reserves. But, because of the super-exploitation of the remaining 600 million, the internal economy is unable to expand. How are these 600 million, scattered over an economy ranging from food-gathering to modern industry, to come together ? How does the State contain the 600 million ad those who drop out of the 70 million ?

5. There is the phenomena of the non-Party political groups. How do these groups share their experience ? How do they analyse and arrive at an understanding of the macro-processes ? How can they encourage others who have the potential for radicalisation but are afraid to plunge into struggle? What is the role of the religious institutions in the process of and support of radicalisation ?

THE FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEMATIKA

In an attempt to bring all these issues to a focal point for the South Asian Region a formulation was attempted as follows:

The basic dynamic that emerges is one of:

Fragmentation - Manipulation - Protest

The fragmentation is of the working classes in the process of production because of the crisis of capitalism. This fragmentation, compunded by division within the working classes on class, caste, racial, and sexual issues, is further manipulated by the ruling classes for depoliticisation, distortion of consciousness. Since the crisis is not overcome by the manipulation and there appears to be no national alternative the people respond by protesting through non-Party political processes and formations.

Unlike in Latin America, there are no nation-wide popular movements

throwing up pressing issues for debate. Here, in the Region, there is the presence of active individuals, groups, and mass movements throwing up issues. The point of referral, therefore, would be to see the situation from the point of view of the non-Party political formations as well as to understand the limitations of these formations. The four specific areas of debate that emerge, then, are:

1. The specific fragmentations manifesting at the micro-level, whose linkage to the general fragmentation has to be established, and to consider how to overcome the fragmentation at the micro/macro levels.

2. The class consciousness of the working classes is distorted. How to anticipate, respond to, prevent recurrence of such rifts and distortions.

3. In the ideological struggle between the classes the theoretical abstractions are not adequate. The people respond in human terms. How to recover, reinterpret, reconstruct the cultural history of protest as dissent, resistance, and assertion.

4. The dynamics of the non-Party political groups has to be investigated and understood: their birth and evolution; the shift from the micro-activity to the macro-understanding; the future of such formations.

BRINGING THE DEBATE TOGETHER

The challenge is one of bringing research to relate to the process of change. For each of the above four areas of debate innovative work is required in research and base-work as also in the area of social science methodology. But such innovative work does not have to be manipulated out of scratch. Fortunately, it already exists - in bits and pieces. The objective crises in the dynamic of fragmentation - Manipulation - Protest have already given birth to forms of protest in the field of social science research. Individuals and institutions have already begun research and basework into parts of the problematika - without, perhaps,

having put all the parts together into the whole as a conscious effort. One of the tasks of the South Asian debate is, therefore, abundantly clear:

I To locate, identify, and try to bring together individuals and ~~knnkk~~ institutions, already undertaking research into component parts of the problematika, on to a common platform of debate and discussion.

The second task of the South Asian debate may not be as readily approachable. In order to fill in the gaps in the full canvass where research is not already being done, it would be necessary :

II To identify gaps in the research and to attempt to locate and encourage such individual researchers who would have the background and ability to fill in the gaps.

The third task would be the most difficult of all. South Asia has no consistent tradition of radical social sciences. In the recent past a number of research institutions and publications have emerged bu the social science methodology generally followed is either a behavioral analysis one or a repetition of one of the existing political paradigms. What is the correct methodology to be followed, which explains most coherently the complexity of the social reality ? - is a question the debate must address. Consequently, the third task is:

III To initiate and encourage debate into the adequacy or otherwise of the theoretical tools of research and to attempt to set a direction for the search of an appropriate paradigm.

While, doubtless, once initiated, the debate proper will occupy a significant amount of time and effort it is important to note that to initiate the debate itself would take some consistent activity. In order to complete the above three tasks it should take about a year of sustained effort to cover the research institutions and the significant non-Party political formations ~~x~~ and to begin discussions with individuals within them. One person full-time with appropriate part-time assistance from three to four others may just about be able to bring the debate together. The critical element, of course, is whether the situation is ripe and concerned individuals are sufficiently motivated to join the debate. That is a question that can only be answered by the effort.

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The Emergence of People's Power in Palghar and Some Reflections Arising Out Of It*

The Bhoomi Sena Movement

The Bhoomi Sena Movement in Palghar started in 1970 primarily as a struggle of tribals (Adivasis) to recover land alienated from the small peasants to the sawkars who were initially local money lenders. This is a widely observed phenomenon in small peasant agriculture of Asia, where in extreme cases after land alienation the peasant himself becomes bonded to the money lender and reaches a near slave status. This had happened in Palghar. The success of the struggle against land alienation and bonded labour resulted on the one hand in the growth of the Bhoomi Sena movement and on the other hand in the dwindling economic power of the money lenders as a class. In the emerging new situation the weakened money lenders are being gradually replaced by sections of the middle/rich peasant proprietors who are now beginning to enter the field of essential money lending activities of providing working capital and consumption loans to the poor peasants. While the rate of interest being charged by them is highly exploitative, the earlier system of land alienation through land mortgage has been eliminated. Thus, the character of the exploiting class itself has begun to change somewhat as a result of earlier struggles and this in turn has corresponded to changes in the nature of the Bhoomi Sena movement. One crucial link with the past situation remains however: both the earlier money lenders who are losing economic power and the newly emerging money lending rich peasant proprietor are non-Adivasis.

Internally, the Bhoomi Sena movement which started more or less as a spontaneous reaction of the exploited and oppressed Adivasis on the social and economic plane, found an initial rallying point in the movement against land alienation and bonded labour[1]. The success of the

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* A note prepared by Amit Bhaduri, G V S D'Silva, Niranjan Mehta, Anisur Rahman, Datta Savale and Ponna Vigneraja, August 1977.

1 Coincident with the official "20-Point" programme of the Indira Gandhi government at this juncture.

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movement on these specific issues created, first, an awareness that it was within their power to change the exploitative socio-economic order with which they were in direct contact. The organization of the Bhoomi Sena as a political organ grew out of this self-awareness of the power they could collectively wield. Thus, spontaneity gave rise to organization and the organization now is seeking to channel spontaneity of the Adivasis towards struggle on more carefully deliberated specific issues. At the moment, the Bhoomi Sena is beginning to take up such specific issues as minimum wage and guaranteed employment schemes through extensive discussion among the Adivasis. The newly emerging feature is that these discussions are often actively initiated by the Bhoomi Sena to heighten awareness of these problems.

In the larger context, it needs emphasis that all the issues so far chosen by the Bhoomi Sena for struggle have one common characteristic: their demands are all for rights granted them by the laws of the land. From this point of view, their need for struggle so far has arisen in the context of non-implementation of the existing laws. But it is also equally important to note that these legal demands represent some of their most immediately pressing problems. On the other hand, in cases where they have felt that implementation of law will not be feasible within the present socio-economic framework (e.g., the stringent laws about terms of private lending in Maharashtra), they have not taken up these legal issues even if they are pressing.

Although the Bhoomi Sena movement has been engaged in the struggle for realising the legal rights of the Adivasis, its own origin in spontaneous revolution against injustice and its organisation into a political organ have themselves been outside the formal politico-administrative framework. In this sense, it is not the authorities who transferred power to the Bhoomi Sena to implement the laws; rather, it is the collective power of the exploited Adivasis which got crystalized into the formation of the Bhoomi Sena as an organ of people's power.

This newly born power acts more as a countervailing power aimed at ensuring the proper implementation of law rather than as an implementing body created from the top. Thus, people's power is primarily a countervailing power in this context, functioning within the legal framework.

Reflections on People's Power Arising Out Of Bhoomi Sena

1. People's power is created as a countervailing power through spontaneous mass action.

2. Spontaneity leads through a heightening of awareness into organization. Power is institutionalized.

3. In this process of institutionalization, the power of the institution and the power of the people have remained coincident; people's power has not been transformed into the power of the leaders/institution over the people. Why?

   a. The awareness of Bhoomi Sena of the possibility of such a transformation and its conscious efforts to counteract it, by

      i. Cadres continually moving among the people and integrating with them.

      ii. encouragement of spontaneous action.

      iii. style of leadership.

      iv. non-formal organizational structure (e.g., relationship between Bhoomi Sena and Tarun Mandal).

      v. discussions in open forum - non-cadres have the same rights of participation and decision making as the cadres, whenever they are present at a discussion.

      vi. a climate encouraging critical reflection.

   b. The relative smallness of the area of operation, i.e., the space element is still favourable.

   c. Time too is still not a constraint because of the specific relationships of power in the milieu in which it is growing.

Some Further Reflections

The specific Bhoomi Sena movement raises several more general issues regarding the nature and scope of people's power.

In this specific context people's power is in the process getting organized in institutional forms to act as a check on the exercises of formal power, as is reflected in its law-implementing nature. This needs to be contrasted for analytical purposes with a situation where people's power largely or fully coincides with formal power e.g., in an immediate post-revolutionary situation. Thus people's power need not necessarily be countervailing power always; it may also have at least the transitory character of the ruling power. On the other hand, countervailing power is not always people's power.

The coincidence of formal power with people's power has been transitory in history. Since essentially it is countervailing in character to formal power, it would be generally more fruitful to think of people's power as countervailing. But people's power in this form can exist either as a heightened mass consciousness ready to be momentarily mobilized and act spontaneously or alternatively, it can be institutionalized. In general, people's power unless institutionalized, cannot act as a sufficient check to gross misuse of formal power. When institutionalized, however, new dialectics tend to be generated separating formal power from countervailing power again.

Countervailing power, institutionalized or otherwise, can grow with the formal power proportionately as an internal process (as in Chinese communes). But it can also grow or suddenly erupt in direct contradiction to establishing formal power.

The concept of countervailing power growing with formal power does not seem to capture sufficiently the active force of such power

trying to capture the institutions created for the exercise of formal power. Typically, countervailing power growing in contradiction to established power often has the characteristic of either capturing, remaking or destroying institutions of formal power - to start afresh again.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING UP PEOPLE'S POWER

INTRODUCTION:

Indian society is at crossroads. Different economic, social and political contradictions are reflected in frequent strikes, gheraos, atrocities against the oppressed and their retaliation in some cases. The economy has no doubt developed since Independence but major benefits of this development went to a small number of people both in rural and urban areas. There are tides of expectations that cannot be fulfilled without some structural changes in the socio-economic and political set up.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS:

With the emergence of new contradictions the old methods of resolving them are proving worthless. Political parties appear to be caught in the merry-go-round of power and people at large feel that their utility as instruments of revolutionary change is very limited. A number of groups have began to work at grass-roots, among the rural areas where political parties have not reached except for election meetings. It is difficult to estimate the number of such groups as new groups are coming into existence practically every month. The groups have different motivations, but a somewhat similar method of work.

Some groups are clearly politically motivated and would like to spread revolutionary consciousness among the poor. They want to end the present social system built on exploitation of man by man. A radical and planned effort along can change the situation. The industrial proletariat appears to be well entrenched in the capitalist system. Trade unions

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It is possible in the beginning to create informal fronts of different groups doing similar type of work. This of course will require tact and humility. A genuine sense of friendship and lack of patternalism is necessary to achieve this goal. A number of groups will develop new activities and perspectives during the process of coming together. This may take up few years but this will really help to build up people's power. There can be no development nor liberation without building up people's power. This is not an easy task but nothing really worthwhile is easy. One who knows a number of grass-root groups and their work sees rays of hope in the present era of darkness.

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root workers becomes the last meeting. There are several groups which are led by Christian youths belonging to different orders. Attempts are being made by the senior persons of these orders to bring together organisers belonging to their order. Such attempts do have limited results. However, such gatherings are not attended by not only the non-Christian organisers but also the organisers belonging to different Christian orders.

All the groups do feel the necessity of having some contact with others, particularly in the present political context. The agency or the group which really desires to make an attempt to bring these groups together must have something to offer in return, and this something must not be finance. The group must be ready to visit micro-level groups in the fields to organise tahsilwise or districtwise meetings. A group which is not itself a grass-root organisation can do this work more effectively than any grass-root organisation. Small groups hesitate to attend meetings called by big grass-root organisation as they are afraid that the latter will swallow them rather than help them.

MICRO-GROUPS, CONSCIENTIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Revolution from below appears to be the only solution to solve the problem of socio-economic stagnation. The existence of different grass-root groups will definitely help to accelerate the process of revolution from below. It is necessary to bring such groups together on an informal basis and also to help the creation of groups in the areas where there is no such work. This is not an easy task. A number of micro-groups have their vanities and prejudices. However, the fear of impending repression in prompting them to seek wider cooperation.

Most of these have failed. Some intellectuals try to convene meeting of such group leaders and try to bring them together. If the attempt is on an All India Scale, it invariably fails. First the convenors know only of large groups whose activities have received sufficient publicity. Secondly the absence of any common approach between the groups makes it impossible to create all India platform. All India meetings often end with revolutionary speeches, resolutions and no action. Even statewise attempts to bring different groups together have achieved little success. Here again the differences in approaches and the methods of work come in the way. But the real hurdle is that the inviting agency has nothing to offer to these groups. The organisers of different groups initially attend such annual meetings and the really active amongst them gradually drop out and the annual meetings become a ritual attended mostly by not-very-active groups. Some funding agencies also try to bring different groups together. These also yield no real result. The grass-root workers do not expect any guidance on perspective and the method of work from these donor agencies. The donor agencies in turn are mostly foreign based and are unable to guide anybody in respect of perspective and structural changes. The meetings called by them are mainly attended by their clients. The meetings are comfortable and nothing more. Some universities and institutions and institutes of social work have also tried to build-up a sort of coordinating organisation of such micro-level groups. These have also achieved little success. Such meeting starts with a very elaborate and a learned lecture by the chief of the Institute or some professor who has never been at grass-roots for a single day in his life. The phrases borrowed from Marx, Gandhiji, Gramsci, Freire and others bring occasional applause but the grass-root workers attending the meeting realise the emptiness of the show and the first meeting to bring together different grass-

TYPES OF WORK:

These groups are doing different types of work. A number of groups are organising the people for the implementation of progressive laws like employment guarantee scheme in Maharashtra, minimum wages acts for agricultural labours, laws giving land rights to the poor. Some of these groups also take up the social issues of the harrasment of the lower caste by higher caste, while some groups avoid social issues. Some groups are carrying on the work of medical aid and education, while some help the people to obtain bank loans and government aid for different schemes. Many groups are taking up the issues of exploitation of the people by traders, money-lenders, land-lords, police and other village officials.

RELATIONSHIP WITH POLITICAL PARTIES:

Most of these groups have no direct links with any political party. Some of the workers do have leanings towards one party or the other. Political parties in turn also look at these groups with suspicion. Local leaders of all political parties look at these groups as rivals. Political parties try to woo these groups at the time of elections. Some of these groups take a rather a-political attitude and denounce all political parties. While the more reasonable groups know their limitations and admit the necessity of political parties in the present political set-up.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS:

At present most of these groups are separate and scattered. Even the groups working in close vicinity have no contacts and common strategy. Several efforts are being made to bring together these groups to form a common front.

crisis theoriticians have come to the front creating social assistance institutions and employing armies of social workers. These will never solve the problem of development which is really the problem of people's liberation. What is needed is not just to supply finance or physical inputs to the poor but to go to the people to create critical consciousness and to help them to enter the struggle to change the socio-economic reality.

MICRO-GROUPS:

Luckily in India there are several micro-level groups working with the people and organising them against oppression and exploitation. Some of these groups cover large areas of about 150 villages while many groups limit their activities to about 10 villages. Some groups have been working for more than a decade while a number of groups are very recent. Several groups are formed every year.

IDEOLOGIES:

These groups have different ideologies. There are few groups which believe in the immediate annihilation of class enemies. Their attempts win immediate sympathy of poor but attract attention of the police and these groups and their sympathisers soon become targets of police oppression. Some groups have a clear perspective of the structural changes to be made in the socio-economic and political set-up. These groups have a clear but broad leftist egalitarian perspective. Some groups are started by persons who have rather romantic ideas of work while some have began their work only on broad humanitarian basis.

ready to build a society without oppression and not just to change the places of the oppressor and the oppressed. To awaken critical consciousness among the poor is and must be the real task of the groups that try to build up people's power. Critical self insertion into real action of the oppressed will ultimately transform the reality of oppression. This is particularly necessary in India where the culture of silence is age old and has taken the form of caste hierarchy. This cultural oppression due to the structural relation between the dominated and the dominators must end. We see in India certain revolts against the dominating castes and classes, but these are sporadic. They indicate the emergence of popular consciousness but this is not enough. Symbolic action and temporary anger do not change the society. The groups will have, therefore, to try to create revolutionary consciousness and a continuity of action that alone will change the oppressive structure. The political parties are not doing it. They emphasise slogans and denunciation. They are content with symbolic actions and temporary anger. They have neither the will nor the capacity to create revolutionary critical consciousness among the people below the poverty line. Political leaders and the revolutionary intellectuals try to create revolutionary consciousness through learned and not-so-learned articles. In a country like India where the majority of poor are also illiterate these articles have little impact.

A number of institutions have been trying to impart the knowledge of new agricultural methods to the small and poor farmers. Their efforts also appear to have achieved little success, excepting cases where people were involved in organising such programmes. They also suffer from the defects of government efforts like patternalism, control and non-reciprocity between experts and laymen. A number

REVOLUTION FROM BELOW:

The other way is that of the revolution from below. The way is slow but sure. One must work at grass-roots and organise people below the poverty line and slowly and steadily fight the class and caste domination. One cannot wait for a readymade agent of socialist revolution. The only way is to create a revolutionary consciousness among the exploited through repeated struggles. This will help the creation of a socialist democracy in two ways. First this will weaken the grip of the class and the caste over the people, and secondly it will also create some sort of infrastructure for the working of a socialist democracy. It must be remembered that conditions in India differ from village to village, district to district and state to state. It is, therefore, not possible to lay down any uniform form of organisation or strategy. Only requirement should be that the organisations must be of the oppressed and the ultimate object must be the structural change in the society. Of course, these organisations will have to take up some immediate issues. Majority of the persons do not fight for abstract ideas in somebody's head. They fight for some immediate gain that will improve their lives. The main task of organisers is to organise people's struggle in such a way that they will realise that their ultimate development lies in the change of socio-economic structures.

DEVELOPMENT:

Real development is liberation of the oppressed from the cultural burden upon their minds. The oppressed must first be prepared to denounce oppression in all forms. There is no real annunciation without denunciation. While getting prepared to end oppression the oppressed must be

of different complexions want workers to have a larger share in the cake. They cannot be used as an instrument of social revolution.

REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE:

One can approach revolution from two sides. There is revolution from above due to the capture of state power. This capture can take place in two ways, an armed revolt of the military and/or of the people, and capture of power through elections. Insurrections led to revolution in Russia and China, but only in an atmosphere of civil war and external aggression. The Indian state is too powerful to allow a leftist insurrection. Some parties are, therefore, relying on elections as a means of creating a socialist society.

ELECTIONS:

However, it is difficult for any party to capture all the state legislatures and the Parliament to create a socialist state. Elections are very costly and the vested interests are too powerful to allow any leftist party even to contest all the seats. Indian society is divided not only by classes but also by castes. Castes play a powerful role in elections. It, therefore, appears very difficult to create a socialist state through elections.

Political parties have lost their credibility. Even the leftist parties have been unable to unite against totalitarian capitalist forces. There is a clear division among the broad socialist activists and leftists who believe in a totalitarian state. The situation is one of despair.

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Caste-Class Colloquim
28-29 April, 1981.

CLASS, CASTE AND LAND IN INDIA: AN INTRODUCTION ESSAY

Gail Omvedt

"Farmers' agitations" and "atrocities on Harijans" - these seem to be vying for space on the front pages of India's daily newspapers. On the one hand, in the name of "peasants unite!" rural militants have been blocking roads, burning train stations and going on hundreds-of-mile long marches. On the other hand, caste, the age-old source of rural disunity, has been apparently coming to the fore in brutal attacks on low-caste labourers in Belchhi, Bajitpur, Pipra and in the massive pogroms in Marathwada, the campaign against giving land to the landless at Kanjhawala, and the month-long battle of dalits and caste Hindus in Gujarat. And such agitations and attacks are occuring not only in the more feudal, backward and impoverished areas of the countryside such as Bihar but also in the "modern" and capitalistically developed regions like Gujarat, Punjab and Maharashtra.

One thing seems clear and that is that though caste is a crucial factor in these struggles, the current events are a disproof of western-derived academic theories of politics which have emphasized the integrative and even "democratic" role of caste. Such theories, with their functionalist and idealist biases, have seen peasants as passive, villagers as torn only by factional conflicts among the rural elite, and untouchables and other low-caste labourers as too helpless and dependent to revolt. The farmers' agitations and the organizations behind them--however much they may be in the interest of and led by the rich farmers--have shown peasants ready to surpass local factionalism to go into battle. And in the case of the attacks on dalits, Marxist analysis have clearly shown the class factors lying behind these, the struggle between sharecroppers and landlords or labourers and kulaks and - a qualitatively new factor - the increasing readiness of the most suppressed and proletarianized sections of Indian society to rise up and fight for their rights even in the face of the most brutal repression.

Similarly, the old models of caste-based "vote banks" and politics as a game of the village "dominant caste" are clearly incapable of explaining the varying political alignments of the last decade - the swings from Indira Gandhi to Janata and back again - or the underlying factors which are influencing voting. The new forms of political parties, in

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particular the Congress (I) and the BJP, their tendencies/ efforts to bedome cadre parties while building up a single "supreme leader", their efforts to make ideological appeals to all sections of the population, reveal the inadequacy of the old political model of the Congress and its opposition parties. These old political models were themselves based on a particular image of the Indian village (in which class factors were much less significant than caste-based alignments and in which political, social and economic life was solidly controlled by a "dominant caste elite") which itself is no longer true: the village is now revealed to be increasingly torn by a complex of class and caste contradictions which are bursting out everywhere on the national political arena.

So those who claimed that "class" and "class struggle" have no place in the very unique society of India have been silenced by the emergent historical reality. However, the traditional Marxist analyses are also showing themselves as not fully adequate. The view that though there are class differences among the peasantry (rich, poor, landless, etc.) these are non-antagonistic and the main contradiction is between "peasants" as a group and landlords has left the major communist parties fairly helpless in building an independent rural political movement based on the rural toilers. And the idea that in regard to atrocities "caste is nonly a form, the reality is class struggle" does not explain why the form of caste has become so important, what its material base is, and how the revolutionary movement should deal with this.

Similarly it has to be admitted that though there is a heroic tradition in India of both anti-caste and left-led peasant and agricultural labourer struggles, these have largely also failed to deal with the present crisis - or rather, shown their limitations. For "atrocities" and caste-riots have taken place not only in the land of Gandhi but also in areas such as Tamilnadu and Maharashtra where an anti-caste non-Brahman movement has been strong; "atrocities against Harijans" occur even in Kerala where feudal relations seem to have been wiped out the most thoroughly and that too under left leadership which participated in anti-untouchability as well as peasant movements; vethbegar and landlord-kulak dominance continues in severe form in Telengana, centre of India's biggest peasant revolt in history; dalits appear to be the most suppressed in Bihar, earliest homeland of the KisanSabha; and it appears that in spite of its strength the left in Bengal is some twenty years behind the Congress in Maharashtra in taking decisive anti-feudal steps in the countryside. All of this suggests an inability to carry forward these traditions of struggle under the new conditions of changing agrarian relations in independent India.

What is the connection between "class" and "caste" in rural India today, and what is its role in relation to both the old and developing forms of agrarian relations of production? This issue of Teaching Politics presents articles giving detailed analyses of states from every region of India that shed important light on this question. This article is an initial attempt to present a theoretical and overall view.

1. Theoretical Background

The origins of the caste system in India are shrouded in mystery. The most predominant and widely popular theory traces it to the Aryan invasion of Indian and links it to the process by which the invaders could subordinate the indigenous inhabitants and integrate them as peasants and slaves within a stratified society. Thus it is believed that the "twice-born" castes, Brahmans, Ksatriyas and Vaisyas, are descended primarily from the original Aryans or later invaders from outside, while the masses of Sudras, Ati-sudras and tribal peoples, the majority of Indian peasants and workers, are descended primarily from the conquered non-Aryan natives. In South India, where there were few castes recognized as Ksatriyas and even aristocratic landlords were often classified as Sudras, the majority of the population are thought to be non-Aryans or Dravidians, while in north India a larger section are considered of Aryan origin while only tribals, ex-untouchables and other low castes emphasize their non-Aryan and indigenous descent.

This "popular"-level theory was originated first by racist-oriented British and European scholars and in particular by H.H. Risley, a British Census Commissioners. Such scholars argued that there were basic racial and physical differences among the various castes. This "Aryan theory" was quickly taken over by Indians, at first by Brahman intellectuals who sought to use it to prove their superiority over the low castes within India and their racial equality with the "white men", and later by cultural radicals such as Jotirao Phule and the leaders of the non-Brahman movement in Tamilnadu who stressed the equality and moral superiority of the original non-Aryans or "Dravidians."1 Of all non-Brahman intellectuals and leaders, in fact it was only B.R. Ambedkar who really rejected the racial theory. But as an explanation of caste, the "Aryan theory" is inadequate. It does not explain why the Indo-European invasions should have given rise to caste in India only and not elsewhere, nor why caste seems to be strognest in the areas least affected by such invasions (i.e. south India). In addition, as Morton Klass has pointed out, there is no proof at all of any massive ivasions by racially distinct groups in the 2000-1000 BC period, and there seem to have been elements of traits

connected with caste that were indigenous to the pre-Aryan Indian societies (Klass, 1980).

Klass's recent book, Caste: The Emergence of the South Asian Social System, puts forward an alternate hypothesis. He argues that caste originated with the first development of an economic surplus in India and that it was the means by which tribal societies consisting of originally equalitarian clans adjusted to the inequality generated by this surplus. This would place the origin of caste at the very beginning of Indian class society, with the first development of settled rice and wheat agriculture in the subcontinent leading to the rise of the Indus valley cities. In this view, the system was adjusted to and modified by Aryans and other invaders, but the theories these Sanskritic-speaking peoples formulated to explain it only served to give it a firm ideological foundation, and hardly prove that they themselves "invented" caste.

Whatever may be the case, whether it had its beginning with Aryan invasions or earlier, it is clear that caste in India has existed for a very long period and that it has survived through major socio-historical changes. For India has certainly not been an "unchanging" society from 2000 BC or 1000 BC to the present. It has undergone major shifts in systems of production, forms of political rule and culture. In Marxist terms, we say that caste has coexisted with several different modes of production, from the very earliest ones which we would define essentially as tributary modes through the feudal period up to the present when capitalism has come to dominate and caste, though it is taking on new forms, is clearly far from vanishing. From this we can conclude that caste cannot be identified with any single mode of production as such, though certainly the existence (in both these characteristics it is similar to patriarchal structures and women's oppression).

At the same time, caste had a very different relation to Indian feudalism and existed then in a very different form than it does today in the period of rising capitalism, and this also has to be taken into account in analyzing the nature of caste, class and land in India.

An analysis should begin with some basic definitions. First, what is caste ? Though there is often violent disagreement among scholars, Marxist and otherwise, about the origins of caste, its relation to the rest of the social structure and in particular to the economy, there is a surprising amount of agreement about what caste actually is. Caste is a system in which a person's membership in the society is mediated through his/her birth in a particular group which is assigned a particular status within a broad social heirarchy of such groups; this group has a particular accepted occupation or range of occupations and only within it can a person marry and carry on close social relations

such as interdining (roti-beti vyavahar). This group is a corporate group that has certain defined rules of behaviour for its members at exercizes some degree of authority over them, including the right to expel those who defy its authority. A person is born into such a group, is a lifelong member (unless expelled) and is not able to legitimately join any other group.

As many scholars, from Irawati Karve to Morton Klasshave pointed out, this most basic group or unit of the system is not actually the jati or "caste" but rather the subcaste or potjati (Klass refers to them as "marriage-circles"). These are the actual functioning units of the system which regulate marriage, and are known to their members by special names (e.g. Tondamalai Vellalas; Somvanshi Mahars). Their membership has been estimated at a median of between 5000 and 15,000 each (Marriott and Inden, 1974: 985). In turn, these groups are known to the broader society largely by the name of their jati (e.g. as Vellalas or Maha s). During the feudal period, when the caste system was maintained by the feudal state, the jatis themselves had a concrete social existence as the basic unit of the social division of labour, (and the jati name most commonly was an "occupational" name, meaning "peasant", "barber", "potter" or the like), but today the jatis exist only as clusters of subcastes. In turn, these jatis claimed and still claim a certain broader status as Brahmans, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas or Sudras within the all-India heirarchical varna sustem.

It therefore seems that caste is primarily a social phenomenon; the subcaste which has been the most enduring element within it is primarily a unit of the social system of kinship, though the broader jati was for a long time the basic unit of social division of labour (i.e. part of the economy) and even today caste still has definite economic effects.

In contrast it is tempting to say that class is basically an economic phenomenon - and this is indeed how most people view the issue. However we feel this is a vulgarization of Marxism. Class should be basically defined in terms of the Marxist concept of the social relations of production, and this is not such a simple concept. Of course it is commonly known that Marx himself never identifies the "economic" or the "base" simply with technology or the labour process (which he normally calls the "forces of production") but rather sees this as a comnination of forces and relations of production. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition comes from Volume III of Capital :

> The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of ruler and ruled, as it grows directly out of the production itself, and in turn

> reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this. however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community, which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is alsays the direct relationship of the owners of the means of production to the direct producers, a relation always naturally corresponding to labour and thereby its social productivity, which reveals the i nermost secret, and the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence. This does not prevent the same economic basis - the same from the standpoint of its main conditions - due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, etc. from showing infinite variations, and gradations in appearnace, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances. (Marx, 19 ; 791-2)

The complecation here has two aspects. First, the "relations of production" are really given two definitions in this passage, first in terms of the form "in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers", and econd in terms of the relation of the "owners of the means of production to the direct producers" - and these two may not be precisely the same (e.g. tool-owning artisans exploited via the jajmani system). Second, the form "in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out" in many societies may concretely include economic, social and political factors mingled together, while Marx is specifically taking only the economic aspect of this relation or form to define the "social relations of production", and this is often something of a formalistic abstraction.

Marx himself of course recognised and stressed that it is really only with the birth of capitalist society that the economy comes to exist as a concrete, phenomenon separate from the political, social and other levels of society. By the same token it is only with capitalism that classes come into existence as phenomena clearly and apparently defined first at the economic level, the level of production. In contrast, in precapitalist societies, classes which are defined in terms of the relations of production and always exist wherever there is a surplus "pumped out of the direct producers, are evolved along with these relations in social, religious, political and other superstructural forms.

Thus it is only in a very formalistic sense that we can distinguish "caste" and "class" and say that one is mainly a "social" and the other is mainly an "economic" concept, and that both have probably coexisted in India since the beginning of the generation of a surplus and economic inequality. In concrete fact, the situation was more complex.

In pre-capitalist Indian society (we may say with the fullfledged feudal period from about 600 AD), unpaid surplus labour was pumped out of direct producers via a system that was itself defined and organized in terms of caste; while the subcastes were a basic unit of the kinship system the jati itself was a class phenomenon and was a basic unit of the division of labour. With this caste structured the very nature and existence of the exploiting and exploited sections. Exactly how this was so we shall try to define in the next section. But the result was that it was impossible to speak of a "caste system" and a "class structure" as separate concrete phenomenon; the two in fact were interwoven (thus those who say that in feudal society "class and caste coincided" in a sense are right) and in fact we should say that the Indian feudal social formation was actually based on a caste-feudal mode of production.

Today, though, "class" and "caste" are separate, and we speak of the dominance of a simple capitalist mode of production. The reason is, that the beginning of capitalism under colonial rule not only began to create new classes (workers, bourgeoisie) but also began a process of separating out a " caste system " from the "class structure". This meant on the one hand redefining and reshaping castes as a new kind of social phenomenon; it also meant redefining and reshaping classes in the rural areas as "landlords", "tenants" and "labourers" even before the emergence of the new capitalist rural classes of kulak farmers and agricultural labourers. Today, with this redefined caste system maintained under the dominance of a capitalist mode of production, what we are faced with is a very complex mixture of caste and class, a mixture that has tremendous regional variations. Not only do more "feudal" and "capitalist" forms of classes and vice versa though now both exist on a separate basis.

One conclusion from this is that low castes and especially the ex-touchables (dalits) are, like women, specially oppressed section, one that can and must organize independently, one whose liberation is crucial for any revolution in India. They are also a section whose majority are proletarianized toilers - agricultural labourers and workers. But as a section, their nature is different from that of the basic revolutionary class, the proletariat, and it is unscientific and misleading to speak of "caste and class" as parallel phenomena and parallel struggles in which the working class leads an economic revolution while the dalits lead an anti-caste revolution. Now because the new form of caste is conditioned by and under the dominance of capitalism, it can only be abolished by a social evolution under the leadership of the proletariat. But at the same time, because caste still is a material reality with a material base and important economic results, because it has become in fact the primary means for dividing the toiling masses, it is equally

dangerous to ignore caste, to suggest that dealing with it can be "postponed" until after the revolution or that "economic unity" can come first, and to argue that "all struggles are class struggles but they only have a caste form." Caste is not only form but also concrete material content, one that now must be solved as a crucial obstacle before any revolutionary movement. In fact, the mechanical tendency to overlook the superstructure has led to ignoring the ways that this social system of caste has historically shaped the very basis of Indian economy and society and continues to have crucial economic implications today.

The rest of this paper will first outline the basic structure of caste-feudal society in India. Then it will summarize the changes that occurred under British rule and the varying forms of class (or "class-caste") struggle that took place then. Finally the new class structure and the role of caste in the rural areas in the post-colonial bourgeois state will be examined with as much attention to regional variation as possible.

2. Caste-Feudal Society

There is a broad agreement among Marxist scholars that by the time of the British conquest the Indian social formation was primarily feudal in character, though there were elements and survivals of other forms of exploitation, particularly tributary forms in the case of the Mughal empire and the south Kosambi, Pavlov, Gough, Gardezi). There were also of course interspersed areas of tribal modes of production, and one broad region (Jharkhand) had its character defined by the fact that tribal modes prevailed for a much longer period of time (Sengupta, 1980; Singh, 1978). But in the rest of India · feudalism was dominant and was characterized by the fact that the most important mens of production, the land,was essentially controlled by feudal exploiting classes at the village level. Periodically the ruling states (both the Mughals and Hindu states) laid claim to "ownership" of the land but in practice were not able to enforce this; while on the other hand the main producing classes (peasants, artisans and labourers) had certain types of rights to the land and to the means of production, they were primarily subordinant tenant, dependent on the village feudals for their access to the land and their performance of their functions.

But the nature of these village feudal classes and the very structuring of the relations of production they dominated were defined in terms of the caste system. To understand how this worked, we shall begin with two points made about the traditional system by non-Marxist scholars and then turn to some insights of the Russian historian V.I. Pavlov.

The first important observation is that of Andre Beteille, who has pointed out that along with the thousands of castes, there were also in fact indigenous "class"-type classifications that divided the rural population of India into four or five main socio-economic groups according to their position in the system of production. In Bengal these were zamindars, jotedars (most often big ryots or big tenants), bargadars (sharecroppers) and khetmajur; along with these of course were merchants and artisans (Beteille, 1974: 126). Almost identical classes can be identified in nearly every region of India. In Tamionadu there were mirasdars or kaniyachikarar (landlords), paykaris (tenants), functionaries and artisans, and adimais and padiyals who were bonded labourers and field slaves (Sivkumar 1978; Gough, 1977; Mencher, 1978). In Bihar Harcourt has distinguished ashraf (landlords), bakal (village shopkeepers), pawania (artisans), jotiya (small peasants directily cultivating their land, sometimes divided into weel-to-do cultivators and share-croppers) and "a class of low caste landless labourers usually known by the name of the most numerous labourer caste at the local level" (Harcourt, 1977; 234-5). Other scholars speak of a basic north Indian division into malik (landlord), Kisan (peasant), and mazdur as well as artisans and merchants (Singh, 1978; Thorner, 1976). The Maharashtra the cultivating ryots, though all of the kunbi caste, were divided at the village level between the dominant patil lineage, the kulwadis or uparis (tenants, small cultivators of subordinate lineages or late arrivals); balutedars (artisans) and the labourers who did some balutedar work also but were generally called by their caste names of "Mahar-Mang". In all these classifications, it can be seen that there is not only a division between the exploiting classes (village landlords, merchants, priests and state officials) and others; there are also divisions among the village toilers between peasants (and often peasants are divided into two sections), artisans and labourers, and the latter divisions coincide with jati divisions.

A second point stressed by many scholars (Klass, Neale) is that due to the caste system access to produce within the village was almost never on the basis of market exchange. Rather it was through caste (jati), the services performed by the different castes and a right to a share of the produce traditionally claimed on the basis of such services. This is often described in terms of a division of the grain heap at harvest time: members of the different castes or sub-castes (from barbers to carpenters to untouchable field labourers to priests) who had performed their traditional duties throughout the year at that time claimed as their right a prescribed proportion of the grain. Besides this, they also had various other kinds of social and economic rights, from prescribed places and tasks at village festivals to certain shares of food at specific times to (occasionally) allotment of land for self-cultivation. Of course this system did not work

"automatically." In fact the allotment of the shares of grain or of other goods (along with the major share of village land) was under control of the dominant subcaste or lineage at the village level; it was these in fact who were the village feudal rulers and they are sometimes referred to as the "managerial caste" or "dominant caste."

In most cases (the traditional "zamindari" areas) (Spear,) these village landlords were from traditional noncultivating castes who often derived their control over the land from its conquest by an early ancestor or its grant by a king or overlord. Normally these were sharply distinguished in varna terms from the village toilers. In north India they were mainly "twice-born", Rajputs, Brahmans, Bhumihars. In many parts of south India the distinction was just as strong even though no castes were recognized traditionally as Ksatriyas; in Tamilnadu these landlords were mainly Brahmans or Vellalas who distinguished themselves from the exploited sections as sat-shudras, while in Kerala though the Nayar landlords only had a status as shudras, nevertheless they maintained their ritual distance from tenants and labourers by classifying all the others as some form of "untouchable" or "excluded" caste.

In the traditional "ryotwari" areas the situation was a bit more complicated, for here it seemed that the village "dominant caste" or "managerial caste" were not in fact non-cultivating landlords but were the cultivating ryots such as Marathas, Kammas, Reddis etc. Probably originally it was true that in these areas the main relations of production were at first not feudal but rather tributary relations between a majority group of peasant cultivators and the state. But with feudalization the headman (patil, patel, gauda) developed as an intermediary; the headman's sub-lineage became in effect the village feudal rulers and came to be noncultivating landlords who dominated not only the artisans and labourers but also junior lineages and "guest families" of peasant cultivators. Pavlov has estimated that these headmen had the right to a 15-25% of the village produce (1949, 77-80), and Perlin has shown that rising higher feudal families often "bought up" village-level patilki rights to increase and centralize their landholdings ( ). Thus, the non-cultivating landlord caste in the zamindari areas, and the headman's lineages in the ryotwari areas were in fact essentially feudal landlords; they were the lowest rung in the very extended and stratified ladder of feudal exploitation, and they along with the representatives of the feudal state at all levels enforced and maintained the caste-defined behaviour which structured the ways in which "unpaid surplus labour /was/ pumped out of direct producers."

Pavlov's analysis helps to show one important way in which this structuring differed from European feudalism. This was not simply in terms of the existence of "birth-ascribed" class membership nor in terms of the fact that religious and cultural factors shaped the economic structure --- and feudal

societies are "ascriptive" in some sense and in all religious and political factors directly enter into production relations. The difference was in the relationships among toilers. In Europe, though membership in the exploited peasantry was defined by birth, there were no such birth-limits to performance of specialist functions. A peasant might do his own carpentering or other work, or there might be specialist carpenters, but even if there were a boy from a peasant family faced no absolute barriers to entering such occupations. In various ways guilds might regulate entry into skilled crafts, but this was not part of the basic social rules. Similarly an impoverished family that lost its land might be forced to mainly work as wage-labourers (and there were in fact wage-paid field labourers in medieval Europe), but again it was only economic obstacles which placed people in such positions and prevented them from moving out of them, and not social ones which assigned them to groups who were held to be by birth and nature fit only for tasks as labourers.

In contrast, Indian-caste-feudalism split the exploited classes into several major sections. Pavlov argues against applying the very word "peasant" to India, for essentially this reason :

> If this conception is based on... personal participation in agricultural production the category will have to include sections as incomparable in social and proprietary status as the untouchables among the servants of the community, and its upper sections which (in Maharashtra, for instance) took part in cultivating the soil. But these did not in any sense form units in a single class/estate (1978: 48).

Thus he describes to reserve the term "peasant" for "only the tillers of the soil among the upper castes who held the land as rayats" and he notes that this section constituted only a minority of the population in contrast to the European notion of the peasant as a land-tilling majority.

Below these cultivating rayats were inferior tenants and sharecroppers of lower castes or subcastes. And along with them was another numerous section in rural society, the artisans (Kamins, balutedars). They included a wide range of castes from relatively high-status goldsmiths down to leather-workers, rope-makers and others often classed as untouchables; but they were always socially and economically subordinated not only to the landlords but to most of the cultivating peasants as well. A very important fact stressed by Pavlov is that production of the means of production for agriculture (carts, rope, leather, iron) was carried out through the jajmani/balutedari system in which the craftsman was not paid in exchange for each item he produced but was considered as a village servant entitled on a ongoing, hereditary basis to

rewards that included the allotment of grain at harvest time, a whole bundle of social and economic perquisites and occasionally the allotment of land for self-cultivation. In contrast to this, production of consumption goods such as cloth, jewelery etc. was nearly always carried on for exchange though again by members of specific castes (Pavlov, 1978: 51-57).

The lowest of the castes within this system were usually considered untouchable on the grounds that they performed polluting occupations, and were forced to live in separate settlements outside the village boundaries. Significantly, almost everywhere there were one or two large untouchable castes who not only did specific craft duties but were also bound to the performance of general menial labour that included acting as general plough servants and field slaves for landlord families, carrying and fetching services for the village headmen and higher state officials, woodcutting and other general casual labour for the village.

Could artisans and labourers be called "peasants" in any sense ? In fact their position was an ambivalent one. On one hand they were agricultural producers in the sense that they performed functions necessary for agricultural production, yet they had no recognized right to the land itself, and they were never considered to be "peasants" or "tillers of the soil". "Though many untouchable castes have traditions which define them as descendents of ancient native sons-of-the-soil, this was never recognized by the wider society). In contrast to European labourers and artisans, their economic position did not result from impoverishment or choice of a specialization, but was rather an ascriptive one within a system that maintained a permanent class of field labourers as well as village resident artisans.

Thus there was three major sections among the exploited producers in Indian feudal society: the kisans or peasants; the kamins or artisans; and the untouchable labourers. The kisans were almost always drawn from the main "present" or land-tilling caste of the region, and in fact their jati name was also frequently the word for "peasant" in a local language. They were Kunbis, Jats, Kurmis, Reddis, Vokkaligas, Kammas, Vanniyas etc. and they were always classed as shudras in varna terms. Similar in status and almost in the same category were castes whose "traditional" function was that of sheepherding, cowherding or vegetable gardening (Malis, Yadavas, Ahirs, Dhangars, etc.) but who often became cultivators and sometimes constituted the dominant caste in villages where they were a majority. It is important to note that while the kisans were mainly an exploited section of toilers, the village feudal classes (from patils to zamindars, deshmukhs and others) could be drawn from their ranks, and in this sense they had an access to economic and social mobility that other sections lacked.

Below these, the artisans were always drawn from specific castes known by the name of their function to the wider community; they were also classed as shudra in varna terms. Finally there were the labourers, who were untouchables or ati-shudra in varna terms and were the most exploited (though not the only exploited) section at the base of the system. Next to the major kisan caste, these were often numerically the biggest caste in the village and today also they represent castes that are quite big in the Indian context - Chamars, Chuhras, Mahars and Mangs, Malas and Madigas, Holeyas, Puleyas, Paraiyans and Pallans.

Should these three sections be called different "classes" or different sections of a single exploited class ? This may be simply a matter of terminology. What is important is that in the Indian caste-feudal mode of production, the economy was structured and the surplus "pumped out" in such a way that it maintained in existence such highly subdivided and unequally exploited sections of tiolers. For anti-feudal struggles the conclusion is important: While it would be correct to say that in India as elsewhere "agrarian revolution" (the revolutionary transformation of relations of production on the land) was central to the anti-feudal struggle, this could not be attained simply through the abolition of landlordism. Rather it required a thorough attack on the caste system itself and a transformation of the relations of production within the village and among the toiling masses in a way that would assure that artisans and labourers as well as the kisans could gain basic rights to the land itself and to its produce.

3. Colonial Ryle and Anti-Fedual Struggles :-

Indian feudalism was not, of course, revolutionaized by an indigenous development of capitalism. Rather it aas transformed by the imposition of British colonial rune, which subordinated the entire Indian social formation to the needs of the development of capitalism in Britain. The concrete form in which colonial bule both sowed the seeds of capitalist development as well as maintained semi-feudal structure in existence in Indial provided the conditions under which anti-feudal as well as anti-imperialist movements developed in India. An improvement aspect of this was the transformation/ maintenance of the caste system and its relation to the rest of the society.

First, the British aboloshed the pre-existing purely caste-defined access to land and other goods and imposed legal relationships of land ownership and tenancy backed up by courts operating on a definition of legal private property. Along with this, new factories, mines and plantations as well as the new schools and bureaucracy recruited their workers, students and employees on a basis of formal equality in which caste membership did not in and of itself bar any section from entry. The state ceased to be a protector of the tradcharacteristic of capitalist society began in India under colonail ruke.

Caste and class continued to beheavily interlinked. The educated elite was overwhelmingly drawn from the higher castes who had formerly a literate tradition, that is Brahmans, Kayasthas and others. Men from peasant and artisan castes of shudra status constituted the large majority of factory workers ; while dalits should find some openings in factories or on roads and railways, generally they filled the lowest, most unskilled jobs. In the mines and plantations it was the sections most exploited in feudal society (dalits) or those outside of feudal relations altogether but brought into them by colonial rule (adivasis) who formed the bulk of the work force. Merchantd and moneylenders were mainly drawn from the vaishya castes who had traditionally performed this function, and though they gained power over peasants as sowkars and got control over much of the land on mortgage, they generally did not emerge as actual landlords or owners of the land but preferred simply to control the crops. It was from their ranks that an industrial bourgeoisie, ultimately a national bourgeoisie, began to take shape.

In terms of their legal position, landlords were a mixed lot : in some parts of the country they were legally defined as such(as zamindars, khotedars, talukdars etc) while in other areas they emerged within a ryotwari structure as those who acquired large amounts of land through various means (from traditional ownership including former patil and inam rights to buying up land with advantages of education and bureaucratic connections), and formed it mainly through tenants. Nevertheless in caste terms they were almost always drawn from the previous village feudal classes, the Rajputs, Brahamans, Bhumihrs, Vellalas, Nayars, Nambudiris etc.

Below these could be found a large peasant section including owner-cultivators as well as various types of tenants, These were overwhelmingly shdra in varna terms and they included both the former kisan castes as well as artisan castes. By the end of colonial rule it was clear that most of the specialist cstees-many of whom had been ruined and displaced by imperialist competition were direct cultivators of the land rather than performing their "traditional" occupation. At the same time there was a process of differentiation among this peasantry. The better off sections of owner-cultivators and the richer tenants (and these were almost all from traditional kisan castes) began to consolidate their position and even emerge as exploiters of wage labour and other forms of labour extracted from the lower castes, while others became steadily more impoverished. The rich peasants clearly benefited from casteforms of exploitation in their villages, even though they also had an interest in opposing the caste privil_eges and economic power of the landlords-moneylenders-bureaucrats. Finally, at the bottom the status of the untouchable labourers continued much as before ; though now it often took forms of debt-bondage and legal contracts, these untouchable servants-serfs often continuted to be known by the traditional terms for field slaves (e.g. panniyal). Still, among the growing numbers of agricultural labourers, there were many who had originally been middle caste cultivators or artisans and were thrown now into this position by impoverishment ; these often had a more free status and there were some areas (e.g. western Maharashtra, the Andhra delta) where dalits as well as caste Hindu labourers were more mobile and less bound.

Under British rule there was thus a broad correlation between caste and class which duplicated the main classes of the pre-colonial caste-feudal period ; Nevertheless it was only a correlation, and not an identity, and in every caste there could be found some individuals who could get education, a little bit of land, some access to new opportunities. The fact that artisans and even untouchables had formal rights to land ownership, to education and to new occupations was connected with the emergence of "caste" and "class" as separate but highly interconnected, and this was the material base on which the very complex anti-feudal struggles of the colonial period emerged.

These anti-feudal struggles included the kisan movements, the nonBrahaman anti-caste movements, and the dalit and agricultural labourer movements. Of these, the kisan movements have been the most thoroughly studied ; they centered around demands for abolition of zamindari and so primarily involved the interests of middle and rich peasants who had traditionally recognised claims to the land as tenantsor as cultivators. But they also included a large number of related issues-demands for restoration of certain lands grabbed by the zamindars, opposition to forms of forecdd labour collectively termsc as vethbegar,

opposition to moneylending, demand for cheap access to water resources etc. and they frequently involved poor and low caste peasants. Further, both the climactic struggles of the kisan movement- the Tebhaga movement in Bengal and the Telengana revolt-transcended the limitations of the earlier kisan movement and involved large sections of the rural poor.

Anti-caste movements, in particular broad nonBrahaman movements of south India, were also generally anti-feudal. For the large section of peasant and artisan masses, their oppression was in terms of caste as well as class, and as some educated sections began to develop within each jati these took leadership both in more conservative forms of organizations (caste associations which essentially accepted the caste heirarchy but sought to use caste identity to complete for a higher position within it) as well as in more radical challenges to the system itself. Toilers as well as these educated sections began to reject their hitherto accepted position as shudras within an established varna heirarchy and to see themselves as nonBrahamans or nonAryans or bahujan samaj fighting an exploiting Aryan elite or shetji-bhatji class which had originated the caste system as a means of subjugating and dividing them. The Satyashodhak Samaj in Maharashtra and the Self-Respect movement in Tamilnadu at times took the place of the kisan sabhas in these areas and engaged in sometimes direct attacks on moneylenders or landlords as well as in a fierce challenge to the ritual status of the elite. In north India anti-caste organizations generally took amore conservative form in which the middle castes mainly claimed ksatriya status. In Bihar the middle peasant kisans organized through the Triveni Sangh as well as in the Kisan Sabha, while in northwest India the Arya Samaj and Kisan Sabhas became interwoven expressions of the (mainly Jat) kisans against their (mainly Rajput) feudal exploiters.

At the same time the untoubhable labourers, inspired by such struggles but only partially included in them, began to organise separately. Movements based on their notion of themselves as the original "sons of the soil"(adi-Andhras, Adi-Hindus, Ad-Dharm etc) began to emerge in the 1920s, and a new term expressing a totality of socio-economic exploitation, dalit, began to be used from about 1930 in Maharashtra and north India. Struggles began to take place only in the towns to claim education, legal rights or use of tanks, and temples (the Mahad satyagraha ; the Vaikom satyagraha), but also in the villages to claim land (either forest land or cultivable waste), higher wages and the ending of vethbegar. The late 1930s, the same period in which the All-India Kisan Sabha emerged as a united organization under left leadership, saw the emergence of separate dalit based agricultural labourer organizations in Bihar (led by Jagjivan Ram) and Andhra (led by Ranga and the Communists). In the same period Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party to link dalit, peasants and workers' struggles. Finally, people in the tribal areas, now subordinated to new consolidated feudal exploitation, also began to organize in a new fashion that stressed their identity as adivasis.

The Telengans revolt (1946-1950) was in many ways a climax of all these movements. While both the Kisan Sabha and agricultural labour organizing had been strong in the Andhra region, in Telengana itself the mass organization which was a basis for the revolt was the Andhra Mahasabha- which combined social reform, anti-caste and nationalist features. It had earlier taken up anti-untouchability and anti-vethbegar as well as cultural campaigns ; and to these a new Communist leadership linked militancy and anti-landlord struggles. Thus, dalits artisans and the landless as well as substantial villages landholders were involved in the revolt, and when the revolution took up both abolition of zamindari and distribution of "excess land" to the landless the first time this really was brought forward as an issue in struggle they were meeting inpractice the needs for land of the low castes as well as the cultivating kisans.

But in spite of these achievements and in spite of the long history of sustained struggles, by and large they remained under rich peasant and middle class hegemony. In the end it was Gandhi and the Congress, rather than the socialists and Communists, who maintained leadership in the anti-imperialist as well as over the anti feudal struggles.

On one hand this was a failure of the left, and this meant the inability of the working class, peasant and dalit forces to evolve a dilitant anti-feudal movement that could unite all the various aspects of the anti-caste and peasant struggles, and to combine these with the fight against imerrialism. In spite of impressive local efforts under communist leadership in such places as Andhra and Kerala, there was by and large a separation of struggles at the national level, In the Kisan Sabha movement, for instance, the issue of caste and untouchability was general ignored, the specific problems of the dalit labourers were underplayed, and there was no real analysis of the specific characteristics of Indian feudalism. The result was that the "agrarian revolution" and the "abolition of landlordism" came to mean in practice only the abolition of zamindari and giving land title to the tenants - that is, to those who had some historically recognized claim to the land, primarily the middle caste kisans. For example, a final climactic resolution on the abolition of landlordism of the All-India Kisan Sabha in 1947 reads as follows :

> With the abolition of landlordism all agricultural land must in the first instance be declared the property of the state and then be given in permanent ownership to actual cultivators of the soil. All agricultural labourers must have a minimum wage. All other tillers of the soil must get proprietary rights in it under their direct cultivation and cultivable waste land must be distributed among poor peasants and agricultural labourers(Rasul: 1947 : 147).

Here the "actual cultivators of the soil" seem to be identified with the middle class tenants, while there is a virtual acceptance of the continuing existence of agricultural labourers who do not have the same rights as other "tillers of the soil" : The evidence of all the Kisan Sabha debates on this issue suggests that leaders were defining the problem of tentnts and labourers in European terms, and missing most of Indian caste-defined specificities.

One result was that dalits largely remained apart from these kisan struggles and even when they did take part they could esually not consolidate any gains in rights to the land because they were not traditionally "tillers" and there was no broader powerful peasant movement consciousn enough to assure that they could win such fights. Even in the great Telengana revolt, where dalit labourers fought along side caste Hindu kisans, the kisans who got land as tenants managed to keep their gains while the dalits and other landless who got the "ceiling land" generally lost these. Here it may be said that a general failure of the left (both of socialists and communists in this period) was both to overlook the anti-feudal character of the anti-caste and nonBrahman movements and to overlook the specific needs of dalit labourers and artisans within the broadder peasant movement.

There was also a problem in combining the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal fight, a problem partly related to the great difficulty the communists had in organizing and in evolving a well-define policy. Until the middle 1930s (partly as a result of Comintern directives) the Communists militantly organized the working class but did not lead any anti-British struggles and remained isolated from the national movement. Then the Socialist party was formed as a pressure group within the Congress, as a left nationalist and not an independent working class party-and when the Communists switched their policy after 1935 to that of the "anti-imperialist united front" they did so by simply joining the CSP and so, in effect, accepted the same policy of "working from within". But this was at a time when in many areas independent anti-feudal and potentially anti-imperialist forces were emerging, most notably Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party in Maharashtra and Periyar's Self-Respect movement. But communist and communist-influenced cadres were directed to leave these parties and join the CSP instead even though they were getting some considerable influence atleast in the cast of the Self-Respect movement and were helping a movement towards a moremilitant anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle. The result was to deprive these movements of left and working class influence, and in turn to isolate the Communists from the dalit movement in Maharashtra and the Dravidian movement in Tamilnadu.

The repercussions of both are felt today. Nor did the fact of "working within" the Congress really help the leftists to topple a conservative, Gandhian leadership ; rather they only helped to increase its mass base.

And on the other hand this Gandhian leadership succeeded quite brilliantly in forging a policy for a bourgeois form of anti-feudal and national struggle that did bring together under Congress leadership all aspects of the anti-feudal movements but only in a distorted, conservative and fragmentizing manner. One aspect of Gandhi's genius was in fact that he could give an all-round programme that promised something for every section of society. In the cast of the kisan movement, the Congress supported or even organized struggles where they had no choice or where they could be controlled, and always with certain conservative policies : to accept the principle of compensation and the ultimate right of landlords, to avoid "violence", etc. At the same time it sought to avoid connecting the kisan movement with that of the issues of labourers. In turn the Congress very cautiously encouraged a limited form of organizing agricultural labourers but only (under Jagjivan Ram) where this was useful as a counter to a left-led Kisan Sabha. But for the dalits as such, Gandhi's main emphasis was to avoid their economic issues entirely ; to avoid also any militant action against caste oppression as such ; and in fact to avoid organizing them altogether except as "Harijans" who were objects of paternalistic sympathy and "uplift" from caste Hindus who were consciously given control of the organizations auch as the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The brilliance of Gandhi's "constructive programme" (from the our point of the bourgeoise), as Dhanagare has shown (1980:) was that it provided something fof the dalits and those who were motivated by their plight, but only in a way that increased their subordination to the rural elite and diverted them from radical struggles. In other words, the Congress policy almost consciously fostered disunity among the various sections of the toiling masses while at the same time preaching a harmony with the exploited ; while the left led many militant struggles and sought to intensify contradictions in the countryside to their understanding but failed to build up a militant unity of all sections of the oppressed.

Thus the promise inherent in the mightly Telengans revolt, in the all-round participation of Communists in anti-landlord and anti-untouchablility struggles among agricultural labourers and peasants in such areas as Andhra and Kerala, or in the attempt of Ambedkar in the late 1930s to formulate a programme to unite workers, peasants and dalits remained unfulfilled. Congress hegemony was maintained ; the kisan movement ended up serving the needs of the rich peasants ; the nonBrahman movements fell under middle class leadership and the dalit and anti-caste movements in general failed to become a thorough dalit liberation movemtnt. When independence was won in 1947 it was in the form of a bourgeois state.

4. Caste and Class in Post-Colonial India

A close look at the notorious "atrocities against Harijans" that seem to be going on everywhere today will reveal in fact the significant changes that have occurred in Indian agriculture since independence. The cases of Kilvenmani, Belcchi, Bajitpur, Pipra may appear to be feudal in the violent, goonds nature of the onslaught, but the very ferocity of the attack shows the growing rural tensions, and the degree to which dalit labourers are beginning to challenge the village powerholders. In the case of Kamjhawala, Marathwada, and now Gujarat, a new phenomenon is evident: along with riots and pograms, the sustained organized campaigns, demonstrations, mass-oriented slogans designed to win over the caste Hindu toilers against the dalits. And everywhere a simple question reveals a crucial difference from the feudal, pre-independence period: who is attacking the dalits? Now it is no longer Brahmans, Rajputs, deshmukhs, Vellalas or highcaste landlords, but most often the middle castes, the new rich farmers, those who were once middle peasants and tenents fighting against landlords and who now still call themselves bahujan samaj, kisan and shetkari. Those who were once allies of dalits in the anti-feudal struggles now appear to be the main enemy.

These attacks themselves show the coming of capitalist relations in agriculture. They indicate the main lines of conflict are no longer between middle and low-caste peasants on one side and high-caste landlords on the other, but are now between the rich farmers and the agricultural labourers-poor peasants. And they show that in this new emerging class struggle, caste is one of the strongest weapons which the rich are using to divide and attack the rural poor.

The process of change in agricultural relations of production and in the relation between class and caste has taken iplace in a highly uneven fashion throughout India. Therefore we will first outline the broad character of this change, and then in the final section try to deal briefly with the regional variations which form the background for the various papers in this volume.

With independence, a new bourgeoisie came into power in the Indian state, and after the repression of the peasant revolt in Telegana and other waves of popular discontent, it began to implement land reforms designed to change the agrarian structure in the interests of the bourgeioise. Throughout the 1950s, the major demand of the Kisan Sabha movement, the demand for the abolition of zamindari, was implemented, though in a slow and halting way. Intermediaries were abolished in the former zamindari areas (though they were always left with enough land and compensation to survive as big farmers) and tenancy acts in the ryotwari areas served a similar purpose of removing a major basis of power of former noncultivating Brahmans and other highcaste landlords though

they hardly touched the lands of the "cultivating" castes (e.g. Maharashtra). These laws laid the basis for the former rich peasants and big tenents to emerge as the main landholding elite in the villages, and put pressure on big landowners to farm their lands "directly", that is by hired agricultural lanourers, rather than giving it out on tenancy. As a result tenancy declined significantly between 1951 and 1961, and while it has more or less stated at the same level since 1961 (by 1971 17% of rural households were taking land on tenancy and 9.25% of land was taken on lease) much of this is capitalist tenancy in which the land is taken by middle and rich farmers (See Table 1). (While some of this decline in tenancy may be and underestimation due to new motives for "concealed tenancy", village studies are unable to show much more actual tenancy). Similarly the percentage of the rural work farce who are agricultural lanourers has risen from 16% in 1951 to 31% in 1971, the change has been most dramatic between 1961 and 1971, and this does not include people who work part time as labourers and slightly more on their own land (Omvedt, 1980).

The process of actual proletarianization in agruculture - of poor peasants and artisans losing their land - has undlubtedly been a slow one. For it is taking place in a post-colonial country caught in the grips of imperialism in which industrialization has grown only very slowly and in a capital-intensive way that is incapable of absorbing labour-power displaced from the land. It is within this context also that we have to see the various land-ceiling acts (passed mainly in two waves, 1961 and 1971, and implemented very haltingly) and other measures claiming to give meet the demands of the landless for land by providing forest al land, cultivable waste and other land to the rural poor. Unlike the Zamindari Abolition measures, these are generally taken to be failures; certainly only a small proportion of the estimated surplus land has been distributed. Unlike the Zamindari Abolition acts, also, these are not class bourgeois reforms in the interest of capitalist agricultural development, but rather go against the immediate interests of all big landowners, capitalist and feudal alike. Nevertheless, it may be argued that such measures have played a role in showing down absolute proletarianization (and so also in caliing to some extend the readiness to revolt of the poor), for the number of rural families who do not <u>own</u> land (according to NSS statistics) has dropped from 22% in 1953 to 9.6% in 1971. Nevertheless proletarianization is going on in a somewhat different fashion, for the number of families who do not <u>cultivate</u> land has risen, by the same statistics, from 11% to 27%. These families include landless labourers, landless artisans, and those working in other rural wage-earning jobs (may rent out the small plots of land they own)or (contract work, construction, truck-driving, etc), given to them to relatives, but only about 1-2% own enough land to survive as non-cultivating landlords. In addition, are an even larger number of agricultural labourers,

small artisans and other rural workers who both cultivate their tiny plots and work for wages. Thus the type of proletarianization that is developing in rural India is one in which most rural wage earners in own or cultivate small plots of land, maintain milk buffalos and cows, or have other auziliary sources of income - all of which serve to maintain them on the land in a period in which industrial jobs are not sufficiently available, and to cheapen their labour power.

Along with this process, the ending of the jajmani system in large sections of India, the ending of the previous forms of dalit bondage (the "village work" such as carrying away dead cattle and other services for the big farmers) in many areas, the greater mobility of large numbers of poor families in search of work (from village to village daily, seasonally in the case of many jobs including construction, migrant harvest work etc), even the ending of debt-bondage of "contract labourers in many areas - all this has meant that gradually the relationship between the labourers and the rich farmers has become more and more commercialized, less and less feudal and patronage-oriented. and more and more one of open capitalist expoitation. Again, it mustbe remembered that all of these processes have taken place in a highly uneven regional fashion.

Concurrently the bourgeoisie state has taken a number of measures to promote technological fdevelopment in agriculture and insure credit and other infrastructural facilities to the rich farmers. The promotion of irrigation (by 1978 this covered about 30% of the land area), agricultural extension programmes, the promotion of cooperatives, steps taken to insure credit facilities (most notably beginning from the bank nationalization in 1969) and the whole set of measures including new seeds and fertilizer facilities associated with the "green revolution" have all been part of this process. And these have all helped the new rich peasant/kulak farmer class to emerge as genuine capitalist farmers producing for the amrket and earning a significant profit from their land. With much regional variation, agricultural growth has been an average of 2.7% a year between 1951 and 1978 - higher until 1967, then slowing down some with the all-round economic crisis between 1967 and 1976, then picking a up somewhat after 1975-76.

In the villages of the more "advanced" states in particular the rich farmers have been aided in consolidating and modernizing their power by an associated set of government measures - setting up and supporting new gram panchayats, village cooperatives, new educational associations, dairy societies and a whole set of village associations which have generally been controlled by the rich farmers but have served as reservoirs of patronage and other powers by which to maintain their dominance over the lower castes, poor peasants and labourers.

Indeed, the democratic rights given in the bourgeois constitution as well as the welfare measures of the bourgeois state - education, reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and many "Backward Castes", measures like the Untouchability Offenses Act and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, measures giving land to the poor, the right to vote itself - have had a very complex effect. On the one hand, they served finally to disassociate "caste" from the near-absolute correlation it had previously had with class: now small middle class sections developing in all the low castes had some opportunity to consolidate their position and move ahead. Now indeed even significant sections from among the dalits and low castes might make use of anti-untouchability acts, measures giving them land or cows or other facilities for tiny gains, while this in turn gave a base for the view that the state was indeed a "neutral" body, standing above society, even standing above their local class oppressors and occasionally helping them. This in fact has been the base for the continued appeal of the Congress and Indira Gandhi to the rural poor. But at the same time, the fact that very few members from low castes were in a position to take advantage of their rights, the fact that many forms of untouchability remain universal throughout rural India (separate living quarters and separate water), the fact that caste remains the major unit within which marriage and social relations take place, the fact that members of the middle-caste landholding "peasant" castes were much better placed to take advantage of education, employment and government facilities - all of this meant that caste continued to have a high correlation with economic position. Most dalits and adivasis and most members of artisan castes remained as poor and as low in the social-economic hierarchy as before, and the rural bureaucrats (member of panchayats, cooperative societies, government officials, the police etc.) continued to be drawn mainly from the rural elite.

These processes have had important effects on caste organizations. During the colonial period when "caste" began to emerge as a separate social phenomenon, the middle class and educated members of almost every jati had become involved in the formation of "caste association" - organizations which tried to unite the different subcastes within the jati, to reform accepted behaviour along sanskritized lines, to promote education and generally fight for a higher place within the

social hierarchy. These caste associations had always existed alongside the more radical anti-caste organisations of non-Brahmans and others. Now in the post-colonial period, such caste associations if anything intensified their activity. Social scientists now began to stres the emergence of castes as "competing groups", of caste-linked "vote banks" in the countryside, and they began to observe the ways in which the bourgeois and kulak members of various castes were appealing to caste identity to keep members of their "own caste" lined up behind them and split away from forming class solidarity with toilers of different castes. In the pre-independence period, broad semi-caste organizations of the middle castes (e.g. the non-Brahman movements) and the dalit organizations both had a radical, anti-feudal direction. Now among the middle castes the radical element vanished, only the conservative caste associations and caste appeals remained while only among the dalits did certain caste-based organizations (e.g. Dalit Panthers, Dalit Sangarsha Samitis, even Republican Party) continue to have a dual character with both radical and conservative aspects. The reason was that only the dalits and similar groups remain to a large degree proletarianized (their middle class section is primarily one of the petty b urgeois employees, rather than property-holding exploiters of labour power), while among the middle castes economic differentiation was now qualitatively different: some had become capitalist aside from the employed sections, farmers many were middle peasants, while large numbers were poor peasants and labourers. But the rich farmer sections no longer had any radical or anti-feudal interests at all.

In very general terms, ignoring regional variations for a moment, we can define the new shape of agrarian classes and their caste composition (see Omvedt, 1980 for empirical data). First, about 15% of all rural families can be classed as rich farmer families, including capitalist farmers, capitalist landlords, a minority of feudal landlords existing in more backward areas, and families who also include merchants and rural employees. In caste terms this section includes both the traditional feudal classes (Brahmans, Rajputs, Vellalas, etc.) as well as the middle kisan castes. But it is the kisan castes who are now dominant among them (there are only a few, a minute proportion, a families from artisan caste or dalit background in this class) especially in the more capitalist regions, where Patidars, Marathas, Jats, Vokkaligas, Lingayats, Kammas, Reddis, etc. seem almost equivalent to the new kulak farmers.

These rich farmers have an ambivalent, almost dual-political character. On the one hand the proportion of ex-tenants and peasants among them, the fact that they have a heritage of struggle against landlords and the upper castes, allows them to take on a surface appearance of being "peasants" (kisans, shetkari, bahujan samaj) and leaders, not simply oppressors, of the rural masses. Their role in the new capitalist institutions of dominance (gram panchayats, cooperatives etc), the fact that they are now largely educated, their

ability to exercize a sophisticated, coopting form of rural power in which some patronage is dispensed and some members of low castes are given a place, is part of this. But on the other hand, their own background as village power-holders and their readiness to take on even the most brutal feudal traits of the classes they once fought against means that they are also ready to exercize their power in the most corrupt, violent and gangster forms. Similarly, their relative caste homogeneity means they often are able to put on an appearance of being less "casteist", but this is the section that most strongly uses caste associations and caste appeals to rally people behind them, that relies on kinship and caste ties for "influence" in education, employment and other concessions, and gives the strongest support to all the religious and cultural institutions that uphold casteism. Their specific class interests often lead them into adual political battle, facing the urban industrial bourgeoisie on the one hand in claiming more credit and higher prices (though here their contradiction antagonism is nonantagonistic) and facing the rural semi-proletariat on the other. Generally they attempt to use a rhetoric of "peasant unity" to win over middle peasants and sometimes poor peasants to their side, but with this also they use caste ties and appeals to win over the poor peasants and agricultural labourers of their own caste in dividing and concentrating their attack on dalit labourers.

Middle peasants, about 25% of all rural families, are again primarily of kisan caste background but include a small but significant proportion of artisan castes and other allied castes and even some dalits. Though they are continually threatened with problems of unemployment, price-rise, and with the corruption and bossism of the rich farmers, their own aspirations as petty property holders and their caste ties with the rich farmers normally lead they to tail after this class.

Finally, the poor peasants and agricultural labourers, the proletarianized rural majority, perhaps 60% of rural households, are the most divided in caste terms. They include not only dalits and adivasis, but Muslims and other minorities and members of all the former Hindu shudra castes, both artisans and the traditional kisan castes. In capitalist areas (such as western Maharashtra) one can find that not only are the "dominant" caste of Marathas fully differentiated in class terms, but in each village practically every clan of Marathas is equally differentiated, including both rich farmers, middle peasants and landless agricultural labourers. On an all-India basis, the 1974-75 Rural Labourer Enquiry showed that of 30% of households classed as rural labourer families (meaning that over half their income came from agricultural or other wage labour), some 37% were Scheduled Castes, 10% Scheduled Tribes and the rest "others" - and that these were almost equally likely to be landed or landless (Scheduled Tribes were somewhat more likely to have land, Scheduled Castes somewhat less likely).

Thus a large "semi-proletarian" section is emerging that cuts across caste lines - but these divisions run deep. Though it has the greatest objective need of all the rural classes to destroy casteism, its history and material conditions make this difficult. Both dalits and savarnas may be agricultural labourers, but there is a difference. Dalits who are wage labourers have most often risen out of a position of even worse feudal bondage and have done so through their fighting anti-feudal movements. Savarnas (whether former artisans or former peasants) in contrast have often experienced a loss of economic position that is upsetting in a different way; they in fact still have some material benefits from living within the village and having social and kinship relations with middle peasants and rich farmers, and in the face of their poverty and the economic crisis this makes them liable to the propaganda of casteism which tells them their problems come from the dalit who are going ahead and getting all the advantages. Thus there is a material base also for the hegemony of the rich farmers and their ability to use "caste as a weapon".

Among the rural poor toilers, the continued existence of caste divisions and the continued, if varying forms of the special oppression of dalit labourers means that a struggle against social/cultural oppression and an anti-caste struggle is a crucial part of their general battle for liberation. But this is no longer a simple anti-feudal struggle as before. For one thing the main enemies now are the rich farmers, including capitalist farmers, and the bourgeoise state as such, and the dalits can no longer find their allies as the ex-shudra peasantry fighting against the "twice-born". Now the question has become one of uniting the dalits - and breaking the false, cross-class "caste unity" of the middle castes in order to bring the middle-caste toilers into alliance with dalits; it is now a question of a dalit liberation movement along with the formation of a broader militant class unity among the rural poor under the slogan of "dalit-shramik unity".

With the growth of capitalist relations particularly from the 1960s the rural poor, agricultural labourers and poor peasants, began to break loose from the former domination of the rural elite (which had earlier been partly an alliance in the areas of more militant struggle) and to assert themselves independently in a variety of forms, under agricultural labourer organizations, in dalit organizations, sometimes under "caste" - influenced class forms (as in Thanjavur where the form was that of the CPI(M) - led Kisan Sabha but the content was provided by the caste panchayats of the Paraiyans and Pallans), sometimes with hardly any leadership at all except local contacts. Politically this class had - and still has - no party of its own on a national basis: the RPI is limited to only its dalit sections in a few areas, the CPI(M) though based mainly on this class has also been limited to pockets and in the more feudal and backward areas and has been facing heavy repression, and the CPI and CPI(M) though leading a number of struggles have been objectively more

becoming parties of the middle peasants and rich farmers in the countryside. In this condition the independent assertion of the rural toilers has necessiatated a new kind of political appeal by the broader national parties, an appeal based on ideological (both class and caste) factors going over the heads of the rural elites - and it has been the party of the industrial bourgeoisie, the Congress - Congress (I), which has been most successful in making this appeal. After fostering the growth of the kulaks by their policies of limited land reform, credit etc., the urban bourgeoisie found it handy to check the upsurge of this class as well as to throw a few crumbs to the rural poor in terms of a tiny bit of surplus land, minimum wages, rural house-sites etc. And in the overall absence of any revolutionary party of its own, the rural poor has mostly responded to this appeal.

The capitalist farmers, in turn, began to emerge as a state-level power-holding class 10-20 years after independence. By this time, the old politics of parallel and interlinked tenant-landlord and non-Brahman-upper caste struggles were coming to an end in the more capitalistically-developed areas. In these areas, in south and west India, the new kulaks came to power under a variety of political forms, including the Congress in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and Gujarat, the DMK in Tamilnadu, even in a partial form with the Communists in Kerala. But their discontent with the Congress policies and their conflicts with the urban bourgeoisie over prices and credit were growing, and in the northern states where feudal tendencies were stronger and where the Congress at a statelevel remained controlled by upper caste elements, these were enough to drive this class into opposition. So by 1967 most of this section in Bihar, UP, MP and later Gujarat went to the Congress (O), the Akali Dal, the BKD and BLD, and finally by 1977 and the end of Emergency into the Janata Party. The southern kulak class has also tended to go into opposition (Urs Congress) but the weakness of the political opposition has driven many of them back to the Congress (I) and finally resulted in the formation of "non-party" class organizations - the various Farmers' Associations - through which they have tried to assert their interests against the industrial bourgeoisie and re-establish their rural hegemony outside of parties (and within them).

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DISCUSSION

Counter-Statement on Humanistic Temper

ASHIS NANDY

A Statement on Scientific Temper, a thought-provoking document signed by outstanding scientists and public figures and released by the Nehru Centre in Bombay (*Mainstream*, July 25, 1981) has touched off rethinking among intellectuals in the country. Two comments on the Statement were published in these columns (*Mainstream*, August 29, 1981). We publish here a vigorous critique of the Statement, and invite readers to participate in this discussion.—*Editor*

'A Statement on Scientific Temper,' signed by a group which includes a number of my terribly respectable and highly successful friends, may read like a paean to conventionality, propriety and middle-class wisdom. On closer scrutiny, it turns out to be a mix of superstitions, half-truths and cliches.

The statement begins with a sleight of hand. In the preface, P.N. Haksar quotes Jawaharlal Nehru as follows: "This method (the method of science) may not always be applicable in our quest of truth;...Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purposes of science." The statement then goes on to mock this insight of Nehru and his implicit faith that modern science may also have to learn something from this civilisation. It claims that "the fullest use of the methods of science in everyday life and in *every* aspect of human endeavour from ethics to politics and economics — is essential for ensuring human survival and progress, and...that one should accept knowledge gained through the application of the method of science *as the closest approximation to truth.*" What was a plurality of visions becomes, thus, a hierarchy of methods, with one method having not only permanently higher truth-value but also unrestricted applicability. In the process, Nehru is reduced to a fourth-rate pamphleteer for modern science and to a maudlin ultra-positivist.

The signatories aim to "provide our people, once again, with a vision and a method for translating that vision into reality." If they were less pompous they would have seen that the only concrete vision they offer is a new stratarchy based on the possession of scientific temper. The stratarchy hierarchises the scientists and the laymen, with the naive non-scientists who sign obsequious statements on scientific temper placed somewhere in between. If one looks closer at the hierarchy, one discovers its real meaning: its lowest rung is mostly people, not by those whom their statement overtly attacks (the obscurantists and the Right reactionaries), but by the ordinary citizens uneasy with the Western and modern categories of thought. In other words, the target of the statement turns out to be those at the receiving end of the present global system and the statement turns out to be a new attempt to hold the sufferers in imperfect societies responsible for their suffering.

The ultimate logic of the statement is the vulgar contempt for the common man it exudes. That is why it has to ignore the fact that science today is the main instrument of oppression in the world, that 60 per cent of the world's scientists and most of their funds are spent on destructive technology, which in turn is used not so much in inter-state warfare as in within-state oppression.

Concurrently, the statement has to whitewash the fact that modern science today is big business and the modern Indian scientists are mostly a new class of compradors, that to be the subjects of such a science and to be subject to such scientists is to be doubly subject to the national and international structures of oppression. The resistance to science in the 'laity' is based on an unconscious awareness of this fact. The common man is not that common after all.

The scientists among the signatories will of course try desperately to deny the true nature of modern science and technology and to become what Georg Lukacs used to call a "silent species." It is astounding that the non-scientist signatories sheepishly accept this pretended amnesia. Recent experience has repeatedly confirmed that the so-called kindly sciences like medicine and agronomy are not merely cut-throat enterprises but are also fast becoming counter-productive mega-organisations, dealing out mega-suffering and mega-death. In some countries, more illness is now caused by the modern medical system than by natural causes; in some, if you hold constant the energy inputs, the net contribution of modern agronomy to productivity becomes negative; and in some others, more suffering is produced by modern economics than removed by it.

It is often claimed that modern science has eliminated major epidemics, shortages and backwardnesses. Recent works have challenged even that. Epidemics, they show, have been mostly eliminated by social welfare measures, in turn brought about by alterations in political and social structures; productivity gains in agriculture often are a function of heavy energy inputs made possible by cheap energy obtained, we know how; and economic development is frequently the other name of an oppressive political economy and 'developmental authoritarianism,' vended as transient stages of social progress.

The statement is packaged in pseudo-empiricism. It begins with bogus history. Galileo, evidence now seems to show, was not unilaterally persecuted by the Church (see de Santillana, Barfield, Koestler). In his case at least, it was the Church which proved itself more open and sought to have plural images of the cosmos. Galileo, like the signatories to the statement, thought he knew the truth and he wanted to oust all other concepts of truth. The Church, though it might have gone about it foolishly and hamhandedly, objected to that part of the story.

If the knowledge of European history of science in the signatories is poor, their knowledge of Indian history of science is no better. They rightly say that creative Indians questioned traditional beliefs during the Colonial period, but ignore the fact that these questions were mostly raised within the framework of Indian traditions. Contrary to what the statement implies, none of the great Indians used modern science as his or her vantage ground, not even the highly Westernised ones like Madhusudan Dutt. Often, even when they themselves were not believers, they worked from within a religious faith. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is one example; B.R. Ambedkar could be another. The reason for this is obvious; these men wanted to avoid the model of official dissent the colonial power offered. Gandhi, for instance, used traditional West as an ally, not modern West and certainly not modern science. The present statement shows no such cultural sensitivity; it shows total ignorance of Indian creative efforts to understand the social context of science.

Particularly, the attempt to set up science and religion as antagonistic forces in India is entirely derived from Western experience and is further proof that the statement is a posthumous child of colonialism. The first attempt to use modern science as a critical force within Indian society came from within religious reformers and it remained that way throughout the entire colonial period. Rammohun Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, M.G. Ranade, J.C. Bose, P.C. Ray, Lokhitavadi, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Mahendralal Sircar and C.V. Raman were all believers and they never found any contradiction between faith and science. Nor for that matter did Jawaharlal Nehru. Even the foreigners who took serious interest in science in India were mostly men of faith like Father Lafont and Patrick Geddes.

The argument against astrology used by the statement is so ancient and it has been so badly mauled by Paul Feyerabend on scientific, normative and methodological grounds that I am ashamed to restate it for a group which includes a number of literates. I shall, however, add two other arguments to Feyerabend's, because of their relevance to India. First, in a world where arbitrary authorities constantly deny one control over one's fate, a situation created partly by modern science and technology, astrology is for the poor a psychological defence; it is an attempt to find meaning for an oppressive present in a controllable future. Whatever be its original meaning and however vulgar its practice, present-day astrology *is* a corollary of the scientific-modern worldview. Let us not be taken in by the antics of a few astrologically-inclined politicians. Everything said, astrology is a myth of the weak; modern science that of the strong. If you have the latter you have to have the former.

Secondly, science itself is the major source of superstitions today. It recommends social eugenics, it eliminates millions of under-privileged students from schools through IQ tests, it institutionalises millions in the name of 'mental illnesses' which are within the span of normality in the older societies, it uses unnecessary drugs and surgeries for sometimes as long as decades, it wastes more than one thousand crores of rupees *a day* on the military for the sake of a mythical security, it promotes mechanomorphism, part-object relations and objectification. Because such superstitions endorse the sense of omnipotence and omniscience of the privileged, they are seen as cognitive faults which could be corrected from within science. This, I believe, is the beginning of a new form of sedation.

THERE *is* a need for a change in public consiousness, not from non-scientific to scientific temper, but from a consciousness which accepts the hegemony of science towards a consciousness which accepts science as only one of the many imperfect traditions of humankind and which allows the peripheries the world to reclaim their human dignity and reaffirm those aspects of their life on which the dignity is based.

The base includes various forms of traditions, religions and myths. The Establishment consciousness blames the religions for the oppression of the caste system in India, for the intolerance of dissent in medieval Europe, and for communal riots everywhere, but when it comes to science, it ignores that science has collaborated with the major massacres of this century — from Nazi concentration camps and Hiroshima to Siberia, Vietnam and Cambodia. It ignores that Nazi racism, American modernism and Stalinist Marxism are all scientific theories. They may be defensively called pseudo-sciences, but the fact remains that they are corrupt sciences, not corrupt religions. (In our times, religion and culture are held responsible for whatever is done in their name, science is not. For the ills of science responsibility is placed on those who control and use science. As if no one controlled or used religions and cultures.)

Such obscene logic is best expressed where the statement says, "There is, in fact, essential incompatibility of all dogmas with science." This not merely goes against most traditional, neopositivist, anarchist, and radical understanding of science, it is a total sanction for the amoral cognition promoted by science and an open encouragement to us to demolish the traditional faiths by which the majority of this and other similarly-placed societies protect themselves against the oppression of the modern world. This encouragement becomes a sick joke when combined with the attempts in the statement to discredit idea systems which maintain some harmony between ideas and feelings, what, according to Haksar, Nehru called "a harmonious living consisting of a proper balancing of an individual's inner and outer life."

It is in this context that the plea for "the fuller use of the method of science in everyday life and every aspect of human endeavour from ethics to politics and economics" is a plea for totalisation and a prescription for cultural and intellectual aridity. It is a plea for the destruction of all norms, all spontaneity, all rebelliousness, all under-socialised thinking. It comes at a time when science has already reached our relationship with our children and our co-workers, our playgrounds and our bedrooms. In the name of increasing scientific temper, it is a plea for a total take-over of the consciousness of the rest of this society who are, unwittingly and as a part of their own struggle for survival, resisting the imperial presence of modern science.

NO discussion of science and technology is possible in the last quarter of the twentieth century without taking into account

the role science has played in the institutionalisation of suffering. Science has helped millions to escape suffering and death; it has sent many more millions to death. A critical consciousness can never downplay the second role of science. Even more important in future might be the kind of legitimating role science has already begun to play by objectification and reification of the human situation. For instance, in the black art called economics, the qnantification of poverty is today a more weighty problem than poverty itself; thus, the larger the number of people one puts under the poverty line, the more radical one becomes. Military weapons today are not instruments of national security; they are irrational substitutes for security — so much so that if you point this out, you are accused of being a woolly visionary or a traitor. Similarly, one now measures suffering to objectify it, so that one can discuss, in cabinet meetings or at party headquarters, how many should be killed for the liberation of how many, or how much suffering could be imposed for the sake of development, national security, progress, or law and order.

Secondly, modern science has everywhere shown the tendency, after destroying the hegemony of religions and cultures, to become not merely the Establishment but also to promote internal and external authoritarianism. By internal authoritarianism I mean the way modern science has cornered all other classical, traditional or ethnosciences and monopolised power, patronage and money. By external authoritarianism I mean the way modern science has pre-empted all criticism from outside and has become the ultimate standard for establishing truth in every sphere of life. (So that, today, you have to be "scientific" to criticise science but you do not have to be a Muslim to criticise Islam)

NOTHING is as tiring as the slogans of yester-years. At one time the science lobby might have been in a minority. Today, it monopolises the show in crucial sectors of our life. Even when you grow a sacred tuft of hair or arrange your daughter's marriage, you now either invoke sentiment and apologetically say your ailing mother wants it or you try to find a quasi-scientific justification for it In such a world to plead for scientific temper is to plead for the Establishment. No one is more pathetic than the middle-aged, successful academics, politicians, journalists and bureaucrats pretending to be young rebels.

Let me therefore appeal, over the heads of these worthies, to the younger scientists, scholars and social activists to consider the following propositions as a baseline for a more serious debate on science and society in india:

(1) It is possible to jettison the idea of an imperial science which would one day liberate the less scientific from all the ills of the world through science. In a world where science and technology are crucial planks in the global structure of exploitation, where science constantly threatens ethnocide and annihilation, the first need is to humanise and educate the scientist and the technocrat and wean him away from ruling powers and ideologies. *More humanistic temper in the scientists is one of the basic needs of this society.* In any case, the false consciousness of the elite is more dangerous than the false consciousness of the citizen.

(2) We must learn to reject the claim to universality of science. *Science is no less determined by culture and society than any other human effort.* The problems of science spring not merely from with its context but also from its text or content. There is a direct correlation between the claims to absolute objectivity, inter-subjectivity, internal consistency, dispassion and value-neutrality, on the one hand, and violence, oppression, authoritarianism, killing uniformity and death of cultures, on the other. Science must recognise that there are limits to human certitude and it must learn to live with an attenuated social status.

(3) It follows from the above that *one cannot place science outside 'history' and everything else in history.* After seventy-five years of work on the history, sociology and psychology of science and on the creative processes involved in science, it should be obvious by now that one part of science itself has now shown the limits of science. The next generation of Indians should be able to strengthen this awareness and find out the specific limits and scope of science in this society.

(4) Certain basic values — human dignity, freedom, non-violence (both institutional and non-institutional) and equality for instance — are outside culture and history. *The ideas of cultural relativism and the dogmas of progress are less universal principles than the shared values of humankind.* Science in its present form constantly flouts these values by being a reliable ally of authoritarianism, violence and Machiavellianism. These values must be reaffirmed and science must be subjected to criticism as a new faith with its own built-in dishonesty and moral blindness.

The stress on values leads to a strong society; the stress on science, in its present form, leads to a strong nation. The latter without the former is a prescription for fascism and imperialism.

(5) Religions and ideologies must be similarly criticised from the point of view of these values. However, there is need to be more protective and respectful towards the faiths held by those defeated and marginalised by the dominant global consciousness.

Also, there ought to be *equal rights to interpretation.* If modern idea systems like Marxism are given the right to distinguish between their vulgar and non-vulgar versions, and thus escape a part of the responsibility for what is done in their names, the same right must be given to traditional idea systems. It is safer, however, to believe that *every idea system must taken full responsibility for whatever is done in its name.*

(6) *Oppression diminishes but never ends. When one form of oppression ends, new forms emerge.* (For instance, the kind of surplus the scientists and technologists extract these days is no less than the surplus once extracted by other kinds of rulers) Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom from oppression and from one's inner disposition to collaborate with new and more hidden forms of oppression. What was once a major ideological prop for oppression can in a changed circumstance become the baseline for a new vision of a less oppressive society. Similarly, what was once a dissenting consciousness can become a collaborationist strain. *The contents of oppression change; the baseline of criticism also should change.* No successful movement, no change of regime, no revolution can change this fact. This may lead to greater congnitive and moral uncertainty, but in a shrinking world one must learn to live with such uncertainty.

(7) *The common man has not only his traditional or folk science, he has his own philosophy of science* It might be vague, implicit and non-professional but it is informed with the experience of suffering. Such folk sciences and folk philosophies must be taken seriously. In fact, we can hope to build an indigenous science only when such lost sciences and implicit philosophies are respectfully articulated by contemporary Indian scholars.

No theory of progress negates this principle of basic respect for non-modern idea systems.

(8) *Modern science is one of the many traditions available to humankind. It is also one of the many traditions of science.* Unfortunately, like some of the semitic creeds, it claims to be the only truth outside all traditions. It is time for us to affirm that modern science has the right to praselytise but not to forcibly convert. Least of all has it any right to totalise our consciousness or to vend itself as a cure-all of the ills of this society.

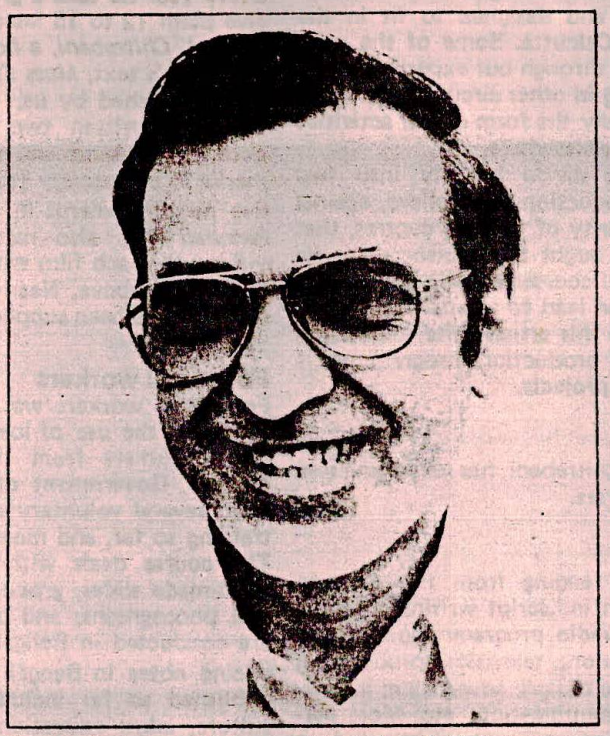
(9) Modern science is an over organised monster, sold to 'normality,' hypermasculinity and conformity. It should be partly deorganised, so as to facilitate cross criticisms among competing idea systems.

This is because *if science has a duty to criticise other systems of thought and cosmologies, the latter too have a duty to criticise science.* The idea that the scientific critique of religions is a respectable sociology of religion, whereas a theological critique of science is a reactionary ploy, is obscurantism of the worst kind. Also, one should be allowed to criticise a system of knowledge not merely from the points of view of other systems of knowledge, but from outside all systems. We should be willing to defy conventional concepts of normality, rationality, order and maturity.

(10) *If science takes credit for the achievements of technology, it must take responsibility for the misdeeds of technology.* For the moment, in societies like India, the politics of science cannot be divorced from the politics of technology, though conceptually it is vital to distinguish between science and technology.

(11) Finally, *the ordinary citizen has a right to know more about the politics of science,* which is very ugly and is hardly likely to inspire others to trust the scientists. Hence the effort by the scientists and their PR consultants to hide the politics of science and vend science as an apolitical expertise.

Chitrabani: an Indian experience in development communication



Gaston Roberge, Director and founder of Chitrabani
(Photo: Salim Paul ©Chitrabani)

GASTON ROBERGE

Gaston Roberge has been living in West Bengal since 1961. In 1970 he received an MA in Theatre Arts (Film) from the University of California in Los Angeles. He has published a number of books on film and the media and is the director of Chitrabani, a social communication centre in Calcutta.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
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Chitrabani, a Bengali phrase meaning image/word, is the name of a small communication centre located in Calcutta and created in 1970 by the Jesuit Fathers of West Bengal. It is a registered society and is recognized by the State of West Bengal as an educational institution for training and experimenting in the production and use of communication media supporting educational and developmental programmes. The centre is a church-related institution but it is not a religious centre. Staff members are selected for their competence, irrespective of their religion. At the moment, the director and the manager are two Jesuits, the other 18 staff members are lay people, half of them non-Christians. Except for the director, all are Indians. The Chitrabani centre includes a reading room with nearly 4,000 books and well over fifty magazines on communication; a library of photographs; a multipurpose hall; a sound-recording studio; a photographic dark room; and space for an eventual film studio. Since its inception, Chitrabani has been supported by various Catholic organizations (the Jesuits of Calcutta and of Montreal, CARITAS India MISEREOR, UNDA, OCIC) and by the governments of India and of West Bengal. Funded projects account for nearly half of the budget of Chitrabani.

Philosophy

The involvement of the Catholic Church, and of the Jesuits of West Bengal in particular, in the field of communications is prompted by a keen realization that there is an intimate relationship between development and communication. The particular rapport between the members of a society is established and expressed by, among other things, the communication processes prevalent in that society. Any improvement of the communication processes, therefore, is an improvement of social life.

Today, the majority of the people in India do not have free access to the facilities required for the full development of their human potential. The entire spectrum of communication media is an integral part of this situation both as an effect and as a contributory factor that maintains it. There is a crying need for a change – not for a little more or less of the same, but for a radical change. And there are two main change-agents: the politician and the educator. The politician seeks power to bring about socio-economic change; the educator seeks to bring

about change in people's mind in order that socio-economic changes might be meaningful to them. That is why a communication centre cannot be satisfied only with teaching technical skills or only with churning out so-called educational programmes. The type of training offered and the approach to programme-making themselves are educational. They are not and cannot be neutral. They either strengthen the situation prevalent in the milieu or they contribute to subvert it. It is with this thought in mind that Chitrabani was created and designed to fit in the particular situation of Calcutta. Some of the principles we have arrived at through our experience may be useful to people living in other circumstances, but our activities and especially the form of our activities may well be impracticable elsewhere.

Chitrabani's activities divide broadly into two groups: training and production. We believe, against the practice of the majority of training centres, that training and production ought to be associated. We feel that even theoretical courses like film aesthetics must be grounded in and lead to a 'praxis', namely, that of film criticism. In this article, after describing our main training and production programmes, I shall discuss some of our projects.

TRAINING

In the last ten years Chitrabani has experimented with various sorts of courses.

For professionals

We have given courses ranging from five days to nine months in duration in: script writing for television, radio and film; radio programming; cinematography; film appreciation; television production; still photography; graphic design; advertising; journalism; philosophy of communication, etc. Most persons enrolled in these courses were interested in increasing their chances of getting a job, whether or not they liked the subject, and whether or not they were fit for it. Even persons joining courses in film appreciation or the philosophy of communication often turned out to be persons who wanted to become film-makers. Since there is only a small chance that our trainees would get jobs because they have attended our courses, we have resisted the demand for giving more of these courses, especially in cinematography, where the demand is most persistent and job opportunities least numerous. We have come to the conclusion that since there are so few job opportunities our courses for would-be professional communicators should be offered to persons who are already in the field of amateurs, freelance or full time workers. Thus, our programme for the next months will be as follows.

Radio: We shall take three trainees for two years. They will work full time with us and they will be initiated into all aspects of radio production. They will be given a monthly stipend for the duration of the course and a diploma upon successful completion of the training. This scheme, however, depends on receiving a grant we have applied for.

Still photography and film-making: We shall take ten trainees, each one of them for various periods of time. The trainees will have access to 35mm still cameras and to 8mm, Super 8mm and 16mm cine-cameras. They will be permitted to use our dark room and our Super 8mm and 16mm film-viewers. They will be given personal guidance in the implementation of their projects. These facilities will be extended to them free of charge, but the trainees will have to supply their own photographic material. This service also depends on a grant we have applied for.

For high school students

For a long time we have been interested in initiating high school students into the media of communication, because it is at high school age that the young form their habits and critical sense in the use of the media. Every year we take a group of twenty pupils and we give them 12 to 15 lessons on the media. A teacher's manual, *Chitrabani, a book on film appreciation*, and a student's text, *Mass Communication and Man*, have been published by us. For more advanced students we have written two more books, *Films for an Ecology of Mind* and *Mediation, the action of the media in our society* (to be reviewed in *EBI* - Ed.). A five minute excerpt in 16mm from the film *Pather Panchali* was also made available to institutions wishing to teach film with the help of the textbooks mentioned above. Nearly twenty copies of the film excerpt have been supplied.

For social workers

For social workers we have designed a two-month course in the use of low cost media. Two groups of social workers from the Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal, and workers from several voluntary agencies have been given this training so far, and many more sessions are planned. The course deals with four main media: puppets; hand-made slides; group discussion with the help of still photographs; and poster-making. These courses are conducted in Bengali, and we are currently producing notes in Bengali for the trainees. The notes published so far include: education, development, culture, adult education, magic lantern, and group discussion.

Diploma programme in communication

In 1977 we launched our diploma programme with an open syllabus and no academic pre-requirement. Students joining this programme have included a high school student (who completed the programme very successfully but was an exceptional case), college and university students and office workers. The city itself is our resource centre and the students are encouraged to integrate the various media experiences that the city offers: films, dramas, folk media performances, music, dance, exhibitions, radio, television, advertising, seminars, lectures, etc. Each student selects the items of his or her choice and reports to the academic advisor on what has been done. The advisor encourages the student to deepen these experiences either by private reading, or by writing essays, or by getting involved in media performances, or by producing media programmes. So far, seven students have been awarded our diploma. It takes nearly two years for an active student to complete the statutory requirements for the diploma, in addition to his or her other activites. There are currently twenty students in this programme.

PRODUCTION

So far, we have gained experience in the production of photographs, video tapes, sound recording for radio, Super 8mm films, 16mm films, and graphics. We have decided to limit the range of our productions to still photographs, 16mm films, radio programmes, and graphics.

From *The Pilkhana Child* collection (Photo: Brian Blane © Chitrabani)

From *the Pilkhana Child* collection (Photo: Brian Balen © Chitrabani)

PROJECTS

Ours is a team of communicators at the service of other communicators. We can produce excellent material, we can teach adequate approaches and techniques, but finally we are not *the* communicators. The successful use of our material, the implementation of our approaches, depend on the actual communicators whom we serve. These belong to at least five categories:

1. government departments
2. development and service agencies
3. churches
4. educational institutions
5. advertising agencies.

These are all persons with definite messages to convey. Moreover, most of them are concerned with results that can be computed in finite quantities. Not a few would even like to increase their 'power' through communication techniques that 'would make the people do what we want them to do because we know what they should do'—as a young social worker once told me. To the five groups listed above should be added 'the people'. Through communication, they figure out how they feel about each other and they 'relate'. The real educator is concerned with that level of communication. However, I am amazed to find how few communicators are educators. And one of the most difficult aspects of our work is to adjust to the approaches of communicators who have no concern for education. For instance, when we had an exhibition of the children in the Pilkhana slum, a very devoted social worker commented that 'showing photos is all very nice, but what people need is not pictures but food'. I argued with him that the Pilkhana slum people crowded into the nearby cinema hall. They themselves took some money from their meagre income to buy pictures, not food, for they need pictures, everybody does; but the pictures they get are *mind-polluting*. We can take a tiny fraction of our budget to offer slum people pictures of themselves which they can be proud of and which can contribute to reinforcing their identity. Most social workers are concerned with tangible results. They would rather keep away from values, because values are very close

When this photo was exhibited in the Pikhana slum, the child took his mother along to see it. She was so proud of her son that she stood next to the photo to explain to the visitors that this was her son and that he earned 50 *paise* a day. (Photo: Brian Balen © Chitrabani)

Still photographs

We undertake two sorts of photographic assignments: documentary and educational. For instance, during the 1978 floods in West Bengal we took documentary photographs of the affected area for use by relief agencies, and we documented the work done by these agencies. Our educational photographs are meant for group discussions. They are printed in the 8" by 12" format, mounted on cards and covered with plastic so that they can be handled freely by the users. These photos can also be used in exhibitions and are then printed 20" by 30". It is our view that the image one has of oneself largely determines whether or not one is underdeveloped. We believe that without the cultivation of a dynamic image of self, socio-economic development is impossible. Hence the photographs we take are designed to reflect a positive view of the persons photographed. Our main collections of still photographs include *Saheed Minar* (1,500 images of Calcutta), and *The Pilkhana Child* (1,000 images of children of Pilkhana, a slum of Calcutta). Fifty photographs from the latter collection were exhibited in the Pilkhana slum in January 1979, during the Year of the Child, as a homage to the children of the slum. The photographs from our various collections are available on loan free of charge for social work. We do not encourage the use of slide/sound programmes for social work because we consider that in our milieu these programmes are too expensive. However, we plan to guide film students in the making of such programmes because they constitute a cheap alternative to actual film-making when doing exercises in montage.

Radio

Every month we produce six hours of Bengali programmes for Radio Veritas, Manila, Phillippines. These socially-useful programmes are meant for broadcast to Bangladesh and West Bengal, a potential audience of over 120 million. The programmes are also available for local use on cassettes and we hope that our educational radio skits, in particular, will be increasingly used for group listening on cassette-recorders.

Film-making

We are by choice a small centre and from the start we felt that we had to choose one of the following three media: Super 8mm with sound, 16mm with sound and video tape. We opted for the best established medium, 16mm. Since we took this decision the governments of India and of West Bengal have also decided to promote the use of 16mm for educational films and even for feature films. Four years ago, we were offered some film-making equipment: an Arri camera, a Nagra tape recorder, a Steenbeck editing table and a multi-track magnetic 16mm sound mixing console, but it has not yet arrived. Although in 1975 we made two 16mm films for television broadcast in the SITE programme, at the request of the Ministry of Education, the experience convinced us that without a minimum of equipment of our own, 16mm film-making was still too difficult and too costly in India to warrant the effort. However, at the moment, we are making a 20 minute animation film in 16mm. When the donated equipment arrives we shall resume making educational films and will offer practical training in film-making.

Graphics

In the past we have had the services of different graphic designers on short term assignments and we shall soon have with us a full time graphic designer specialized in visual communication. In addition to meeting our own design needs, the graphic designer will be of assistance to numerous groups who require promotional leaflets, illustrated reports, publications, exhibitions and teaching materials of all sorts.

A home for the aged, from the *Saheed Minar* collection (Photo: Vivek Dev Burman © Chitrabani)

An artist at work, from the *Saheed Minar* collection (Photo: Subrata Lahiri © Chitrabani)

to the area of politics and also because dealing with values would make them question their own vantage position which permits them to 'help' in the first place. A social worker who believes that relief work or a housing scheme are value-free is sadly mistaken. But this sort of mistake is a cherished one.

The quality of our projects, therefore, depends to a large extent on the communicators who are involved with us in the implementation of these projects. And this is as it should be. Social work is not done in an isolated office or on paper, but in a dialogue with actual people. There are two more factors which have an influence on our projects: the first factor is the very size of the problems we are facing. These problems are so large that we are tempted to create projects commensurate to them. We resist this temptation: not because we would not like many more people to benefit from our action, but because we believe that our action can only remain of good quality if it is not too big. We wish to do things because of their significance not because of the number of people who would supposedly be in some way influenced by them. And we have in front of us so many examples of 'big' schemes that only come to nothing. There is a second factor which tends to affect the very nature of our work: it is the rapid advance of technology in richer countries and the tendency in developing countries to embrace technologies for all aspects of communication. Frankly, I am worried by the pressures put on Third World countries—from within and without—for them to go in for television and video technologies. I cannot discuss this point here adequately for lack of space. The following projects will give an idea of our orientation and of the way in which we seek to apply the few theoretical thoughts I have discussed so far in this paper.

Audio-visual laboratory

This project is to be initiated shortly. We shall put on in our hall an exhibition of low cost audio-visual aids centered on an educational theme, like adult literacy, hygiene, leprosy, etc. The exhibition will be open for 200 days a year and for two hours each day. The media used will include: models, scrolls, posters, photographs, hand made slides, and a live performance, like a puppet show, singing or group theatre. Visitors will be invited from a school, a club, etc so as to form a homogeneous group of nearly fifty people. Two social workers will show the visitors around and a researcher will study their reaction to the various exhibits to assess their suitability. Social workers, educators, pastors and teachers will be welcome to observe. Thus, the laboratory will provide a useful experience for the visitors, it will enable us to test our material and it will serve as a demonstration centre. Exhibits will be designed so as to be easily moved to another location should we wish to do so.

The Bauls of West Bengal

This is an old project entering into a new phase. The *bauls* are mendicant singers and are perhaps the best communicators in rural West Bengal. There are several thousand of these troubadours who spread in their songs a sort of counter-culture, neither Hindu nor Muslim, and containing elements borrowed from Tantrism, Buddhism (*Sahajya patha*) and Sufism. Every year they congregate in five or six main festivals and people flock to listen to them. It is said that the Baul festival held at Kenduli in the Birbhum District attracts some three to four thousand Bauls and thousands of devoted listeners. In the course of the last two years we have attended most of the important festivals and a number of secondary ones. We have established an enduring relationship with

Bauls at Shantiniketan (Tagore's University). This young singer is the son of the famous Baul in the next picture. (Photo Salim Paul © Chitrabani)

(Photo: Salim Paul © Chitrabani)

several Bauls and have interviewed a few of them and recorded some 200 songs. Very soon some Bauls will perform for an urban audience in our centre, and will follow this with a discussion. Recently, we had the opportunity to assist Jerzy Grotowski who conducted a theatre workshop with a few Bauls and people doing theatre in rural Bengal. Thus, this Baul project is progressing well. However, since none of us is trained in the disciplines of anthropology or sociology, I fear that the project may drift indefinitely. We are considering abandoning it unless we obtain the collaboration of a scholar interested in this field of studies and especially in ethnomusicology.

Indian experiences in the use of low cost media for education

While initiating social workers into the use of low cost media we constantly come up against a difficulty: valuable experience in the use of low cost media has already been gained in various parts of India but too little is known about it. We feel that a systematic study of some 15 to 20 cases should be made in order that these scattered pieces of work can be discussed and integrated into a fund of knowledge available to social workers and educators. We are now formulating a project to this effect.

Magic lantern and codes of representation

One of the media we recommend is the magic lantern. This, of course, was already known and used years ago but it has fallen into disuse. What is new in our approach is that the lantern we have designed is inexpensive (Rs 285) and can be used with either a kerosene lamp (usually available in villages) or a 100w household bulb. The lantern can be dismantled for easy transportation. But what is more important still is that we encourage the users to make their own slides by drawing them directly onto a 3¼" by 3¼" piece of glass. This simple technology makes it possible for the users to gain an experience of a participatory and fully accessible communication medium. So far, we have supplied over 50 magic lanterns to various groups and it seems that many more lanterns will be needed. I recently saw a slide show in a small Santali village at Ajodhya Hills in the Purulia District (West Bengal) where a young Santali teacher had had her pupils draw the slides for the show. We have started to make photocopies of some of the slides made by users in order to study the codes of representation in use in a particular area and visual perception among illiterates. This study is necessary because images, contrary to a misconception very common among social workers, are not a universal language. For this project we would also need technical assistance.

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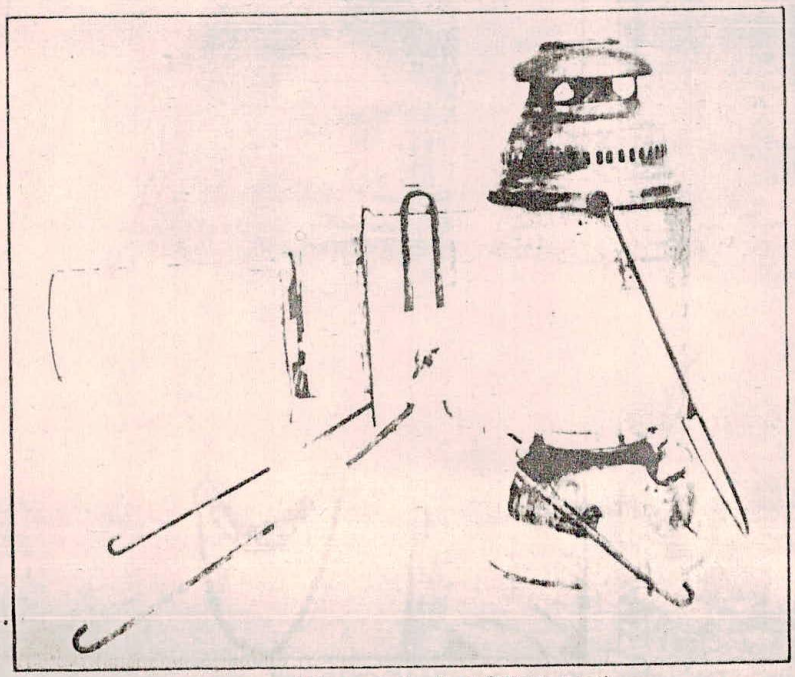

The Chitrabani magic lantern (Photo: Salim Paul © Chitrabani)

A woman worker drawing a slide (Photo: Salim Paul © Chitrabani)

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What Kind of Lifeboat ?

A Humanist View of Mankind's Ecological Predicament

by Christian Bay [x]

Garrett Hardin is an admirably ecolate writer. He is learned, lucid, and didactically effective in getting across his urgent warning of impending ecological disaster, and indeed of disasters in progress. But politicolate he is not:

(1) He seems oblivious of the political impact of his repeated warnings against aiding the world's poor. (2) He does not seem to understand that warnings of disastrous developments call for a critical examination of the conventional (liberal) political wisdom and for a consideration of possible alternative policy priorities, beyond his simple plea for population control. (3) Paradoxically, Hardin seems unaware of the necessity of making a choice between liberal and humanist priorities, once you understand the ecological predicament of our time, even though his own work has demonstrated so powerfully the necessity of such a choice.

This is the most charitable and also the most reasonable interpretation of Hardin's work. On the basis of some of his writings he might be pictured as a callous anti-humanist, a privileged California professor who crusades against the world's poorest populations perhaps because he is disturbed by other people's troubled conscience regarding oppression in the Third World; perhaps, for his own mental comforts, he might be repressing his own guilt by way of blaming the world's poverty on its victims. Astounding statements to the effect that there is no world hunger problem, anymore than there is a world earthquake problem, would seem to support such a reading (pp. 55--56). But I much prefer to accept at face value Hardin's repeated assurances (pp. 56, 57, 61, and 62) that he does not believe that excess human populations should be killed off, on the game management model. What he lacks is not so much humanity as politicolacy.

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1. What we write can have political consequences

I take it that we live in an extremely unjust world in which compassion, along with a willingness to sacrifice, is in short supply, among those who have and could afford to share. Human solidarity is a cardinal virtue that has been preached by all the great religious founders and leaders, and is a basic humanist commitment shared by philosophers and social reformers whose names are revered in the historical and literary works in many countries. To Hardin, "Love of justice is fine -- but not if it leads to the establishment of a commons in a world ruled by scarcity" (p. 59). Let me stress that he makes a valid and important point; what disturbs me is that he has nothing further to say about justice in this paper; nothing positive.

What disturbs me more is the context of Hardin's continuing role as a virtual crusader against the world's poor, -- or the world's undeserving poor nations, to be more exact, in that he wants to end foreign aid from the US and other rich nations only to those Third World countries that have failed to achieve effective population-reducing policies. His frontal attack was launched in a popular magazine, Psychology Today, in 1974 with the essay "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor." [1]

In scientific journals there is a case to be made, no doubt against any particular policy of social justice, and there are valid arguments to be made against aid that leads to more rapid population growth. Hardin states such arguments well, both in the essay before us here and in his "Lifeboat Ethics". But I wonder whether it has occurred to him that his "Lifeboat Ethics" essay most probably has had a very substantial impact in reducing funds available to the many small American agencies that work to save lives in drought and famine areas, and in increasing public support for reduced American participation in international and bilateral governmental aid programs. Writing in 1975,

also in Psychology Today, Roger Lewin estimated that more than 300 Million Third World children at that time suffered from "starved brains": long-term malnutrition serious enough to reduce significantly their potentials for mental or physical growth.[2] Does Hardin relish his role of a formidable, very articulate and influential antagonist of all these children ? I should think not. Rather, I think there is a woeful lack of politicolacy in his otherwise so enlightened ecolate perspective.

2. The possibility of alternate policy priorities

A lifeboat is in one way an appropriate model for understanding the modern ecolate predicament of our world, but in other ways it is profoundly inappropriate.

It is appropriate in bringing home the fact that we all live on a globe with a finite system of life supports, floating along in an "ocean" of space. The earth, like a lifeboat, can carry only a limited number of people, and everyone is perhaps better off if the actual numbers fall far short of the upper limits. -- Everyone ?

No, not everyone. For hundreds of millions today, far larger numbers than in the past, this issue has little significance. They barely exist, at the margin of life, or they die, or they see their children die a slow death. Do they care, or should they be expected to care, about what happens to the rest of us ? In a lifeboat scarce resources are shared equally. There is a sense of solidarity. While our world's least privileged classes barely survive, if at all, they see the super-race or the super-class speeding along the highways, or in the jetplanes above. (Some of them are even treated to international car-races, in this world of desperate energy shortages for many poor people).

This is where the lifeboat is so radically inappropriate as a simile. A luxury liner is what our world resembles more, except that no actual ship ever came close to matching this world's class and racial

divisions. Our jet-sets would probably find even the most sumptuous First Class accomodations too cramped for their own lifestyles. And below the Third Class deck there would have to be decks for the diseased, the starving, and the dying, with no medics or social workers in attendance.

There are "numerous pockets of hunger and poverty scattered throughout the world," Hardin concedes (p. 55). He suggests that they, much like earthquakes, should be seen as local problems (further on, at p. 66, he suggests that[1] earthquakes, as these calamities are not man-made, do merit international relief aid).

Problems of destitution have local causes, being the result of too many persons born and not enough dying, as far as Hardin is concerned. Nations that now rely on the First World to help them against hunger and disease are parasitic, we are told (p. 67). And we are treate to one ludicrous example of ostentatious waste on the part of the President of a relatively affluent African country, as a demagogic way of denigrating other African countries as well as international aid to the Third World generally; only Mao's China gets good marks, for Mao's public insistence on "regeneration through our own efforts" (pp. 67--68).

One must wonder at this point whether Hardin has ever heard of imperialism, or neo-imperialism. It is a fact, is it not, that First World nations conquered and subjugated most of what is now the Third World, and that European settlers drove the natives in many areas off many of their best lands ? By these evictions they secured not only lands but generations of cheap, subservient labor. After political independence much of the good land in pro-West Third World countries is now owned either by local affluent people of favored families or by agribusiness corporations.[3] Most present Third World regimes encourage cash crops, large units of rural production, and urbanization with industrialization, to be able to raise taxes to pay for armies, police, and

bureaucracies. Peasantries trying to be (or remain) self-reliant have few politically influential friends, unlike the multinational corporations.

It is in this kind of world that peasants and other poor people raise many children. In their lives of misery, what else is there to do ? What other personal hope is left, than seeing one of their own children make good in life, and perhaps be enabled to give comfort or even support in one's old age ?

It is well established that people in welfare states, and citizens in other affluent countries who can afford to secure their private welfare, tend to have few children. There may also be a rather general tendency for children of the securely affluent to develop "post-materialist values," according to Ronald Inglehart's research, [4] -- that is, values that reduce commodity consumption and waste, in the context of ecologically responsible outlooks.

Here, it seems to me, are cues toward a viable strategy for coping with the serious problem of over-population in today's world, -- a strategy far more viable, at any rate, than preaching (or imposing, if one ever can) low birthrates for populations living in utter misery: reduce their misery and improve on their sense of security, give them hope of a better life for themselves, and not only for a lucky child !

Another viable strategy, if standards of welfare and education can be raised, might be to encourage feminist consciousness and movements. Male macho-ism and female subservience clearly are big factors, in many cultures, in the persistence of traditions of having many children. It may well be, too, that a larger female role in family decisions will tend to encourage environmentally more responsible lifestyles, compared to the highly individual-achievement-oriented male lifestyles in many male-dominated cultures, in which nature as well as women and children are generally seen as objects of subjugation.

Liberal-individualist achievement orientations and possessive individualism, with the world seen as an unlimited Commons, ~~would seem to make~~ made a lot of sense in the 17th Century world of John Locke, with the Americas and other new continents still to be "conquered" and with new technologies promising unlimited possibilities for the private accumulation of capital. The liberal ideology of laissez-faire helped to build First World affluence and a world dominated by London and Paris.

We still have a Western powers-dominated world, but our recent and current technological developments have become very destructive to our natural environments, with deserts expanding on several cpntinents, and accumulating pollution affecting flora and fanna, including the health of the human species, in many localities. It seems clear that the world's remaining bounty now impoverishes many more people in th Third World than it enriches, due to the unjust property relations that were developed and sanctified in the heyday of imperialism.

How to undo, how to reverse, the structural injustice imposed by the heritage of imperialism ? Having asserted the "sanctity of the carrying capacity" of our eco-system as a first premise of enlightened politics, Garrett Hardin would be well advised to reflect on what political and economic changes will be required for poor people and rich people to reduce birthrates, and to achieve an ecolate consciousness.

I have a more specific suggestion as well. How about bringing some new questions to our Ministries of Defense ? Should they not assume some responsibility for the defense of our (international) environment, instead of remaining fixated on the defense of national real estate against evil designs from foreign powers ? And, while we have the attention of NATO Defense Ministries, how about insisting that Washington's and NATO's continuing quest for military superiority must now be ended, ~~with its enormous squandering of resources, West and East~~ with the enormous squandering of the whole world's resources that Washington's arms race imposes on Moscow and on most other world capitals.

which the US as the leading arms-racer would have to initiate, would not a slowing down of the military arms race, ~~[illegible]~~ achieve far more toward resolving our ecolate predicament than a reduction of shipments of powdered milk and medicines to the Sahel countries or to Bangla Desh? If substantial savings in weaponries could be channeled into funds for the improvement of health, welfare, and education in such countries, then a considerable sense of optimism might become possible, even for highly ecolate people like Dr. Hardin.

3. Liberalism versus humanism: the necessity of choice

Hardin leads off his essay with a critique of Jan Tinbergen's moral view that the rich countries ought to share with the poor, -- or else "the future looks rather bleak," Tinbergen asserts. From my own humanist perspective the present, too, looks rather bleak, as I have indicated. I agree with Tinbergen that in the absence of larger foreign aid, or more equitable international trading arrangements, the future will become bleaker still. Hardin's moral disagreement with Tinbergen concedes, however, that the outlook is bleak. What Hardin argues is that increased foreign aid in the present world order will hasten the current drift toward ecological catastrophe, and soon lead to a universal bleakness beyond Tinbergen's most pessimistic forebodings for a non-aid future.

On this crucial point I think Hardin is entirely right. If the present liberal world order is not to change, then increased foreign aid will in a small way (no generous increases are likely) hasten the arrival of massive ecological disasters, which will make most of mankind immeasurably worse off. There is no doubt but that the St. Matthew Island reindeer population study that Hardin cites (p. 57) has direct relevance to our human situation as well. While the world's total Commons are very much larger, our numbers are also vast, and our technological powers of destruction and waste have become immense.

Hardin has rendered a great service, in my view, with his didactically brilliant 1968 essay, "The Tragedy of the Commons". I don't know of a more lucid and devastating (implicit) critique of liberal ideology, philosophy, and economics (see above, pp. 50--51, for excerpts). Hardin demonstrates conclusively that unrestricted free enterprise with a right to accumulate private wealth from nature's Commons must lead to the depletion and destruction of nature, and eventually destroy all human life. He is right to insist, in the paper before us, that these are facts that must be understood by everyone who is not only literate and numerate, but ecolate as well, as we must all try to become, as responsible citizens.

Hardin's enlightenment is admirable up to this point, but it extends no further. In the domain of politics he is stuck with the blinders of a conventional liberal ideology that takes private property rights and the legitimacy of boundless individual acquisitiveness for granted. Much like Robert Nozick, the most articulate of libertarian political philosophers, [5] Hardin simply assumes that existing property entitlements, and the right to (legally) accumulate new property, must hardly ever be infringed upon. This appears to be the first premise in his political outlook. Human needs, by comparison, seem to carry little weight. With this kind of basic assumptions it is no wonder that his reasoning leads him toward the brink of suggesting that surplus populations in various Third World countries must be left alone to die, while we in North America remain preoccupied with problems of obesity and reducing diets.

Hardin scornfully rejects the allegedly anarchist-inspired view that human <u>need creates right</u>, along with Proudhon's idea that "property is theft" (p. 49, his italics). This is precisely the point at which Hardin must be confronted: <u>what else</u>, Sir, should be construed as creating moral rights, if not human needs ? Does man exist for the sake of (property) rights, or do rights exist for the sake of human

beings ?

I have on a number of occasions [6] argued that this is precisely what the issue of human rights is about: for the sake of all of humanity, we must struggle toward establishing a consensus that will insist on certain universal and paramount moral entitlements to be granted to and enforced for all human beings everywhere, because such entitlements are required to facilitate meeting the most basic needs that we all share as members of the human race. They come in four main categories, I believe, in the following order of priority: the need/right to survive; to be protected from physical violence, needless disease, and extreme misery; to be afforded dignity and community-solidarity; and to be assured liberty of choice and of personal growth, within the constraints of social and ecological responsibility.

Hardin's position is that rights-priorities in accord with priorities of human need-claims are impossible, it would appear, for the simple reason that he takes rights-claims to be infinite while resources are finite. To be sure, liberal rights-claims on behalf of affluent persons or corporations can indeed be almost boundless. Hardin is to this extent right, provided that existing private and corporate property rights are to remain sacrosanct. For him, it appears, they are. Thus, on the altar of liberal free enterprise, an ideology and an economic system that made good sense to the rising British bourgeoisie of the 17th Century, Hardin is today prepared to sacrifice all need-based human rights, and indeed human lives by the millions.

But, surely, Garrett Hardin is no monster ? Surely not. His humane alibi must rest with his premises of conventional liberalism, more sinister/ whose implications are/not for all to see. Unlike Barry Commoner, for example, who is as realistically ecolate as Hardin [7], the latter has not been up to imagining the possibility of an ecologically responsible

world order in which high-priority human rights take precedence over most private and all corporate property rights, or he has not seen that it is possible to struggle toward building such communities and societies, and such a world. 8

Hardin's answer to "Common-ism" is to seek ways to reduce the numbers of human beings in the Third World, while defending (with nuclear arms, if necessary ?) the immense wealth that Europeans and Americans have extracted from their own and other parts of the world, in part by way of colonial/domination and neo-colonial, -- a domination that continues today, through the system of international banking, trade arrangements largely dictated by the strong against the weak, and by way of bolstering with military assistance almost every corrupt or terroristic Third World regime that feels threatened by demands and movements seeking social justice; they are automatically ~~suspected~~ accused of pro-Soviet leanings, in most cases. Hardin apparently expects this particular variant of the "white man's burden" to be eased somewhat, however: on p. 68 he anticipates that the wealthy in the Third World will be able "to keep their own threatening poor at bay", thus saving the Americans the trouble of having to defend their own wealth with arms.

An enlightened humanist response to this prevailing liberal barbarism (it certainly does prevail in Washington today, with President Reagan's Administration) must share with Hardin the insight th there can be no human rights beyond our earth's carrying capacity; and, as well, that we must urgently seek ways of inducing reduced growth rates for the world's population. Indeed, we must aim for some reduction in total population size, eventually.

But such policies must be placed in a humane context: human lives must remain, or again come to be seen as, sacred, in the sense that they are to be treasured as ends, regardless of race or creed or territorial location. Foreign aid to areas of famine and other misery

must be increased considerably, in order to affirm and enhance the humanity of the donors as well as the recipients. These are indeed debts owed to descendants of our ancestors' victims; but, much more important, this is aid that we owe to people because they are human and have needs more urgent or extreme than our own.

Such aid programs, along with more equitable trade relations, must be only a beginning, however. As privileged people, we in North America must seek ways of constructively sharing our wealth (as well as our information, which also Hardin is willing to share). And we must engage in joint struggles with the world's underprivileged, for policies of just human rights priorities, environmental protection, and local self-reliance and self-government.[9]

Hardin's vision is of a fortress America, which he would like to close to most would-be immigrants (p. 69), -- so that the US can remain a four meals a-day country in an increasingly one meal a-day world (or none). His political predicament, of which he may not be fully conscious, to me illustrates the flagrant obsolescence of liberal individualism in our time. It is time to call for a humanist approach, a human rights-approach to resolving the modern ecological predicament, an approach that is committed to just priorities of human rights ahead of most property rights, in every part of the world.

Notes

1. Psychology Today, Vol. 8 (1974, September), pp. 38--43 and 123--126.
2. "Starved Brains". Ibid., Vol. 9 (1975, September), pp. 29--33.
3. Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins. Food First. Beyond the Myth of Scarcity. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
4. The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
5. Anarchy, State, and Utopia. New York: Basic Books, 1974.
6. "A Human Rights Approach to Transnational Politics." Universal Human Rights, Vol. 1 (1979), pp. 19--42; "Universal Human Rights Priorities:

Toward a Rational Order". Jack Nelson and Vera Green (Eds). International Human Rights: Contemporary Issues. Stanfordville, NY: Earl M. Coleman, 1980, Chapter 1; Strategies of Political Emancipation. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, Chapter 4.

7. See Commoner. The Closing Circle. New York: Bantam, 1980 (E971).

8. Commoner himself campaigned for the US Presidency in 1980, as the leader of the Citizens' Party, but gained less than a quarter million votes.

9. On local self-reliance as an aim for policies of development in the Third World, see Johan Galtung, Peter O'Brien and Roy Preiswerk (Eds). Self-Reliance: A Strategy for Development. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1980.

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CRISIS, 'ACTION GROUPS' & POLITICAL ACTION - a note.

- AAFTAAB

The Crisis

1.1 We confront today a situation of crisis in the double sense. In the first instance it is a crisis of the capitalist path of development with its manifestations now festering in every sphere, economic, political, social and cultural. In the other, it is a crisis of politics - an inability of the given conceptions, analysis and practices to meet the given situation. The two aspects of the crisis are related to one another. The crisis of politics develops, manifests and matures only in the context of the political crisis.

1.2 The crisis finds its embodiment in the situation of the action groups. The formation and existence of the action groups (as well as their relationship with the organised political forces) indicates the political crisis. The dilemma the action groups are virtually paralysed by, is the indication of the crisis of politics.

1.3 To understand the groups and to be able to discuss their future actions, it is hence necessary to briefly enumerate the major features of the socio-economic-political crisis prevalent in India today. This situation conditions all political action. The conditioning is two fold: it determines the conditions of existence as well as the tasks of political action

The Backdrop

2.1 The crisis, by no means a new feature, is generalised, pervading all aspects of life. It strangles the economy, stifles politics and corrodes the socio-cultural spheres. Stagnation and inflation, political cynicism, divisive agitations, exacerbation of fratricidal conflicts, spiralling crime rate and the brutal responses to it are all symptoms of the same generalised malady.

2.2 Shrinking markets and scarce resources squeeze the Indian economy. Import of capital and technology and export of commodities have only increased the weakness. Every way-out announced with ever increasing fanfare has only multiplied the problems. Vulnerable to internal and external

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pressures the Indian economy is now on a course of retrogression.

2.3 Two sets of conflicts hence arise. Firstly capital and labour confront each other with sharpening antagonism as the former strives to increase surplus and the latter struggles to maintain its standard of living. Secondly, various fractions of the capitalist class, unable to evolve a common class policy move towards a major conflict amongst themselves.

2.4 No party seems to provide a clear cut solution to the problems. The policy of each is characterised by marking time. The unprincipled, opportunistic, unscrupulous and corrupt behaviour of most politicians has defamed, denigrated and devalued politics in the eyes of the common man, particularly as his problems remain unresolved. (The only parties to have escaped this absolute erosion of the credibility are the Communist Parties, which however are not very effective at a national level at the moment).

2.5 All social values have today become eroded. There is no unifying strand in the social life of the country. The cynicism is now generalised as is the brutalisation. The sensibilities are deadened. Human pain and misery seems to evoke no empathy, no concern, no compassion. There is also an ideological vacuum. There is no progressive ideology inspiring the broad masses. Fissiparous, obscurantist, revivalist ideals are beginning to acquire a new lease of life today with ever greater vigour as communalism and casteism take on defiant violent forms.

Assault on the Working Class

3.1 The response of the ruling class and its state has been characteristically anti-working class. Dependence on foreign capital and export drive are being combined with attacks on the working class. Powers of the executive are sought to be increased as democratic rights are assaulted and eroded. While the armed might of the state is strenghtened in a militaristic manner. This is combined with an ideological offensive against the working class.

3.2 Major efforts have been afoot to prevent the working class from reacting politically to the situation which crushes and dehumanises it. These have taken various forms:

a) direct, brutal, common repression unleashed by the state as well as by the private capitalists.

b) draconian legal measures which restrict the democratic rights of the workers.

c) complicated legal set ups which tie up the protests and struggles of the workers in bourgeois norms.

d) populist mobilisation on non issues or false issues using a workerist phraseology.

e) emphasis on non class identities leading to deviationist struggles.

f) exacerbation of disruptive conflicts on casteist, linguistic, regionalistic or religious basis.

g) division or fragmentation of the working class.

The assault on the working class is important to the ruling class both economically and politically. Crushing and curbing the workers is a precondition to disciplining and containing other sections of the society.

The Political Stalemate

4.1 The resolution of this situation would normally be expected to lie in political action. And it is the sphere of politics which presents the gloomiest picture. The traditional responses seem to be woefully inadequate, no longer effective. No new, revolutionary responses are however emerging. The multi-party, parliamentary-democratic system, to common perception, is no longer capable of delivering the goods. The only feasible alternatives however are reactionary, dictatorial and anti people.

4.2 The masses as street crowds or as vote banks have long been manipulated by the establishment. Populist slogans and charismatic personalities have held the stage for all these years. Masses are mobilised to serve party or personal interests either with genuine fervour of the unwilling or with cynical contempt. On a general level moreover, it can be said, that barring temporary and regional phenomena it is the ruling party which has used this process to the greatest advantage and effect.

4.3 The Prime Minister and her party have in the past shown a remarkable capacity to create a sense (illusion) of dynamism, and to mobilise broad sections. A populist ideological position was repeatedly and skillfully forged and used in this process. Actions which would lend support to the claims of intentions (atleast) could also be conjured. No such capacities have been in evidence in the current stint of her rule.

4.4 The parties of the right are thoroughly discredited. They are composed of pygmies who could not even retain power. Their major failure was the inability to evolve an alternate bourgeois policy which would accomodate all factions of the capitalist class, would placate some (large in number) sections of the masses and discipline the working class. They could accomplish, singly or collectively, regionally or nationally, neither of these tasks. In styles of functioning of the organisations or in honesty and integrity of the individuals they were not markedly better than the ruling party. No wonder that they confronted a distrustful mass of people.

4.5 As stalwarts lose glamour and credibility, the masses in general are becoming apathetic towards politics in general. Politics is being viewed by the common man with distrust, disgust, scorn, scepticism and cynicism. This is not obviously an overnight reaction, it has been building up. Apart from the corrupt behaviour of 'politicians', and far more so, it is a reaction to the failure of political forces to provide a way out of the crisis-situation, to in anyway improve the lot of the masses or atleast struggle towards that aim determinedly

4.6 The masses have not been quiescent and inactive. As cursory glances at the newspapers also indicate, there are militant struggles in all parts of the country by all sections provoking brutal, violent repression. These struggles, militant and determined as they are, however are specific, issue based, local, sectional and sectoral. They are often politically uncritical expressions of general dissatisfaction channelled on deviationist lines, on false or non issues. Quite a few of these are fuelled by reactionary ideologies and led by right wing elements. The people's mood to struggle is being harnessed today by the right. (The only exception is the much maligned organised industrial working class).

Dilemma of the Left

5.1 In such a situation, with deteriorating economic conditions of the masses - failure of the right - mood to struggle of the people, the left would normally be expected to make rapid advances and become the dominating political force posing a decisive challenge to the ruling class.

5.2 This is not however the case in reality. With the Socialists

having liquidated themselves as socialists, the Communist Parties are the only organised force standing for a radical social transformation. The major current achievement of the Communists is that they have preserved their credibility. Their actions have been political and not seeped in corruption. Their major incapacity has been the failure to emerge as a leading national force capable of consistently and adequately representing the aspirations of the masses. The Communists have been sectorally or regionally restricted. They have been unable to pose a challenge and emerge as an alternative. Their political practice too has been largely issue based and protest oriented.

Masses, Politics and the Left

6.1 The development of the political process in India has been such that the common man has been more and more alienated and excluded from it. Politics has become a specialist's occupation over which the common-man-worker has no control. Capitalism and its corporate culture has pervaded all forms of life so effectively that even the workers own organisations - the unions - have become structurally distorted. They too tend to become specialist-oriented, elite-controlled, heirarchically-structured organisations. The common-man-worker is now only aroused and mobilised and is not organised for self-activity. His participation is not at a deliberative level but at a plebiscitary one. The net result is institutionalised, substitutionism, which has a tendency to control and contain the constituency.

6.2 As conditions of the mass of the workers and other oppressed deteriorate, as exploitation and oppression become more severe and hence apparent, the discontent also rises. The opposition to the prevalent system mounts. Masses wish to oppose, confront and overthrow the oppressive structure in its entirety. This confrontation is combined with the creation of alternatives. It is further an action, an achievement and a celebration of the oppressed and the exploited. It has to be a continuous creative struggle, a way of life, an attribute of their daily existence. It has to be their praxis. The alienating, excluding, substitutionist political process stifles these attributes. Superbly articulated by electoral norms the bourgeois framework strangles the creative self activity of the mass of the workers. Politics then retains contact with their concrete, living,

subjective existence only through slogans which sound increasingly vacuous and false. Politics then gets devalued, loses credibility and is accepted or condemned uncritically on narrow, tactical opportunistic, local, issue-based immediate-demand oriented basis. This quasi-depoliticisation of the broad masses is precisely the objective of the ruling class. Class struggles can then be distorted into non-class conflicts, even riots, and then co-opted, contained or crushed.

6.3 The most glaring failure of the Left has been its inability to adequately comprehend and then to deal with this situation. It has been unable to resist the subtler co-opting, containing, deviating and depoliticising tactics of the ruling class. It too got entangled in the establishment framework and norms of political practices.

6.4 A critique of the Communist Parties lies outside the scope of this note. Relevant to the present context, certain features need to however be noted.

a) The working class remains disunited and fragmented and as yet unable to intervene politically as a class. The Left has not evolved an adequate response to this situation.

b) The Left unions too are caught up in bourgeois norms and are unable to escalate and generalise struggles.

c) The Left has not been able to give leadership to all oppressed; the leadership of the working class as yet remains a slogan.

d) Working class ideology as a total alternative is not yet operative; socially the working class is not in a hegemonistic position.

e) An adequate understanding of the Indian situation with its specificities and peculiarities has not yet emerged.

f) Caught in a crisis - imminent - collapse orientation, some sections of the Left are unable to meet new strategies and tactics of the bourgeoisie.

g) A rigidity of programmatic/analytic frameworks hampers effective interventions in fluid, changing situations.

h) It is often trapped in consultationist - legalistic - substitutionist bourgeois norms.

i) A search for united fronts at times leads to non assertive role whereby independent class positions are diluted or abandoned.

j) Preoccupation with legislative practics blunts class basis of bases as well as practices.

k) Participation in bourgeois political processes helps to lend credibility to these processes.

l) Issue and protest oriented, legal-legislative practice influenced politics hampers emergence as class - alternative. Corrective practices become generalised.

6.5 These features must not obscure the fact that the Communist Parties are the only force with working class mass base demanding a transformation of the society through a revolutionary process. They are today, the main representatives, however inadequate, of the aspirations of the toiling masses.

The 'Action Groups'

7.1 This is the context in which direct or indirect political activity outside the framework of the political parties emerges and takes place. It could exist and be a topic of serious discussion only in a condition where the parties were facing a difficult situation and such non party activity was proliferating. The catalytic agencies connected with such activity are loosely termed as 'action groups'.

7.2 The proliferation of such action groups has given rise to certain questions. The political parties have naturally asked these questions most vocally and persistently. The action groups have been praised as well as doubted. The action groups have been suspected as being witting or unwitting nuclei of diversionary, deviationist, anti-party actions. They have been hailed as the true representatives of the masses facilitating their direct political participation. They have been accussed of being agents of indigenous or foreign vested interests. They have been championed as the political alternative or as the keepers of political conscience. They have also been rather cautiously appraised as forces complimentary to the parties. The self appraisal of the groups themselves has varied widely.

7.3 The main reason for such a divergence perhaps is the lumping together of widely different entities under one name - in one category.

The so called action groups are quite different in their motivations, their ideology, their approaches, their functions and their styles of work. It is perhaps symptomatic of the prevailing confusion that such widely divergent entities are not only lumped together under the same name but are also brought together, physically, for 'dialogues' with one another.

7.4 This note concerns itself with one particular type of 'action group' - what may be called a 'semi political action group.' Such groups began their existence and activity with non or anti political perspectives. Their concerns were varied: aid, charity, education, development, etc. The individual comprising these groups had no political backgrounds, no political stances. The activities involved a live contact with the exploited and oppressed sections directly. The activities also brought them in a position of opposition to the oppressive, ruling, power structures in their areas of activity. The nature of exploitation and oppression began to become clear to them through direct, practical experience. Quite unknowingly to begin with, they started taking political stands in choosing sides. The local experience and sensitivity slowly expanded and extended to become a general anti-oppression, anti-exploitation stand.

7.5 These 'semi political action groups' are working with the toiling masses at grass roots level, aiding them in their struggles. They are outside the framework of organised politics. Their stands are unclear and vague; often ad hocist or pragmatic. Their analyses of the situation is often simplistic - even populist.

7.6 The deep crisis obviously affects these groups. It poses serious problems, also practical, before them. They need today to clarify and define their stands; to think anew their strategy and tactics. It is hence necessary to consider the strengths and the weaknesses; the vigour and the limitations of these groups, as well as the precise nature of their dilemma.

'Action Groups' and History

8.1 Two differing, equally intense and equally uncritical views are currently expressed regarding the action groups. One sees in their activities a totally new and alternative direction of the political process. The other sees in their activities a deviationist orientation which attacks

parties and politics and helps the quasi-depoliticisation of the masses. Neither of these evaluations are supported by reality. Each grasps only one aspect, unable or unwilling to see the contradictory and complex nature of the action groups. Both views are also static, refusing to see the groups as changing - becoming - living entities. These views also ignore the social and historical determination of the action groups.

8.2 To really understand the action groups it is necessary to understand the specific conditions in which they arose and flourished as well as their complex and contradictory nature. In this understanding again the changes the action groups have undergone cannot be lost sight of.

8.3 The action groups became a phenomenon only during the past decade. This was not an accidental occurrence. The crises became generalised and acquired threatening proportion in the late sixties. The end of the Nehru-era was virtually the end of principled, honest politics. The exclusion of the masses from the political process and their cynical manipulation was becoming apparent. The 1967 experiment of opposition ministries in many states had failed. The splits in the Communist movement and the loss of steam of the Naxalite movement posed serious problems. The Left was getting fragmented. The masses were in uncoordinated struggles, becoming more and more militant. Reactionary forces were attempting to foment communal, linguistic and casteist riots. The State was becoming increasingly brutal in its repression of people's movements. It was the beginning of the crisis of politics - of the traditional political parties and processes.

8.4 This was also a period when many political groups were being formed. Party affiliations were no longer considered a precondition for political action. In fact the political groups condemned the existing parties and aspired to build a new party. The Communist Parties perhaps for the first time confranted a mass opposition from the Left. This group political activity legitimised the existence of the other groups too, in an indirect manner. Their slogans and actions also focussed attention on the

rural areas as well as on the tribals and dalits.

8.5 An ideological atmosphere condoning and legitimising non party, grass root level activities prevailed. Other developments were bringing into consideration hitherto (relatively) neglected sections of the oppressed e.g. poor peasants, agricultural workers, tribals, dalits, women, slum dwellers, etc. The international atmosphere (Sino-Soviet split, liberation, race, women's, minorities', students' movements, New Left, Maoism etc.) also encouraged this process. Most important the masses themselves were ready to listen to young, non-party activists.

8.6 There was also another side to the picture. 'Development' and particularly 'rural development' became was cries of the establishment. There were many reasons for this. Capitalisation and industrialisation of agriculture was a need of the capitalist system. The 'rural time bomb' was seen as a political danger. Harnessing of youth energy in non-communist activities was also a political necessity. Tolerance, encouragement and patronage with appropriate phraseology was extended to 'development activists'. Liberal institutional finance - government and private, Indian and foreign - was also made available - almost for the asking. Official and non official agencies encouraged, promoted and facilitated 'development projects.' In these massive cooptation and containment efforts, the language was radical. 'Peoples' movements', 'grass roots activity', 'conscientisation', 'participatory activity' became new catch words - continuously mouthed by establishment representatives.

8.7 The action groups were conceived and formed under these contradictory influences. Ideologically they were indirectly, inadequately, vaguely and often unconsciously influenced by a radical ideology of social transformation. Structurally they were shaped, by their links - above all financial - to the establishment, however subtly and indirectly. Since their very origins, they were forced to perform a balancing trick, between these diametrically opposite pulls.

8.8 Situation and experience of the past decade make now this balancing act virtually impossible. 'Development' is now under a cloud. Reality demands a clarity of stands. This forces (or should force) a rethinking on the action groups. It also necessitates this dialogue.

8.9 This contradiction, between the ideological aspirations and structural existence, decisively distinguishes the 'action groups' from the political groups. The latter had no institutional support, financial or otherwise, and only rarely enjoyed tolerance. Their ideological stand and perspective was always explicit and clear (however inadequate and erroneous it may have been). They were also by and large keen to develop ties with the working class, to combine rural and urban work, to extend and expand their activities. In light of the current tendency to equate all 'groups', it is necessary to emphasize these fundamental differences. No critical examination would otherwise be possible.

Origin and Survival of 'Action Groups'

9.1 An immediate question which comes up is 'what made the survival of these action groups in the field possible?' The answer is certainly not as immediate or as clear as the question. Numerous factors were responsible, and these very factors indicate the strengths and limitations of the action groups. Before examining these factors however certain facts must be clear. Not all 'action groups' - or what were in the initial stages 'development groups' - not even a majority of them, survived. A large number of them folded up. Quite a few were forced to change their areas of work. The personnel turnover was also large and rapid. In fact a very few action groups did survive. The ones that lasted beyond initial enthusiasm (and funds) also developed. These groups alone, identifying with the oppressed masses, came face to face with the political questions. These alone are the semi-political groups that should be termed as 'action groups'. It is the survival and development of these 'action groups' which needs to be examined.

9.2 The groups went into the field, urban or rural, with blueprints of definite 'developmental activity'. The activities were varied. Education, medical help, housing, supplementary employment, appropriate technology, cooperatives, childcare, all sorts of programmes were tried. The aspirations were simple: to try to improve the lot of the most exploited, oppressed and poor sections. The experience was revealing. Group after group of sincere and sensitive persons realised, however reluctantly, the need for organising the people and for siding with them in their struggles - above all economic. The focus shifted from aid, charity or development to

community organisation, people's struggles and rights.

9.3 These activists were motivated and committed. They were also prepared to learn from experience. This helped them to last out the initial period. They were independent of the local power structure, could if and when necessary oppose it. They had no immediate stakes in the area - economic or political. Their approach and method was fresh and vigorous. The informality and lack of experience also added to the freshness. The methods and techniques they used were quite new. This made their contact with people as well as communication interesting, and hence effective.

9.4 Their focus of interest was usually a specific, small, local area. Their ideological vagueness itself contributed to the intensification of their local interest. No larger perspectives were then operative which would dilute, modify or transform the immediate interests. These interests too, often represented the felt needs and articulated aspirations of the people they worked with. The very same people were discontented, prepared to struggle but alienated from the political process. In these action groups these people discovered persons and agencies that made them the centre and were responsive to them. Rigidly structured agencies - governmental or political - with far off decision making centres with which they had no direct contact (and obviously on which they had no control) had ordinarily controlled their lives in consonance with the local oppressors. These new agencies were somewhat closer, in direct touch. Their approach usually facilitated direct participation, self-organisation and self-activity of the masses.

9.5 These features were also common to the political groups - in fact far more so and far more clearly. It was not the 'action groups' but the political groups which have posed the decisive challenge, in local situations, to the establishment. It is the political groups which have exerted pressure on the established political parties certain other features however were different.

9.6 The non-Marxist tradition of the 'action groups' was in some instances responsible for making them receptive to the immediacy of non-economic issues. Their analytical schemes were polycentric, vague and populist. This made them (paradoxically) aware of numerous non-economic aspects of oppression and deprivation. Lacking a clear class perspective they could not

have become class-reductionist. Many more areas, relatively neglected by the traditional left, were therefore taken up by these groups.

9.7 Horizons of action were thus extended. Action was also restored to the oppressed masses themselves. Quality of life became the focal issue, rather than a distant and abstract system.

9.8 There were other reasons too, not as positive as the ones listed above. The development groups did not have a confrontationist stand. Their early life atleast, was free of conflicts with the power structures. They were not an immediate threat to the power structures. Moreover they had influential support from powerful institutions with links with the state level (if not central) authorities. Even essentially conservative institutions were prepared to defend them as lesser of the evils (as compared to the political groups). They did not hence have to face any severe repression - private or state mediated, legal or extra-legal.

9.9 The financial situation of these groups has also been an important factor. The activists and activities were, due to their institutional support, usually financially secure. Finance, a great bug-bear of the political groups, was rarely if ever a serious limitation (for existence or expansion). The finance also did not have overt, crude, direct strings. Local activities could proceed without hindrance and interference if certain formalities were observed. This also distinguished the action groups from the crushing necessities faced by the political groups and activists of seeking survival - resources as well as of raising funds from the people with whom they worked.

9.10 The seventies thus was a period in which the action groups could originate, survive and thrive.

'Action Groups' Today

10.1 The 1980s present a totally different situation. The objective conditions have changed (- though a formal similarity can be and often is pointed out). The intensification and extension of the crisis over the past decade impart to it a qualitatively new dimension - above all in the socio-political sphere. The maturity, experience and militancy of the mass of toilers has changed, as has their fragmentation and ideological deviation.

The contours and terrain of class struggle in India have altered. There is also an urgency to the situation, proportional to the intensity of confrontation. Observation from the side lines has become untenable and irrelevant. Partisan intervention is on the agenda.

10.2 The action groups too have today reached a decisive stage in their own history. They are no longer a nascent novel phenomenon, to be amusedly watched. They are at a level of development where a serious evaluation is possible and necessary. Proclamations, promises and practics of the past decade are now available for reflection. The shorter age and life of particular individual groups make no difference since the general traits and trends are clear.

10.3 The sincerity, sensitivity and receptivity of the groups and of the individuals making them up was the basic motive force of their development. They were in their observation and intervention in local situations becoming 'politicised'. This politicisation was not based on experience of personal - individual exploitation, oppression or injustice. It was not a result of theoretical - analytical reflections (economic, sociological, political or philosophical). It was based in the main on an observation of the oppression and exploitation of others. The repeated obstacles and difficulties encountered in achieving simple, humanistic goals (often reformist and relief oriented) had steeled and consolidated it.

10.4 The political awareness was essentially the awareness, that poverty and misery, exploitation and oppression were not accidental, natural or divine but man-made, man-controlled and virtually premeditated. Existence of classes, class oppression and class struggle was comprehended by the action groups, though not necessarily in a scientific manner. Society was seen by them as being ruled by definite, articulated and elaborated power structures. Links were also observed between local, regional, national and perhaps international structures which were in control of economic, political, socio-cultural and ideological resources and power through which they dominated, oppressed, exploited and deprived the vast majority. The existence of an oppressive, exploitative and dehumanising system was recognised. This was the extent of the political awareness of the action groups, beyond this it did not develop.

10.5 This awareness took the action groups temperamentally and motivationally away from 'development orientation'. The programmes were in content transformed. The action groups began to organise the people and to aid them in their struggles.

10.6 This organising activity had certain distinctive and novel features in the healthiest of the groups. The range of the activity was deep and wide (within the geographical and often ethnic limits of the area of operation). All aspects of life were sought to be touched. Forms too were new e.g. educational, cultural, medical actions were used. There was a flexibility to the activities, and efforts were made to adapt the same to the felt and expressed needs of the people. There was minimal, if any, orientation towards a priori schemata or programmes. The peoples' participation was hence more direct and linked to self activity. There was in many instances a strong element of spontaneity (sometimes leading to uncritical, chaotic, confusing and contradictory actions). Overall, the organising activity was in direct dialogue with the masses directly, hence responsive to them and representative of them.

10.7 There were also severe limitations to the activities of the groups. The political awareness was limited, simplistic and naive. No definitive perspective beyond an indentification of local, immediate allies and enemies was developed by the action groups. Their orientation - inherent and cultivated - was vehement in its populism, spontaneism, localism and activism. This consigned them to a distrust of and antagonism towards intellectual activity, sophisticated analysis and mature theory. Vulgar practice orientation led repeatedly to ad-hocism and pragmatism. Most action groups were victims of a deep-rooted even if concealed suspicion and hostility towards Marxism. This combined with their middle class roots and links also produced an antagonism towards the organised, industrial working class. These attitudes posed serious problems - not only in generalised understanding but in concrete, daily practical activities - in formulations of strategy and tactics, in evolving appropriate organisational structures.

10.8 The here-and-now, these-people-and-their-immediate-problems attitude restricted actions as well as thinking to specific, local areas. This localism was nothing but prereflective Utopianism in the classical sense. The system was perceived as being composed of discreet units externally

linked and not as a holistic organic entity. People's power too, was then perceived as numerous islands of self organisation and self activity loosely coordinated. Mushroom groups jealously watchful of own identities and spheres of influence then sprang up, victims of a new sectarianism. The logical organisational outcome was a powerless federation of groups for 'sharing and dialogue'. The carefully developed anti party attitude compounded and consolidated these stiffling limitations.

10.9 The approach of the action groups has remained by and large self righteously voluntarist. The practice then necessarily became issue based. Each demand and issue was assiduously debated. The immediate class contours and connotations were clarified. The wider and mystified links were however generally missed. The methodological inability to work out the links between the general and the particular leaves the essential connections between the local and national and international situations unrevealed. The localism of thought and practice, the limitations of perspective, the fragmented organisational structure obscure the operations of the system. Energies are then directed towards corrections of its anomalies; the practice as a whole then becomes essentially reformist, more or less militant. Alternatives then evaporate, correctives emerge. The action groups become subtly coopted.

10.10 The origins, links and structures of the action groups also are serious limitations. The charitable trust cooperative or development agency structure, the dependence on institutional finance, the style of operation the liberal resources generate can and do cramp the 'political' in the practice. Legal and other restrictions curtail and contain the activity.

10.11 The strengths and the limitations of the action groups are coming into ever sharper focus now. As the crisis deepens and poses essentially political questions with imminent urgency, the nature of the action groups become apparent. The historical determination of these groups is revealed as the contradictions sharpen.

'Action Groups' in Crisis

11.1 In the most unflattering terms it can be said that the 'action groups' have been a collosal failure. The promises they made and the hopes

they held out have not been fulfilled. They have been brilliant and glorious experiments - demonstrative show pieces at best. The objective conditions of poverty and misery, it need be hardly pointed out, remain unchanged even in small local areas. People have been organised in some places by the groups. These organisations have not been qualitatively different from the traditional mass/political organisations. The cliche dreams of peoples' power and peoples' leadership have remained unrealised. No political alternative, at any level, has been created. The 'champions and custodian-keepers of political conscience' have had no political impact. They can by and large be left out of any political considerations. The most successful and significant ones play a marginal and disputed role.

11.2 The performance of the 'action groups' has to be evaluated in comparison with that of the political groups for a fuller understanding. This note needs to point out only one feature. The political groups have been able to act as catalyst - leaders of mass movement in specific areas. They have been, in a limited way, parts of the political map of India. They have also been able to raise a debate on political-theoretical issues. The 'action groups' do not have even such achievements to their credit.

11.3 These failures find internal and external reflections. History and events have usually passed the 'action groups' by. They have not been able to intervene in any general currents even in their own areas. If they have been able to participate it is only by effacing themselves, never as distinct organisational entities with distinctive characteristics. This has been the major manifestation of their irrelevance.

11.4 In face of this situation, the 'action groups' are beginning to realise their own stagnation. They have been forced to mark time, finding soothing justifications and rationalisations, while the national mainstream of life has been rapid and tumultous. Preservation and continuation of same programmes with minor geographic and activity expansion has been their fate. The efforts at coordination and coming together have yielded no results. Negatively, the frustrations have been laid at the doors of the character, structure and even personalities of specific agencies

11.5 In the evaluation it would also be necessary to ask whether the 'action groups' have had any negative impact. No such effects are apparent. Some features, more associated with 'development agencies' than with

'action groups' need to be however mentioned. The chosen areas of action were by and large in the vicinity of areas of militant, confrontationist, mass-political activity. Could this have been directed towards containment of the disturbance and creation of illusions of reform? The already complex picture of politics was further complicated by these groups in specific areas. The anti-party stance created obstacles in the operations above all of the left parties. What are the effects of this (unrealised) aspect? The suspicion of strongly organised masses capable of a fight-back in the face of oppression - specifically the working class - has been a recurrent feature. Did this divide the toiling and oppressed masses and promote an ideological schism? And lastly, were natural recruits weaned away from left political activity?

11.6 As the tempo of the crisis quickens and heightens, the dilemma of the 'action groups' becomes sharper. Their helplessness and stagnation become urgent, immediate, concrete, practical problems to be resolved in practice. The failures of various efforts also indicates that these are the fundamental, structural problems requiring redefinition and rethinking in a radical manner.

A Question of Radical Redifinition

12.1 The logic of the capitalist system caught in a crisis forces it to intensify exploitation for its very survival. Conditions deteriorate, discontent mounts and masses launch struggles. The struggles are however capable of distortion. Instability nevertheless mounts. Democratic rights of the toiling masses become a luxury which the ruling class tries to snatch away. The dangers of military ventures can also not be ruled out.

12.2 Talks of 'peoples' rights' and 'peoples' movements' in such a situation cannot remain local, specific and abstract. Transformation of society again cannot be seen as a vague slogan. Diverse nature of emerging mass activity as well as the confusing character of mass agitations does not allow any populist generalisations about pro-people and pro-struggle attitudes. Concrete, specific, historical questions are posed before all activists in a concrete, specific and practical manner. Some of these can be easily enumerated as the most urgent ones:

a) how to protect the democratic rights of the toiling people?

b) how to resist the increasing onslaught of the reactionary, authoritarian, pro-imperialist forces?

c) how to evaluate emerging mass agitations?

d) how to oppose divisive, diversionary, deviationist forces and the fratricidal conflicts they engender?

e) how to translate these stands into practice in local areas consistent with national perspectives?

f) how to locate allies at all levels?

12.3 These tasks demand a radical rethinking on part of the 'action groups'. Ideologically they would have to equip themselves to analyse their own situation, local as well as internal, in consonance with the global perspectives historically. They will have to be able to analyse the character of demands, issues and struggles in dynamic class terms. Vague and wooly 'anti-capitalism' can no longer suffice. A consistent class-political position, a conscious left wing stance is now called for. They will have to, in the first instance accept and learn Marxism if they have any dreams of social transformation.

12.4 The 'action groups' will have to re-examine their contradictory, anomalous and dangerous position towards the working class. While mouthing the need and principle of organisation and power of the toilers they are enemical to the one section of the toiling masses which has this power in some measure, the industrial working class. They are witting or unwitting opponents of the direct challengers of the capitalist class. It is necessary to get out of this dangerous posture. The working class is going to be the first target of the capitalist attack. If its strength is crushed, democratic rights of all other sections will be dispersed with minimal efforts. A critical but firm alliance with the working class is necessary for survival itself.

12.5 'People versus political parties' is another pet proposition of the 'action groups'. This in practice is nothing but anti Communism by another name. The uncritical equation of all parties - left and right - is a subtle and alluring snare of a reactionary, right-wing ideology. It leads to a concentration of attack on communists and decapitates the political strength of the toiling masses by fragmenting them. In the face of the increasing ruling class offensive and erosion of democratic rights the

relationship with the Communist Parties can only be one of alliance. All non-myopic activists and organisations are being today impelled by reality into a critical, corrective cooperation with the Communist Parties. The 'action groups' can turn away from this position to their own peril and to the betrayal of the people they work with.

12.6 In their current structure and existence would it be possible for the 'action groups' to thus redefine their politics and political stands? This is a question they must urgently confront - a painful task indeed which would test their mettle and committment to the extreme.

12.7 The inadequacies in the actions of the 'action groups' can only then be corrected. The questions of organisation, strategy and tactics are primarily political questions since they serve and are defined by the political objectives. A clear political stand, which appropriates the experience and gains of the groups, based on a thorough examination of the objective situation as well as their own history, is the absolutely immediate need. Then alone can the groups contribute to the process of social transformation in India.

Beyond Groups?

13.1 All problems are not resolved with the adoption of a consistent anti-capitalist and pro-Left stand. In fact the most vital ones only then begin to get clearly defined. What are the practical implications of becoming? - is the major question. No one individual, no single 'note' can adequately and exhaustively answer it. Tremendous debate by action groups and others would be necessary. At this stage it is only possible to contribute to the clarification of the contours of this debate. It is possible to point out what the answers are not, and also to indicate the areas which they must cover. Any attempt to provide definitive prescriptions would be misleading and misadventurous. The 'debate' prior to a formulation is a practical and principled necessity. Principled, because grass root participation in politics and in decision making, opposition to substitutionism are necessary preconditions of a political stand today. Practical, since no handed down position are likely to be accepted by activists and groups in the current situations. Demi-theoreticians as demi-gods (both self-proclaimed) is a situation which no longer exists in left wing politics

today.

13.2 One immediate position which springs up is that of joining a larger, national party. The party which in most situation seems to be the ideal one is the CPI(M). 'Join CPI(M)' is not an insignificant trend today. Individuals and groups are increasingly taking recourse to this alternative. An impressive array of arguments is brought forth to justify this course of action, most of them concretely, practically political. It would be instructive to enumerate these arguments:

a) the action groups and their activities, as also of the more political groups, are isolated, discrete phenomena, in no way capable of being politically effective in their uncoordinated existence.

b) given the centralised, organised, efficient might of the ruling class state in its various ramifications the islands of peoples' struggles are powerless and Quixotic efforts.

c) revolution would necessitate a general staff coordinating and directing the activity of the peoples' actions.

d) in face of the anti democratic and authoritarian thrust of ruling class strategy combination of all revolutionary forces on a national level in an organised manner is imperative and urgent.

e) the CPI(M) is the only organised force capable of fulfilling this role.

f) this capacity of the CPI(M) itself imparts to it the potentiality of a dynamism which will rectify any lacunae that it may today have as the situation and the revolutionary movement mature.

13.3 Activists and action groups will have to individually and collectively examine these arguments in the light of their own political understandings and experience. On that basis alone would they have to take their decisions. One factor needs to however be pointed out, which must enter into these deliberations. The phenomenon of non party groups arose as a response to situations within as well as outside the parties, the CPI(M) included. Have these situations or the groups' understanding of them altered fundamentally? or is 'join CPI(M)' a guilty and not properly understood denial of the entire history of the groups? Any apologetic position on these questions would lead to a fundamental political weakness, which may be smuggled into the party itself.

13.4 The other call which may find an echo in the action groups is

'build a new revolutionary party'. The multiple splits in the communist movement - national and international - have lent a legitimacy to this call which would have been unthinkable only a couple of decades ago. The political groups which sprang up in the past 10-12 years were all victims of this party building vision. Each imagined itself to be the nucleus of the true revolutionary party. Any such call today has to take into account the failure of all such efforts. The need or otherwise of a new revolutionary party need not be argued here. It is essential to recognise that action groups, with their limitations can certainly not initiate the process of its formation.

13.5 The note now begins to sound sterile, leading into a blind alley, unable to provide any positive answers. It also fails to fulfil the modest expectation that it should clarify the issues and areas of debate. It has argued that 'action groups' cannot continue to exist as 'action groups'. It has stated that they have to become political entities. It has further indicated that effective politics cannot be the politics of fragments. It has then indicated the difficulties in merging with existing parties. It has also put forth the view that 'action groups' cannot initiate a new party. What avenues then, if any, are open for political action? Or is political inaction being argued for in a round about manner? This situation is precisely indicative of the deep crisis. The crisis is objective as well as a crisis of the 'action groups' themselves. Even objectively, it is a political crisis (of looming imminent terrible dangers) and a crisis of politics (of no readymade, available solutions). The crisis is one of paralysing proportions. It therefore also magnifies and sharpens all contradictions and makes it possible to recognise them.

13.6 The existence 'beyond groups', it is necessary to realise, is at the moment a perplexing question mark. The easy answers, the ones that hand out prescriptions, either fail to see or fail to acknowledge the gravity and character of the crisis. They are thus, unless openly tactical and tentative, likely to be erroneous, even dangerous. In this understanding the 'action groups' will have to learn from experiences of others - particularly the political groups, who face similar questions today.

Questions

14.1 The political groups came into existence around the same time as the 'action groups'. They were responses to the same situation of creeping political stalemate. Their understanding and orientation were political hence their responses were articulated politically. Each began with a criticism of the existing Communist Parties. The criticisms varied in their maturity and in their sophistication. Each however was a critique ultimately of the programmes of the parties. The task was seen as the elaboration of a new revolutionary programme, around which a revolutionary organisation could be forged. Debates on numerous issues were then taken up. (There is a tendency to dismiss all these groups as insignificant. While it is necessary to avoid and resist over glorification, it should not be denied that these groups were enthusiastic partners in the renewed and extended efforts in Marxist enquiry in the country). These debates being essentially programmatic, were within the frameworks elaborated by the parties themselves. The actions of the groups - of those that were more than debating clubs - were however bringing new experience and new lessons, which they were unable to squeeze into the programmatic polemics.

14.2 On the other hand as their awareness of politics began to grow, in practical terms, beyond self complacent localism and voluntarism, another major inadequacy could be realised by them. This was political ineffectivity and stagnation. They had no role, it seemed, to play in the national political mainstream. To them this inadequacy was crippling since they could not unlike the 'action groups' be content on 'micro-experiments'. The emergency, the 1977 and 1980 general elections were in this respect telling events.

14.3 It has been a complex and complicated situation. No party, as 'the revolutionary party', emerged; nor are there immediate possibilities. As groups their existence was ineffective. The causal situation has not changed. Some important lessons were learnt from their own practice. No existing party would be willing to recognise the validity of these lessons or to accomodate these experiences. This situation makes it possible to identify questions that confront them, contradictions that seize them.

14.4 'Action Groups' do not share these problems, at present, in the

same form. It is nevertheless instructive to be acquainted with them. For the sake of convenience and clarity they can be listed as grouped below:

I Practical

(i) The objective situation ripens rapidly portending major political upheavals, while the working class remains backward and unprepared for revolution.

(ii) The contradictions between a revolutionary, confrontationist strategic position and a day to day tactical compromise sharpens with the ripening crisis.

(iii) Masses continue to follow 'parliamentary illusions' while they reject it totally.

(iv) The only help in face of armed, international counter revolution, being from USSR seems paradoxical - possibly counter -productive.

II Basic

(i) Political expediency forces in ever accelerated manner 'temporary' setting aside of revolutionary principles.

(ii) Emphasis on ideological total struggles, participatory democracy, consciousness raising interferes with action towards capture of political power.

(iii) Reconstruction and building of alternate life patterns and wide political confrontation with capitalist rule create differing pulls and pushes.

(iv) Building of revolutionary organisation capable of capture of power and worker centred democratic activity demand differing priorities.

III Immediate

(i) Anti democratic thrust of capitalist rule demands alliances - assimilation into larger parties while the urge is to consolidate the fundamental gains.

(ii) Degenerations of revolutions elsewhere multiply dangers of giving up the new search while ruling class offensive forecloses on the available time.

(iii) Deviationist struggles and movements constantly jeopardise all advances made while no answers surface.

(iv) The parties too seem unable or unwilling to confront the basic is-

sues thrown up by theoretical considerations, vital to post-revolutionary reconstruction.

14.5 These are serious real problems, only now realised as such. The answers do not seem to lie in the previous line of thinking: that of programmatic critique of the parties. The parties seem the only organs available while the doubt remains as to whether they will act effectively. These too are the manifestations of the double crisis which grips the country. Is self-effacement and uncritical acceptance of the CPI(M) the only alternative to ineffective Quixotic existence?

Political Crisis, Crisis of Politics and Political Action

15.1 An era is coming to a rapid close in our country. Confrontations between the ruling capitalist class and the challenging working class are becoming sharper. The unity of the ruling class is itself collapsing. The old set of conditions - the norms of economic, political and social activity - are now neither acceptable to the working class nor convenient to the ruling class. The former will launch an all out mass upsurge, the latter will unleash brutal, repressive authoritarianism.

15.2 The situation generates hope and fear. Hope because it is revolutionary, fear because of the weakness of the Communist Parties. It must, with regard to the aspect of fear, be pointed out that a static view of situation is quite wrong. In such revolutionary circumstances, historical experience teaches us, events and developments are speeded up. The Communist movement too gains strength with unforeseen and unpredicted rapidity. It also gets overhauled. It does not merely grow, it develops.

15.3 Other, gloomier possibilities too can ofcourse not be overlooked. If none of the contending classes can decisively defeat the other, a period of turmoil - of instability and chaos can result. This paves the away ultimately for a repressive and dictatorial resolution of the situation.

15.4 All the possibilities have to be currently considered; none can be ruled out as the situation is wide open. This is the political crisis in India.

15.5 The near-chronic weaknesses of the communist movement point to the other more fundamental aspect - the crisis of politics. It is yet to come

out of a defensive posture and pose decisive challenges to the capitalist class rule in India. It has also not been able to take into account the specificities of the Indian conditions and to emerge as the alternative. It seems trapped in a body of political thinking which is unable to adequately face the present situation - of both the capitalist and the working classes.

15.6 Marxism is an epochal theory. It provides a comprehensive critique of capitalism. It is therefore a living method, not a set of formulae. It is therefore also a general theory and method. It has to be creatively used to understand historical and specific situations. If this task is not fulfilled and if models and formulae are adopted and used a-historically, a movement becomes disarmed and is unable to intervene in a situation. This is the crisis of politics of the communist movement today.

15.7 For groups then the dilemma is shaped by these two aspects of the crisis. The crisis of politics demands totally new thinking and search in the political sphere; the political crisis does not permit the time or the leisure. This itself creates great temptations to deny one of the two aspects of the situation and to call for either merger or the formation of new party, while in reality a dual solution is called for.

15.8 The political crisis, as has been repeatedly emphasized, has an imminence and urgency. Consolidation and strengthening of anti capitalist forces is hence the prime task. A close alliance with the communist parties is therefore indispensible. This alliance is by itself likely to prove merely defensive and not revolutionary - alternative. To create that, new processes - theoretical and practical - are necessary. They will have to be sought and developed, during struggle, as the ruling class offensive is fought and repelled. The initiative would obviously come from the front liners in the revolutionary struggle - the organised working class which in its direct confrontation gives struggles new dimensions and the cadre which can theorise this new experience.

15.9 The role 'action groups' can play in either of the processes so long as they remain 'action groups' is doubtful. To participate they will have to efface themselves as 'action groups' and be reconstituted as revolutionary activists.

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RIGHT, LEFT AND CENTRE AS ASPECTS OF NATURE

J.P.S. UBEROI

In 1925, after the death of Lenin, there was published in Moscow the work of Engels on natural science, *Dialects of nature*, edited from his Ms notes and fragments of 1873 and the years following. It is the chief work of Marxism on science, without a rival in the corpus of Marx and Engels, and its importance in the developments that came after then exceeds even that of Lenin's *Materialism and empirio-criticism* (1909). The first work is more dialectical than the second, and the second is correspondingly more materialist than the first. Engels' chief thesis would appear to be that the positivist or the metaphysical approach should not have a monopoly over science, which should rather follow a non-dualist dialectical way of thinking, i.e. along the lines of the laws of the unity of opposites, the change of quantity into quality and the negation of the negation or the law of development through contradiction.

Such laws highlight the homology or the analogy, self-evident to Engels, among the spheres of thought, nature and society, which are not to be considered as

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in relation to nature; and I will not claim to have understood the most difficult European philosopher of all in the few years that have elapsed since the *Philosophy of Nature* was made available in English.

I had rather taken refuge from the polemics of the right and the left, specially in relation to the debate of idealism versus materialism, in the non-dualist dialectical attitude of the centre, represented at the turn of the eighteenth century in Europe by Goethe, who incidentally never himself accepted the system of Hegel but of whose own work on nature Hegel had formed the highest opinion (e.g. as expressed in Hegel's letter of homage to Goethe). The importance of Goethe is that, while expressing his ignorance of philosophy and practising as a poet and a statesman, he had pressed on for forty years with his experiments in botany and optics, etc., which were based on his theory of metamorphosis and the archetype. Thus the dialectics of the centre should remind us that the anti-positivist non-dualist attitude is not merely a philosophical but also a practico-experimental attitude. The dialectical method of Goethe pre-supposed the equality of man and nature; and this is implicit in his theory and practice of the scientific experiment as well as of scientific explanation, the process of discovery as well as the process of proof.

Engels has himself attributed to Christianity, the religion of the Spirit versus the flesh, the development, after the decline of classical antiquity, of the dualism of mind and matter, man and nature, the body and the soul (*Dialectics of Nature*, English edition, 1954, p.243). But the dualist disease, rather than disappear under the treatment of modernism, has surely become widespread and endemic after the Renaissance and the Reformation, and infected the whole of modern European culture, including its system of knowledge as a whole and in its details. For four centuries and more modern Western positivist dualism, with and latterly without Christianity, has insisted that the two worlds of man and nature, truth and power, science and politics, nature and history, the fact and the value, *lexis* and *praxis*, the Red and the expert, are separate and different in all essentials for study and action.

Yet the opposite non-dualist dialectical attitude was always found in Europe, in the guise of a kind of Gnosticism if not of Christianity, but it was driven underground after the failure of radical Reformation and the so-called peasants' war in Germany (1526). Indeed, I have been told that Marx has somewhere in his Ms writing on art made some kind remarks about the pantheist Franck, who belonged to the radical Reformation, as against his

(Marx's) juxtaposed unkind remark about the "stupid and fanatical" official leader of the Reformation, viz. Luther. Anyhow, the attitude I refer to has, in spite of the modernist attitude, remained alive in the European underground, and it has risen to the surface from time to time, e.g. in the "philosophy of nature" of the right, left and centre in Germany.

It pre-supposes the logic of the unity and the variety of the two worlds, rather than their absolute homogeneity or heterogeneity, and replies that when the two are apparently separate they are also in some sense similar (competition), and that when the two are apparently different they are also in a sense together (cooperation), but that in no sense can we concede separatism *and* difference to the two identities. The latter position would inevitably lead either (a) to absolute atomism by the infinite regress of dualism (Russell); or (b) to the opposite mistakes of the so-called new systems view of the world, which perhaps rightly emphasizes the autonomy, self-regulation and coherence of systems but forgets their rules of transformation and metamorphosis. It consistently neglects the principle of sympathy between the parts of two or more apparently separate and different systems, and so puts its faith in the coherence of the system at the

expense of the principle of contradiction. The coming debate of atomism versus the systems view, like the earlier debate of idealism versus materialism or the still earlier one of realism versus nominalism, is of only secondary interest for us.

It seems that, during the decade of the cultural revolution in China, a serious attempt was made to give shape to this non-dualist dialectical attitude, partly through permanent joint Party-and-expert committees attached to all national scientific establishments, and partly through two popular slogans, "Every worker a scientist" and "Overthrow all authority in science". But it seems that the directives that followed effectively exempted the authority of first nuclear, then defence and soon all natural science, presumably on the principle of the privilege of the expert. Science is science and politics is politics, and the meeting of the two spheres was reduced to only social science and the arts, with the result that the sciences of culture were temporarily destroyed in China and the culture of science simply reaffirmed its immunity. Today the youth of China is applying to every Western nation for deeper training in that culture of science, while presumably leaving its politics at home, and the revolutionary joint committees are dissolved or under suspension; the two slogans of yesteryear have also

not been heard of again. Social science has meanwhile revived feebly in the new autonomous Chinese Academy of Social Science, separated from both the Chinese Academy of Science and the Politburo, so that any future heretical confusion of truth and power arising there can be quickly isolated and managed, if not destroyed again.

China has reset its course to follow the modernist principles of social structure, whereby the spiritual elite (science) and the temporal elite (politics) jointly try to persuade us, the common people, that they are truly separate. Separately and together they require us somehow to believe (a) that they are different from one another and from us, the non-expert non-elite; (b) that this threefold division of labour is natural, right and beneficial for all classes, nations, races; and simultaneously (c) that no one of them is responsible and answerable for it. The whole concept of total social structure, the totality of the regime, and the twin concepts of the freedom and the responsibility of man in relation to it, are therefore condemned as a body of illusion, presumably mischievously fostered by Stalin, Mao and Gandhi.

Yet the reply of the underground, nothing daunted, remains to the effect that mankind should have more

truth in politics, and more non-violence in science, and more truth, love and justice all round, beginning with ourselves. The habit of the dialectical attitude is the habit of seeing all things in the round, i.e. in the light of the unity in variety of everything, specially in relation to study and action, man and nature, truth and reality. Let those scientists who claim to be separate from politics, and to belong to the world community of science, begin again by explaining to us why half or more of that community is, and always has been, willingly engaged in new destructive weapons research and development in all countries under the regime of modernism, East and West. If one half of the scientists in the world are servants of the military, which does violence to man, and the other half are the servants of industry, which does violence to nature, then the love of man and nature obliges us to try and rescue science from the scientists and give it a new and different philosophical direction.

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A note on the

15 year Perspective Plan

for

the Development of Goa, Daman & Diu, prepared by the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad, on a consultancy paid for by the Goa Government.

For circulation among those interested in the Goa Dialogue and among people interested in these questions generally.

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The objectives of the Perspective Plan are as follows:

1) To solve the problem of unemployment of both educated and uneducated in the territory in 10 years i.e. by the end of the Seventh Plan period (1978-1988).

2) To double the State Domestic Products with an overall growth rate of 7% per year, so that the per capita income is also doubled from Rs.1270 to Rs.2540.

3) There will be more emphasis on the development of the hitherto neglected, backward, inland talukas.

4) Better land use and of the environment in the settlement of the Goan population.

5) The plan greatly emphasizes conservation and ecological balance.

6) Rural development.

7) Special attention to poor and backward classes of the Goan population.

Silent features and quoted from the Document

1) This is a 15 year Perspective Plan, a long-range, long-term view of the Goan economy. The argument is that only in long term planning of this sort, can one forsee and accomodate for the minimization of various imbalances in the economy.

2) The approach followed in the preparation of the Perspective Plan is one based on "resource endownment" i.e. the resource potentialities available in the economy and the territory's needs and capabilities to harness them in future - a "management of resources" approach.

3) In the past fifteen years, the basis objective aimed at in the various developmental programmes were self-sufficiency in opportunities and raising the general standard of living of the people.

4) Both the objectives of increasing the agricultural income and the need for self-sufficiency in foodgrains can be achieved only if the irrigated areas to the net sown area in the territory is increased to at least 30-35% from the present 9.8%.

5) Mining cannot be an all - time asset. Precautions are to be taken sufficiently in advance to prepare for the day when the assets will no longer be available and when a large number of persons employed in this major industry would have to be shown alternative avenues of employment.

Introduction

In 1976-77, or thereabouts, the Goa Government of Mrs. S. Kakodkar invited consultants from the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad, to prepare on a professional consultancy basis a long term plan for the development of Goa, Daman and Diu. The Staff College is one of the most prestigious management institutes in the country. The team of consultants from the College was headed by Mr. E. C. Maciel, who has since joined another organization in Bombay.

What emerged from the consultancy exercise is now known as the 15 year Perspective Plan for the development of Goa, Daman and Diu.

The plan, it is needless to say, was prepared without consulting leaders of opinion, leaders of different communities and associations and certainly, the Goan population at large.

The Goa Government of Mr. Rane has accepted the plan in toto, which minor modifications (these are not real changes, but merely increases in certain sector outlays).

So, for the next 15 years, Goa's development and yours may take the shape outlined by a bunch of non-Goans, who juggled statistics offered by out various departments, and wrote the report while sitting in one of the fanciest management institutes this country can boast of.

What follows is a summary of the Perspective Plan and other technical details. This summary is for your information. You are requested to read the entire document - there are two xeroxed copies in circulation among our circle (Government had decreed that the Plan Document should remain "restricted" in circulation. So much for what is said about our democracies).

The Perspective Plan's life is from 1978-1993.
This period will synchronize with the three 5 years plans of the Indian Government as follows:

1978-1983	Sixth Five Year Plan
1983-1988	Seventh Five Year Plan
1988-1993	Eight Five Year Plan

6) But this occupation - fishing - has reached a stage that it can no longer be carried on along traditional lines. It is difficult to tap the availability of marine resources to the maximum by depending upon the practice of fishing with non-mechanization and better and modern techniques of management.

7) A perspective plan can neither be definitive nor mandatory. It outlines major trends of development that are desired or expected in the long run, taking demographic, social and other factors into account. A short term plan (like the five year plans) is generally prepared without taking stock and accounting for the long term effects of the Outputs on the total system. Such a development leads to several imbalances which in the long run influence the economy negatively.

8) Between 1970-71 and 1975-76, the growth rate of the Goan economy was 8.4%. The per capita income went up to Rs.1224.94 from Rs.915.70 in 1970-71, Compared to the all Indian figure of Rs.695.

9) The population per bank office is 6,000 compared to the national average of 29000.

10) Population growth rate : 37% (national average : 25%)
Urban population growth rate : 125% (38% national average)
Influx of outsiders : 1.37 lakhs

11) The plan requires the following conditions for making Goa self-sufficient in food:

- The net sown area must increase from 1,33,575 ha to 1,60,000 ha between 1978-1993.
- Irrigated area must increase from 10,000 ha to 60 ha in the same period.
- The growth rate in paddy cultivation should be 5% instead of 2% as at present.
- The yield of paddy per ha should increase.

There are seven chapters, two statements on outlays, and four appendices. The Chapters are as follows:

1. Profile of the Economy: pp 1-21
2. Approach Issues and Objectives: pp 22-30
3. Macro-Economic Framework: pp 31-52
4. Sector-Wise Analysis and Proposals: pp 53-284

4.1 Agriculture pp 53-69
4.2 Animal Husbandry pp 70-80
4.3 Fisheries pp 81-93
4.4 Forestry pp 94-103
4.5 Industry pp 104-144
4.6 Mining pp 145-154
4.7 Tourism pp 155-181
4.8 Irrigation pp 182-192
4.9 Power pp 193-203
4.10 Transport and Communications pp 204-220
4.11 Education pp 221-238
4.12 Social Services pp 239-250
4.13 Rural Urban Development pp 251-264
4.14 Co-operation pp 265-275
4.15 Institutional Finance pp 276-284
5. Organizational Arrangements: pp 285-294
6. Financial Resources: pp 295-303
7. Plan Formulation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation : pp 304-309

Statement 1: Sector-wise plan outlays for the Perspective Plan period at 1970-71 prices.

Statement 2: Detailed sector wise sixth plan outlays at current prices.

Appendix I: Population Projections (1978-1993)

Appendix II: Estimates of Urban and Rural Distribution (1978-1993)

Appendix III: Projections for Working Population in Goa, Daman and Diu (1978-1993)

Appendix IV: Estimation of Daman for Labour Force during the Perspective Plan period.

Background Material
Lokayan 16/17 May, 1981.

GOLDEN GOA THAT WAS

(From Marg special issue on Goa)

Golden Goa is the legendary name given to the paradisal landscape on the western coast of India.

The beauty of nature, with the blue bays, creeks, and inlets of water lapping on the shores of wooden hills and valleys and at times kissing the long stretch of beaches, make a dramatic setting for the good life, and through the centuries waves of people from the mainland came and settled here and built up intimate cultures.

The Portuguese adventurers of the sixteenth century made Goa harbour the base for their ambition and to found a maritime Empire. With the gunboats came the little ships carrying churchmen, and soon under imperial orders, the local population was asked to seek the Christian faith.

Strange enough, a rich synthesis emerged in the building of churches, cathedrals, chapels and the incidental crafts of ivory and woodcarving, in the hands of Portuguese and Spanish master builders and the local artisans.

The resultant architecture was a Baroque style of unique tropical splendour, unmatched, in any other colonised part of the world.

The tiny strip adjacent to the cost and the main rivers, is as protected as it was isolated by the natural barrier of the Western Ghats and dense forest. Geographically, therefore it is a secluded country lying between two major cultural regions, the Marathi and Kanarese. The local language, Konkani, is not (as is often supposed) a sort of pidgen Marathi but a fully differentiated language derived from Sanskrit and the Prakrits on a line paralled with that of Marathi and Kanarese. Konkani has many portuguese, Arabic and Marathi additions nowadays but until recently the locality of birth according to not only district but village group could be ascertained from a person's local Konkani variant.

Some little ironies strikingly refute the stereotype image of Goans as facile exponents of westernisation. While the gastronomy of the region is not surprisingly among Indias most spectacular, what is much less appreciated is that Goa is a centre of Hindu pilgrimage, ancestral shrines drawing people from many parts of India. In fact, one of the sole remaining temples in India still dedicated to the worships of Brahma is is Goa, and possesses moreover one of the finest MURTI, idol of the South. Is it not a significant irony that the one voice which the millions throughout India love as the very voice of Mother India belongs to a woman who hails from Goa? How many of her admirers know that Lata Mangeshkar, greatest of the movie playback singers, bears the name of Sri Mangesa, most revered deity of Goa, in whose famous temple near Ponda, her family had given service for unnumbered generations? *** Excerpts culled out from the Marg Publications, Golden Goa, 1980.

GOLDEN GOA: My Foot!

The GOVARASHTRA (Goa), after 19 years of euphemistic liberation has been systematically sapped of it's riches and is fast heading towards a 'land of the Jackals'.

Goa today flooded with an influx of people from the neighbouring states, who, besides eating into the economic, and land resources of the Govarashtra, are threatening to devour the Goan 'ethos' culturally and socially as well.

Wide-spread phenomenon of "Educated Unemployment" of a large number of Goan youngsters; break neck speed in the exploitation of Goa's iron ore, manganese, and mineral resources by politically influential private mine owners/exporters; ruthless moving down of strategic and valuable forests by an aggressive and corrupt lobby of forest contractors systematic efforts to eliminate the traditional, rural-based self-employed cottage occupations like toddy tappers, ramponkars (Country boat fishermen), Carpenters, potters, artisans, dhangers and velips (Hill tribes) by introducing every mode of eliminating factors vis-a-vis their occupations, are some of the notorious achievements of the various governments that have ruled and rule Goa till today.

Despite 19 years of much trumpeted self rule, there are several hamlets in Goa which do not enjoy the benefit of potable water, electricity, medical services, transport, schools and proper roads and paths.

On the other hand, while the feverish private mining activity has turned out yester year petty shop-keepers and vegetable sellers into multi-millionaires, vast tracts of fertile green lands and habitanions have been swamped by mining rejects rendering paddy and coconut culture impossible to thousands of agriculturists in Goa, with total impunity to the codified mining laws and regulations. At this hour buried under the heavy weights of dust as far as Goa and it's Government is concerned!

Horticulture like coconut, cashew, pineapple, chiku, papayas, plantations which would have been the only future for Goa are being monopolised by the rich multinationals and non-Goan businessman/ politicians who have bought up large tracts of green land at Sanguem, Quepem, Canacona and Satari Talukas, at a throwaway prices. Similarly, a large percentage of hotels, tourist peraphernelia, business inlets and outlets are today monopolised by a large number of non-Goans, who in turn import non-Goan labour at marginal (starvation level) salaries and wages.

The few big size industries that gate crashed into Goa for the love of its cheap land soft loans, subsidies and other incentives (and not for their love of Goans) have donated Pollution to the various rivers and estuaries of Goa. Whether it be Zuari Agro Chemicals Madras Rubber Factory or Ciba Geigy or the various prawn processing plants scattered all over Goa. Their only benefit to Goa are the large number of slum type illegal hutments to house their non-Goan labour.

The various 3 star and 5 star hotels, "Tourist Resorts" and "Enclosures" built all over the Goan territory have not only rendered Goans aliens in their own homeland but they have turned out to be exclusive enclaves of epicurian affluence and vulgur entertainment with unsatiable appetite to consume the best produce of the Goan Society. While hundreds and thousands off genuine tourists are forced to spend their nights on foot paths, pavements and public gardens. Goan beaches, bus stands and railway station on the other hand, have been systematically turned into centres of nudism, drugging, filth and profligate prostitution all encouraged by the Governmental authorities under the clumsy banner of "Tourism Industry". Undaunted by universal failures like in Sri. Lanka, Phillippines and Kandala in India the existing Government is busy lobbing for an EPZ (Export Promotion Zone) to invite multinationale through the back door under the dubious slogan of 'employment for the local population'.

Besides carrying the yoke of the non-Goan bureaucrats and businessman the Goan masses are today saddled with a brood of young politicians who have formally joined the national mainstream in the realm of "corruption", "nepotism" and "political turn coatmanship". They are in league with the rich mine owners, liquor distillers, land lords, forest contractors, saw mill owners, cashew nut wholesalers big time transport operators, real estate and houring contractors, mechanised fishing boat owners and with the business community at large which are the de facto oppressors of Goans. Whereas, vast multitude of people are left today groping in darkness to find their constant friends and check mate their permanent enemies. In brief, every existing politician today stands potentially doomed by his faulutes - despite the tall publicity and face lift given to them by the Goan media.

Let me remind you and our fellow Goans that it won't be long before Goa is turned into another Sahara. The "desertification" process of Goan economy, minerals, land and forest resources, classical man power potential, and it's unique cultural ethos which began since 1961, has already yielded encouraging results for the die-hard enemies of Goa and Goans at large. What with nearly 40% non-Goans residing in Goa and a bunch of Goan vested interests to assert their predominance over us?

Will you let "The Pearl of the East", "GOLDEN GOA", "The Star of the East" to be converted into another dead meteor?

Think like the Goans feel,
Speak as the Goans do - Konkani,
Be as the Goans are - Socialists.

L E O

THE BASIC CAUSES OF CRISES

by J. D. SETHI

I have received a large number of communications reacting one way or another to my article entitled "India: the most dangerous decades". What is common in most of these communications is a set of two sharply posed questions: (1) how did this situation of multiple crises come about, and (2) what could be the solutions? I would like to answer both questions to the best of my ability, though I feel hesitant to answer the second question because there may be solutions which are feasible but not acceptable and solutions which are desirable may not be feasible.

I do not believe there ever was a dearth of solutions to our problems. If, despite the solutions all our problems survive, it is because we refuse to see what is happening in the black boxes of Indian politics. Besides, any speculation about the future, whether optimistic or pessimistic, is a risky intellectual pursuit, though we need not be as squeamish as William Wilberforce was when he wrote in 1790: "I dare not marry; the future is so dark and uncertain."

I wish to pursue the subject of my last article a little further. Truly the current crisis is not national but civilisational. India is not merely a territorial entity or a nation in the normal sense of the word; it is a civilisation which has already been sliced two or three times. It would be utterly futile to make comparisons of India's crisis with that of any other country which does not have a civilisational character. Leaders come and go, systems rise and fall, crises multiply and disappear, but it takes as long a time for a civilisation to decay as it takes to build. The Indian civilisation, which has stood the test of many centuries, onslaughts, corruption, internal crises and sabotage, now seems to have entered the state of massive decay. Unless this process is drastically arrested, India will go the way of other civilisations.

The incompetence of the leadership that caused the demise of our political system, the dishonesty and corruption of businessmen, the cynicism of the bureaucracy, the massive confrontation of social forces, etc., to which I referred in the last article, are only part of the process of this civilisational decay. The real cause of worry is not the crisis but the incapacity of the power elite and the intellectuals to stand the psychological strains produced by this decay, the disintegration of the fabric of civilisation, and the massive human alienation.

CHINESE TRADITION

It is not necessary to follow any particular philosopher's scheme of rise and fall of civilisations, but we must learn to respect and reckon with the negative and positive historical forces operating in that direction. Most European observers had regarded the social systems of the eternal East as models of tradition that were incapable of modernising themselves. Mao Tse-tung proved them all wrong. He rejected the linear path of the West. By drawing inspiration both from his own past and the present, he was able to safeguard the Chinese tradition and civilisation from decay by modernising them on the strength of their own values as much as on new knowledge.

In the first instance, Mao looked upon China not as a nation but as a civilisation. The Chinese civilisation had also declined and decayed for many centuries. Mao was faced with the problem of integrating the civilisational problem with the problem of building a nation-State. Indeed, his task was even more difficult because he faced another challenge — of international Communism which at that time had subjugated itself to defending the Soviet national interest. Stalin was dead opposed to the Maoist line. Mao successfully fought Stalin by fixing both nationalism and Communism. Mao's remarkable achievement was that he succeeded in combining the rejuvenation of the Chinese civilisation with the building of the Chinese nation-State and the Marxist ideology, something which was unheard of before or since. The so-called failures of Mao Tse-tung, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were no failures. In fact these were essential surgical operations and blood letting to complete the comprehensive civilisational revolution that Mao wanted to accomplish.

POLITICAL SENSE

In our own country, Gandhi faced the same problem when he came on the Indian political scene in the bginning of the century. In many respects the situation of decay and pessimism of today is not much different from what prevailed then. The socio-economic stagnation and the cultural decay of those days had pushed the Indian political leaders and intellectual towards accepting the cultural superiority of the West in every respect. Gandhi used an unusually violent language to denounce the then Indian elite for their collaborationist and subservient attitude towards the Western civilisation.

The situation then corresponded to what Marx described as despotic and static or what Orteg Y. Gassel referred to it as "anthropomorphic vegetations". Toynbee called it "animalism" characteristic of arrested civilisations, i.e., societies in which the pattern of behaviour was like those of lower animals on pre-determined lines. Toynbee described the static situation of decaying civilisation thus: "The equilibrium of forces in their life was so exact that all their energies are absorbed in the efforts of maintaining the position they have attained already, and there is no margin of energy left over for reconnoitring the course of the road ahead, the face of the cliff above them, with a view to further advance."

Gandhi was the first modern Indian to have addressed himself to this problem and made civilisation as the unit of analysis at a time when imperialism reigned supreme. Against the imperialistic nature of the global system, he successfully combined the struggle for creating consciousness about the Indian civilisation with the struggle for making India an independent State. He never gave up this task although his colleagues and successors could not fully appreciate him.

He made the struggle of Indian civilisation against the West and against its own conformist elite the focal point of the national movement. He mobilised the Indian masses and used the mass line to isolate those Indians whom the British had weaned away. His small book "Hind Swaraj", though crudely written, was a seminal work in the sense that (a) it reiterated the superiority of the Indian civilisation over others and reformulated its values; (b) it exposed the hollowness of those who denigrated the Indian civilisation; and (c) it gave bare outlines of the kind of future social, political and economic structure that would be consistent with the value system of the Indian civilisation. Quite remarkably, he, though accepting non-violence as a creed and a way of life, forcefully stated: "I will not hesitate to use any amount of violence if my civilisation was threatened".

Indian Marxists may like it or not, but both history and Gandhi proved that Marx was utterly wrong in his prediction, because even he ignored the civilisational aspect of the change in India. Marx had predicted that British imperialism would play a double, positive as well as negative, role in India. On the one hand, it will destroy what he called "ancient static communities of India" and on the other create a new Western type of civilisation. Almost as a vengeance, India has produced a bastard culture and, in retrospect, it seems that Gandhi was right when he called British imperialism an unmitigated disaster.

As late as 1945, when science, technology, democracy and modern institutions had come to stay in India, Gandhi forcefully reiterated his faith in "Hind Swaraj" (which was originally written in 1908) when Nehru raised some questions about it. It was clear that India would be independent sooner rather than later. Those who describe Gandhi as anti-science or anti-technology have not read him carefully. What Gandhi saw was the danger of British imperialism leaving behind enough of its cultural transmitters who, in the name of science and rationality, would precisely destroy the basic fabric of the Indian society. India was not a small country to be transformed in a short time into a society of the Western type. Gandhi chose Nehru partly because Nehru had earlier talked in civilisational terms and partly because Gandhi thought he alone would be able to integrate the warring factions inside the Congress, while others may divide it.

NATION-STATE

To some extent Nehru perceived Gandhi's approaches to the Indian struggle in a civilisational context when he wrote his "Glimpses of World History" But by the time he had come to write "The Discovery of India" he too had fallen in line with the other leaders and wanted to build India as a powerful nation-State without realising that if the civilisational character of this subcontinent was not kept in view, anti-civilisational forces may be released to thwart the building of the nation-State itself. Despite Gandhi's opposition, other leaders showed indecent hurry in accepting partition which, we now see in retrospect, struck the biggest blow to our civilisation. Between 1947 and 1964 Nehru's was a massive and an imaginative attempt to build India into a modern nation-State, but it was devoid of meeting the civilisational compulsions. That is why the crisis. Indira Gandhi too is a believer in a strong nation-State but is oblivious of civilisational challenges.

There have been many periods when the Indian civilisation went static. The last occasion, before the present era, on which it entered the phase of a prolonged stalemate was somewhere between the reigns of Shahjehan and Aurangzeb. Since then the Indian civilisation continued to decline until the emergence of Gandhi who attempted to stem the tide. Aurangzeb who tried to build a nation-State negated or even destroyed the civilisational character of the challenge through his religious bigotry and thus ended up by ultimately making both the nation-State and the civilisation decline further, so much so that no monarch after him could even attempt to build the nation-State. The British found India ripe for a takeover.

On the other hand, the Sikhs and the Marathas concentrated totally on safeguarding and renovating the Indian civilisation. But they had poor understanding of the nation-State. The scope for a retrieval of the situation became extremely limited because in this period the push towards a nation-State and the civilisational struggle got pitted against each other, resulting in economic and social stagnation for the next three centuries. The process of assimilation and acculturation of new influences into the Indian civilisation was stopped. For the next 300 years or so the Indian civilisation continued to decline, yielding to easy British occupation of the country. The rise of British imperialism, the partition of India and even the present-day communal conflicts are the product or the residual problems of the same contradiction.

POWER ELITE

One of the main characteristics of the Indian civilisation was the separation of elite functions with or without a hierarchy. The functions of value-determination, exercise of political power and money-making — the three functions of the different components of the power elite—were kept separate. Whenever this separation and the balance between the three functions were maintained, the Indian society moved forward and progressed. Whenever this balance was upset or any of the components failed to perform its functions, the system declined or collapsed.

All these functions and the elite groups performing them went through a prolonged and agonising decline in the latter Mughal phase of the Indian civilisation. Not unnaturally, therefore, it became more difficult to define and perform these functions when it came to modern times. It was the neglect of the civilisational compulsions that caused continuous drift of Muslims away from others and this was fully exploited by the British.

The hierarchical dimensions of the power elite had to contend with the modern dimensions of democratic societies with a growing horizontal proliferation and plurality. The double challenge the Indian civilisation faced in its earlier phases of crises had now been imposed on the elite's

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The basic causes of crises

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incapacity to cope with the challenges of the modern techno-democratic system. The elite imbalances and their functional confusion are the main sources of the prevailing crisis.

Even before Gandhi came on the scene attempts were made in different parts of the country to rejuvenate the Indian civilisation by destroying the widespread ritualism which had come to dominate it in the period of stagnation. This was done by introducing some powerful Western elements such as rationality and science into the main body of the Indian society. This combination of Western rationalism and Indian civilisation might have turned out to be very deadly but for the fact that it insisted on the Brahminical tradition of keeping a critical distance between the elite and the masses.

Men like Rammohun Roy, Ranade, Gokhale and Bankimchandra Chatterji were the great pioneers in this new integration and assimilation process. For a while it seemed that the Indian elite might succeed, but the British imperialists proved too clever for them. They cut short this process and split the elite in their own favour by making a section of them accept the superiority of the Western civilisation. Gandhi challenged this split by denouncing both British imperialism and those who had become its stooges. He shifted the entire thrust and focus of the national movement from a nation-State fighting against an imperialist State to a grand civilisational conflict. He ser. ously took up the challenge of the Western civilisation and developed an intransigent resistance to its cultural onslaught. What a contrast! The British could not buy up the Indian mind in 200 years. After Independence it has been sold to them through our indigenous Mephistopheles. The contradictions of our society are truly Faustian.

The mistake that the post-war leaders made was that they politicised everything and put every problem of the Indian civilisation into the political perspective of a nation-State. They also re-established old hierarchies which had been the main cause of the decay of the Indian civilisation. They reintroduced the idea of a new caste and status in politics and society. Nobody is more conscious of his status today than the Indian intellectuals. Through status and hierarchy, the Indian cultur ' and intellectual life got bifurcated, partly outside the context of the Indian civilisation and partly inside it, thereby developing split personalities over the entire leadership spectrum.

Nowhere is this more sharply reflected than in the two per cent English-knowing educated classes refusing to see the communication problem of the rest of the 98 per cent of the population for which English makes no sense. Gandhi gave the highest priority to this issue of communication between the masses and through his unflinching effort made the entire country accept simple Hindi as the lingua franca. His successors singularly failed to carry forward this tradition and if there are not one but two Indias today in the cultural sense it is because of that mistake.

It is the middle class which always carries the civilisational values. Nehru created a large middle class in the hope that it would act as a buffer between the State and the masses. But, he paid scant attention to two aspects of this class: (a) the numerical growth of the middle class has been three times the growth of the working class — something which was bound to create an economic crisis; and (b) that this class could become the enemy of the Indian civilisation by refusing even to look at it, not to speak of enriching it. In one sense, the crisis of our society is the crisis of this parasitic class because the economy cannot produce enough economic surplus to feed its fancies and dysfunctions Th class is completely alienated from the masses.

The collapse of norms and values of our society and the middle classes is a direct expression of this civilisational crisis. The society is sick to the point of death. In face of colossal human suffering and poverty we pride ourselves on being cheerfully cynical. Our universities and research institutions are no longer places of learnir ' and scholarship; they are waysides for gentlemen radicals. The daily pressures on the ordinary man's already diminished integrity are so fierce that he inflicts his own inadequacy on his nearest and dearest. The value-setters, social reformers and revolutionaries of today are unfamiliar sorcerers. India is being ruined by the contagion of despair about the neglect of its civilisational values.

Sometimes people express amazement at the loss of values and the recrudescence of such ugly phenomena as communal violence. These are not the expressions of a transitional society moving into a new one. Instead they are the symptoms of the decay of societal values. India had to be partitioned to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem, but now it is returning to the same form as it existed in the pre-partition days. I am prepared to risk a prediction: Communal riots will not stop unless the fundamental causes are tackled first.

If the new classes among the Hindus have been unable to grapple with the civilisational problem of India, it is too much to expect the Muslims to do so. Every religious group is attracted towards some civilisational magnet. If the Muslims are looking elsewhere, it is the Hindus who are partly to blame, though the Muslims, by turning away from the process of civilisational integration, are making it impossible for the Hindus to trust them.

On the other hand, the role of the R.S.S. is not very different either. This organisation is no more communal than the Akali's, the Muslim League or the politicised Christian missionaries. The tragedy is that as an organised body of the Hindus, it has neither developed the full concept of the nation-State nor learnt the dynamics of a civilisational change. Paradoxically, it is a non-developed conservative force of dedicated cadres. Hence its continuous degeneration into sectarianism.

There are tides among nations when powers rise and fall. The States grow stronger or weaker. There may be riptides among nations, vast torrents of change in politics and economics and culture sweeping away old structures and creating new ones. In this tide Gandhi represented the collective conscience of the Indian people and their civilisation and his successors the collective interests of the elite. India is not merely facing economic or military competition with other nations. She is pitted against alien civilisational forces whose strength is now formidable. The external threats to the country need not take the form of external aggression. It is enough that her social and cultural fabric is destroyed by all kinds of open or settled intervention through culture, technology, ideology and other factors.

TAILPIECE: Prince Karan Singh is the latest defector. He would not like to be reminded of what he said of his predecessors in this game of rattling on one's comrades. I would also dismiss the story he is circulating in Delhi's fashionable circles that, according to astrologers, he is to be the next Prime Minister. Mrs Gandhi is there only to keep the "gaddi" warm for him until the stars appropriately constellate. But I cannot let pass his defection as it has a bearing on the substance of this article. Prince Karan Singh swears by the name Aurobindo who gave the finest and the most sophisticated shape to values and principles of the Indian civilisation. Karan Singh is free to flirt with any political party he likes, but is it exorbitant to expect him not to desecrate the name of Aurobindo and thus defile our civilisation?

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belief in Positivism, that has become embedded in our psyches through the process of technology in its present domination; the entirely erroneous assumption that it is 'subject-matter' that is being examined, etc.

Another one may be the inability to see the relationships between 'subjective' and 'objective', specifically the conditions under which the then 'subjective' becomes the 'objective' and vice-versa.

4 - Let us go back to point one. I have said that it is my belief that what is being primarily investigated is the process of change that takes place in the course of direct, participatory investigation. It is true that the first description of such a process would be 'personal'. But then are not all 'first' findings 'personal' observations ? However when there is a broad enough data base i.e. a number of such 'personal' findings, to enable one ~~in~~ studying the data to distinguish between what is common in most descriptions, then do we not have the beginnings of an 'objective' science ?

What I am trying to say is that the original collection of data is always 'personal', that is on the basis, ultimately, of the likes and dislikes of the pioneering investigator. It is only when there is an adequate ~~mass~~ data base of such 'personal' findings that some-one then tries to co-relate them to find the common ground and the differences, to systematise them as the first step towards 'objectivity'. To the person systematising the findings of others, these findings are less 'personal'. What is personal to the systematiser is his/her categories, classes, method of systematisation. As the process develops e.g. steps of hypotheses, laws, theories, etc. there is greater and greater distancing from the 'personal' and great and greater degrees of 'objectification' - for all stages can now be seen, and perhaps take place, simultaneously.

However the very increasing complexity of the process also leads to much being taken for granted and it is this 'taken for granted' that converts, let us say, objective knowledge to subjective beliefs.

5 - Conscious grasp of the stages and subtleties mentioned above will, it is hoped, sharpen the methods of acquiring knowledge and 'purify' it so that humankind and the individual can the better comprehend the universe of its/ one's experience/existence the more adequately vibe with it for its/one's purposes.

SOME THOUGHTS ON WHAT HAS COME TO BE KNOWN AS 'PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH', 'DIRECT INVESTIGATION', AND, PERHAPS, 'ORAL HISTORY'.

Dec 6: 19

1 - This method of investigation is one that changes the very subjectmatter even as the investigation itself is proceeding viz. the UNU paper on 'Dialectical Transformation', Dialogue.... and the example of how 'scholar', 'worker' come to first name terms in the study "Mining - What's happening to the workers".

If this is so then clearly it cannot be the 'subject-matter' that is being investigated, the very subject-matter being in a state of flux. Perhaps then what is being investigated is the process of change itself ? That is: the moments of that process are being recorded and being recorded as the 'personal' experience of the investigator.

2 - True that such investigation into the 'process' itself provides valuable insights into the 'objective' conditions e.g. the economic, social, cultural forces at work on both the investigator and the subject of the investigation viz. the scholar and the worker in our abovem example, and it also records the 'personal' reactions of these to the forces, but, in view of the suggestion made above, these should be deemed to be secondary benefits of the investigation itself.

Here the charge made against such a method of investigation is that it is 'subjective' - and such a charge is perhaps perfectly valid to start with. Consider: the reactions of both are 'personal' and these themselves change in the course of the investigation, if , for no other reason, then the interaction between the investigator and the 'subject' - so that if they were to go back over the whole process they would certainly deal with it in an entirely different way. The same situation could never be repeated in substantially the same way. It is not only 'subjective' one would say, it is pre-eminently ' subjective' - in the sense that it is once and gone forever !

3 - The common error is not in that. The common error is in correctly seeing this type of investigation as 'subjective' and from there concluding/implying that therefore somehow it is invalid. There are many reasons for such an unwarranted 'leap'. One could be the deep-rooted

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जनता श्रमिक समिति
जन्म और विकास

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धनबाद के कोयला खान मजदूरों के बीच शोषणविहीन और जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था के स्थापना के लिए "जनता श्रमिक समिति" की शुरूआत हुई ।

कोयला खदानों के राष्ट्रीयकरण से पहले यह उद्योग पूंजीपतियों के हाथ में था सन् 1963 ई0 में जीगता कोलियरी को बन्द कर दिया गया । मजदूरों को खान के मालिक चंचनो ने आश्वासन दिया कि जब कभी कम्पनी पुन: चालू किया जाएगा तो सर्व सर्वप्रथम पुराने मजदूरों को नौकरी दी जाएगी लेकिन कम्पनी पुन: 1971 ई0 में चालू हुआ इस बीच की लम्बी अवधि में सभी परदेशी मजदूर वापस चले गए लेकिन स्थानीय आदिवासी और हरिजन मज दूर किसी तरह अपना जीवन यापन करते रहे स्थानीय मजदूरों को पूरा भरोसा था कि जब भी कुपनी पुन: शुरू होगी हमें सर्वप्रथम रोजगार दिया जाएगा । इन मजदूरों में से बहुतों के भविष्य निधि (प्राविडेंट फण्ड) का पैसा अभी तक नहीं मिला है ।

सन् 1971 ई 0 में चनवनी से केवड़ा कं0 ने इस खान को खरीद लिया उसी समय इमामुल हई खाँ के मजदूर संगठन से सांठ-गाँठ करके यहाँ के पुराने मजदूरों को भगाने का षडयंत्र रचा गया पुराने मजदूरों की जगह सतग्राम(बंगाल) से मजदूरों को लोकर खादान का काम शुरू किया गया । इसी बीच हम मजदूरों की भेंट सिजुआ के श्री कृष्ण बल्लभ सहाय जी से हुई उन्होंने सारी समस्या — सुनने के बाद हमें सुझाव दिया कि एक भी मजदूर धौड़ा (मजदूरों की बस्ती) के घर खाली न करें । इसी समय से पुराने मजदूरों का सभाएं और संगठन का काम शुरू हो गया ।

इसी साल जीगता कोलियरी का राष्ट्रीयकरण हो गया । फिर भी पुराने मजदूरों को काम पर नहीं लिया गया राष्ट्रीयकरण के बाद भी रेल डिब्बों में कोयला लादने का काम ठीकेदारों के द्वारा ही करवाया जाता रहा । छँटनी ग्रस्त मजदूर इन्हीं ठीकेदार के अधीन और आसपास के खदानों में काम करते रहे कोयला उद्योग के राष्ट्रीयकरण के बाद जीगता और मोदी डीह कोलियरी के छँटनीग्रस्त मजदूरों में से सिर्फ एक चौथाई लोगों को ही नौकरी मिली । बाकी स्थान पर बीहर के लोगों को नौकरी मिली । राष्ट्रीयकरण के बाद भी वे सभी मजदूर बेकार हो रहे जिनका वंशगत पेशा और जीविका का आधार कोयला खान में काम करना ही रहा है ।

इसी बीच राणा जनार्दन सिंह, प्राण गोपाल, गांगुली, मुरली बाबू, उदय सिंह एवं कृष्ण बल्लभ सहाय जी के प्रयास से श्री बी0पी0 सिन्हा सिजुआ कोलियरी आए । श्री सिन्हा के प्रयास से फिर कुछ पुराने मजदूरों को नौकरी मिली ।

इस कोयला क्षेत्र में हमलोगों के संगठन का काम इन मजदूरों के नौकरी की माँग को लेकर शुरू हुआ जो धीरे-धीरे समाज परिवर्तन की लड़ाई का स्वरूप ग्रहण करने लगा सन् 74 में बिहार आंदोलन शुरू हुआ । बिहार आंदोलन के शुरू होने पर जब जयप्रकाशजी ने गाँव-गाँव में "जनता समिति" का गठन करने का आहवान किया तो सिजुआ कोयला में भी जनता समितियाँ गठित की जाने लगी । धनबाद में जयप्रकाशजी को आम सभा

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का आयाजन हुआ जिसमें जगता और मोदोडोह को यला क्षेत्र के मजदूर काफो संख्या में भाग लिए । इस आम सभा के बाद इन कोयला क्षेत्र के मजदूरों में काफो चेतना का संचार हुआ । हरेक मजदूर बस्तो में बैठकों का आयोजन होने लगा। बिहार आंदोलन के दौरान हो शराब,जुआ, सूदखोरो आदि के खिलाफ भो आंदोलन शुरू हो गया ।

सन् 1975 में देश में आपात्काल को धोषणा के बाद मजदूरों के बोच में राजनोतिक और सामाजिक आंदोलन को गतिविधिया धोमो हो गई । आपात्काल को धोषणा और नागरिक अधिकारों में कटौतो के विरोध में जनता समिति को ओर से सिजुआ में मौन जुलूस निकाला गया तथा काला दिवस मनाया गया उसो दिन तय किया गया कि भ्रष्ट अधिकारियों के हाथों 15 अगस्त 75 को राष्ट्रोय ध्वज नहों फहराने दिया जाएगा । श्रो कृष्णवल्लभ सहाय और स्व0 युधिष्ठिर महतो सहित 5 साथो जिला मुख्यालय में जिलाधोश से पहले उनको स्थान पर ध्वज फहरा दिए । पुलिस द्वारा इन साथियों को जानलेवा पिटाई हुई और इन्हें धनबाद जेल में बन्द कर दिया गया । इन धटना से जोगता और मोदोहोह को यला क्षेत्र के मजदूरों में काफो गुस्सा पैदा हुआ ।

आपात्काल के दौरान हो रेल डिब्बों में कोयला भरने के लिए "पे - लो डर" नामक मशोन आयातित किया गया । इस मशोन के आ जाने से पूरे भारत कोकिंग कोल में करोब 50 हजार मजदूरों को छँटनो कर दो गई । सिर्फ सिजुआ और मो दोडोह क्षेत्र में करोव 10 हजार मजदूरों को छँटना को गई । ये सभो मजदूर भूख और वोमारो के कारण मरने को स्थिति में है ।

आपात्काल में हो इन समस्याओं से लड़ने के लिए जनता समिति का फैलाव होता रहा । कुछ समय बाद इसका नाम "जनता श्रमिक समिति" कर दिया गया । छटनोग्रस्त और गिरफ्तार साथियों के परिवारों के लिए प्रत्येक घर से एक -एक मुट्ठो अनाज पतिदिन जमा किया जाता था । मुठिया जमा करके संकटग्रस्त साथियों के परिवारों को मदद किया जाता था मजदूरों कक बच्चों को पढ़ाने के लिए स्लेट-पेन्सिल,किताब ,कापो आदि भो वितरित किया जाने लगा । मजदूरों को लड़कियों के शादो -विवाह,मृत्यु आदि में भो आपसो सहयोग द्वारा काम किया जाने लगा । शराबखो रो,जुआ,सूदखोरो के खिलाफ जनमत तैयार होने लगा । आपात्काल के दौरान हो सिजुआ और मोदोहोह इलाके में शराव,सूदखोरो एवं जुआ खेलना बन्द हो गया । इन चोजो से पुलिस, स्थानोय गुंडे और व्यापारो के हित को नुकसान पहुंचा । जनता श्रमिक समिति के साथियों को धमकी देना,झूठे मुकदमें , जानसे मार डालने का षडयंत्र इन लोगों द्वारा चलाया गया परन्तु इस कार्य में वे विफल रहे क्योंकि जनता श्रमिक समिति शांतिपूर्ण तरोको द्वारा यह काम कर रहो थो । मजदूरों को समझाकर और दबदबा डालकर ये सभो कार्यक्रम चलाए जाते थे अत: निहित स्वार्थ वाले लोग हमेशा असफल रहे ।

जनता श्रमिक समिति को मुह ल्ला समितियों के द्वारा आपसी झगड़ों का निबटारा हो ने लगा । अंतत: पुलिस और प्र शासन का हस्तक्षेप आम जोवन में धोरे -धोरे कम हो गाया ।

1977 ई0 में जनता पारटो को स्थापना के बाद जनता श्रमिक समिति का काम और भो तेजो से चलने लगा क्योंकि सभा औ र संगठन का काम करने के लिए लोग स्वतंत्र हो गए । धोरे -धोरे कतरास तथा धनवाद के अन्य क्षेत्रों में भो जनता श्रमिक समिति फैलने लगो है । जनता श्रमिक समिति के रचनात्मक कार्यों का प्रमाण यह है कि जनता पारटो को सरकार द्वारा नशाबन्दो कार्यक्रम लागू किए जाने के बाद धनबाद में जहरोलो शराव पोकर काफो लोग मरे, किन्तु जनता श्रमिक समिति के प्रभाव वाले क्षेत्र में एक भो लोग नहों मरे । कतरास और गोधर इलाके में काफो संख्या में लोग जहरोलो शराव पोकर मरे उन इलाकों में अव जनता श्रमिक समिति फैल रहो है । कतरास और गोधर इलाके में शराबबंदो का कार्यक्रम अभो जोरो से चल रहा हे ।

उपर्युक्त कार्यक्र मों से इन क्षेत्रों के [illegible] लोगों में राजनोतिक और सामाजिक चेतना फैलाने में जनता श्रमिक समिति काफो हद तक सफल हुई हे । जनता श्रमिक समिति द्वारा अगला कार्यक्रम पोने के पानो, स्कूल, अस्पताल को व्यवस्था और छँटनोग्रस्त लोगों को रोजगार को लड़ाई होगो । भारत जैसे देश में जहां करोड़ों सक्षम लोग बेकार हैं वहां सरकार बड़े मशोन बना रहो है । रहने के लिए मकान, स्कूल और पोने के पानो को कोई व्यवस्था नहों हैं । इन चोजों के अभाव में कोयला क्षेत्र के मजदूर नारकोय जोवन बिता रहे हैं ।

जनता श्रमिक समित सामाजिक सुधार, रचनात्मक कार्यक्र म और [illegible] जन प्रशिक्षण के द्वारा देश को व्यवस्था बदलने में विश्वास करतो है ।

धन्यवाद ।

विजयभर ।

ORIGINAL

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INDIA: THE MOST DANGEROUS DECADES

By

J.D. SETHI

The 1980s and 1990s are going to be the two most dangerous decades for India. Others said the same for earlier decades and were proved wrong. I hope I shall be proved wrong by those who, through their mystical reflections, have got a blind faith in the nation's destiny.

However, if the emerging crises are not sternly faced, I fear these might converge on one another, sooner than later, to explode into our faces and the prevailing stoic anger and inertia may burst into violent fury. India may not survive these two decades if her power elite, instead of preparing themselves to meet the multiple challenges and crises, remain wilfully engaged in search for a disaster. Indeed, the time is running out on us.

Although there was never a period over the past 33 years when India did not face one crisis or another - sometimes of a very serious nature - never before had she to contend with the convergence of such serious crises, both internal and external, as she faces now. It is tragic that the elite response is either collective acquiescence, breat-beating or becoming panicky or downright lies. It seems that there is no scope left for truth or honestry in India's political leaders. Indeed, we have become a nation of liars. Pick up any newspaper in the morning and see the truth about the lies anywhere.

POLITICAL SYSTEM

India faces four major threats, all at the same time. First, the Indian political system is dead and cannot be revived. Second, the Indian economy has been pushed into a situation of premature decay. Third, social violence is reaching such dangerous proportions as may rip the society apart both horizontally and vertically, and, finally, the massive military built-up by all major powers in the areas around India has created an unprecedentedly threatening situation from outside. Externally, India is being

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encircled from all sides by the super powers and their satellites.

The demise of the political system took place some years ago. But the politicans in their innocence believe it not and act like a mother in her infatuation who refuses to believe the death of her child. Political scientists act like maggots entering this body through various wounds. The death of the political system has orphaned political functionaries.

We may have had a series of elections but with each election the political institutions have been disrupted, corrupted and now destroyed. Political parties have become irrelevant because to win an election the political machine is needed no more. The judiciary has been undermined, humiliated and its powers have been usurped. The bureaucracy is nearly paralysed. The education system, except that part of it which is appropriated by a small and affluent minority, has totally collapsed. Not only have the institutions been destroyed but all those norms and values which impose disciplines on political elements have been thrown to the winds.

PARASITES

Yet there is no exit from politics. It is a remarkable aspect of Indian life that once a politician, always a politician, whether in power, in legislature, in committees or completely outside power. Most Indian politicians and socalled political activists cannot make an honest living outside politics. According to one estimate, there are about two million such perpetual parasites living on the system through means and measures which could not but wreck any system. The Indian economy and society are too weak and poor to retain this vast non-functional army with the limited economic surplus it produces.

The death of the Indian political system is being debated but with great irrelevancies such as the choice between the parliamentary v. the presidential form of government, the basic v. the non-basic

structure of the Constitution, the Centre v. the States etc. It is a great reflection of the bankruptcy of the Indian Marxists that they have reduced every aspect of Marxism to Centre-State relations only.

In fact what has been thrown up is a loose combination of authoritarian and anarchic forces, so loose as to be ineffective and yet so intertwined as not to allow a new system and new institutions to grow and function. The line between the elective and the non-elective systems has disappeared. Attempts being made to revive artifically the dead political system, instead of giving birth to a new one, make no sense.

ELITE LEADERSHIP

There seems hardly any possibility for the rise of a new political system until such time as a new leadership emerges. The entire second generation leadership of both the ruling party and the Opposition has turned out to be corrupt, incompetent and devoid of all political norms. The attempts made to create a third generation elite leadership by the Naxalites, the R.S.S., the Janata and, finally, the Sanjayites, have all flopped. Indeed, some of the roughnecks of the defunct third generation leadership have proved so nasty and brutish that it seems that the alternative to the present system would be some kind of a dictatorship.

Those who had revelled in the illusion that India's foreign policy was a howling success now face its howling failure. The entire external environment with its manifold inside-outside hookups has become potentially hostile. It seems that for nearly two decades there has been no active policy.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. efforts to counteract Moscow by declaring that it would resort to military action if further inroads are made into the Gulf region, as well as the Chinese manoeuvres in support of the U.S.A. on other flanks in this conflict, are all likely to keep us under many

pressures of destabilisation. From now on whether it is detenete or a situation of confrontation between the great powers perpetuating itself, or at the end of the decade the Soviet Union becomes friendly with China, the threshold of the military presence of these powers in areas around India in one form or another will continue to be raised, with every move posing a bigger trespass. Therefore, if a domestic convulsion is ignited by some major external crisis, the country may face dismemberment.

GUIDELINES

The naval activities of the two super powers threaten to turn the Indian Ocean into another Mediterranean. So far several factors had helped to limit military and naval deployment in the Indian Ocean. If the super powers have not been able to increase their presence at a higher level, it was because of obstacles to a possible naval agreement stemming from technical considerations and the difficulty involved in setting up qualitative limitation guidelines. The situation which did not permit or provoke any super power to have a preponderant presence in this ocean has disappeared with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. Gulf doctrine. India has suddenly become vulnerable.

The consequences of Pakistan exploding a nuclear device could be serious. What is going to complicate the situation is the fact that Pakistan has since 1971 increased its military strength by 70 per cent. This means that if we leave the divisions and forces which are deployed on the border with China, there is almost complete parity between India and Pakistan in military terms. According to some analysts, Pakistan has an edge over us and will continue to have it in future if the West decides to arm that country. Whether or not Pakistan is heavily armed by the U.S.A. and China or makes approaches to the Soviet Union, the consequences for India would be serious once Pakistan explodes the bomb.

POVERTY

The most startling aspect of the situation is the premature decay of the economy. It is quite surprising that whereas for over a decade and a half the rate of gross savings and investment has moved from about 12 per cent to about 23 per cent, the rate of growth has declined from about 4.5 per cent per annum to about 3 per cent in 15 years. But it is not quite surprising that, consequent upon this development, the number of people who have been pushed below the poverty line has been increasing. The rate of growth of money supply, inflation, Budget deficits, the balance of trade deficits, etc., have all doubled or trebled. It is difficult to think of another country in the world which has got into this kind of a mess. There is no economic theory to explain all this.

It is for all of us to note that the economy is totally mismanaged, both in the private and the public sectors. The infrastrutture, such as power and transport, has declined in performanee so much as to make nonsense of any further planning. Not to speak of earning profit, public sector undertakings are unable to provide even for interest on borrowed capital. Industrial sickness is spreading like an epidemic. Misallocation of resources has destroyed economic rationality. The rural-urban dichotomies and the respective lobbies that lie behind them are making the system increasingly rigid.

NEW GROWTH

More and more controls and regulations are being introduced to sustain the old ones which have already ceased to produce results. Curiously, attempts at liberalisation of the economy are being resisted not only by the ideologues but by business itself. Business has developed vested interests in maintaining a controlled shortage economy.

The crisis of industry is its growing sickness and low growth rate, both of which emanate from sources that have exhausted their

capacity to generate and stimulate new growth. Besides, tariff protection, subsidised finance, under-priced foreign exchange and under-priced infrastructure and other intermediate goods supplied by the public sector, etc., have all combined to bring about a premature decay of Indian industries.

The most important reason for industrial sickness is the inter-elite conflict as well as joint elite effort to maximise illegal gains by a variety of methods. The fiscal and regulatory system has been such as to give the bureaucracy a big share in illegal graft, and to allow business to manipulate production, distribution, gross earnings and profits. How much of production is illegally sold is anybody's guess, but the fact that when even conditions of high demand, availability of credit and raw materials, moderate taxation, etc., are fully satisfied, firm after firm keeps adding unlicensed and yet apparently "unutilised" capacity. This is a fraud unknown in history. The crux of the problem is that when the owners can make larger profits by illegal means than otherwise, they develop a vested interest in sickness because once an industry is declared sick, numerous other concessions from government can be utilised for reducing costs in addition to what is taken out from unlicensed capacities.

Behind industrial stagnation lie technological obsolescence (despite many claims to the contrary) overaging technology, neglect of regular modernisation of the production mechanism, absence of innovations in production and marketing, etc.

India entered the phase of technological stagnation and even decay some years ago. This is not so obvious to many because visits to industrial complexes give the impression of tremendous progress. This progress relates to the past. Some new technologies are also being added every year. What has stagnated or declined is the rate of technological progress because of continuous reliance on imported technologies without the creation of a system of linkages between import and adoption, innovation and research and development.

How does one measure technical progress? One macro measure is increase in productivity. In industry and manufacturing productivity has sharply declined. The rate of growth of productivity now is less than one-half of 1 per cent per annum and this is in sharp contrast to about 4 per cent in the fifties to about 2 per cent in the sixties and over 1½ per cent in the first half of the seventies.

SHARP CONTRAST

The business community went wild with joy when the Congress(I) won the elections early in 1980. They saw the prospects of the Government banning strikes, as was done during the last Emergency. They do not realise that infrastructural bottlenecks and slow deliveries of inputs and services are far more fundamental causes of the loss of working days; strikes are a crucial factor only in two or three sectors facing major disputes.

The situation on the labour front is far more serious in another way. It reflects stagnation or decline in labour productivity. In this field the role of the public sector has been disastrous; no norms of efficiency are observed by anyone, be they administrators, technicians or workers. In general, India loses 30 to 40 million mandays every year and no labour legislation, however stiff, can meet the challenge because there is no serious cost consciousness among decision makers at all levels. And now this figure is reaching the 50 million mark.

BLACK MONEY

Besides, workers are not always unaware of the black money generated by the employers. The share of this illegal graft also goes to trade union leaders who sometimes live better than the employers. Demoralisation, bitterness and resistance to work produced by this business culture are wrecking the human side of industry.

The most serious problem of the Indian economy and polity is the massive generation of black money. It is true that black

money is generated in every country, but the important difference between India and other countries is that in India black money has even crossed the limit at which it becomes inconsistent with the efficiency of the system. In recent years black money generation has been growing at a very fast rate in this country, so much so that it has become difficult to isolate a single sector of the economy or administration which moves without the use of black money. In fact, black money does not oil the system any more; it obstructs decision-making.

Most economists are unanimous in their view that black money generation has become a major factor for inflaming inflation, because it not only misallocates resources but also shifts them from investment to consumption. Above all, black money generation makes nonsense of all anti-poverty programmes because in the final analysis this money comes from the pockets of the poor.

All the constraints which had limited India's growth rate in the past two decades have now disappeared. Food, other wage goods, foreign exchange, savings, technical manpower and irrigation are no longer serious constraints. Yet the economy has moved into a situation of premature decay. It seems that the reasons are more political than economic. They are also cultural and marginal. Economic recovery is dependent upon a political alternative which is not yet on the horizon.

SOCIAL RELIEF

India has faced many political and economic crises in the past nut never did she face the kind of social crisis it faces now. Earlier, the severity of conflicts and violence was confined to communal problems. Over the past few years social violence has spread over many fields. Indeed, social violence in one field is now setting up a chain link by its extension to other fields. The most disturbing aspect of the situation is the general belief

that violence is the only course left for defending oneself. It is possible to think of law and order measures, education and social work when conflict is, by and large, social. But when social and economic conflicts coincide the result often is large-scale bloodshed.

The alienation of the masses from the elite and the authority is also complete. There is no respect left for law and order, and the law openly appears as an instrument of oppression and violence. In view of the complexity and the mutually contradictory nature of the social crisis, it cannot transform itself into a revolutionary movement. It often creates new outlets for violence while the status quo remains.

The most ugly aspect of social violence is the participation of the police itself in rape, dacoities and murders. At no time in our history has the police been hated so much as it is today. Third degree methods are used by the police to extort information leading often to deaths in prison. If social violence, re-imposed by police violence, is not checked, it will overtake both the economy and the polity. Indeed, it has already overtaken a large part of both. The very survival of the Indian society is now at stake.

If the benefits of economic growth and prosperity are appropriated by a small minority and more and more people are pushed below the poverty line, society cannot remain stable and peaceful. On top of it, when it faces a 25 to 30 per cent rate of inflation, it is bound to hurt severely also the middle class whose expansion has been unnatural and faster than that of the working classes. Even if the degree of violence has not changed as is claimed by the Government, its intensity has certainly become sharper and is felt acutely among the more vocal classes. The erosion of their incomes is rapidly leading to the criminalisation of society. There is a link between black money, inflation and social violence. All of them made their contributions to the demise of the political system and now threaten the survival of the nation.

NUTRITION

Besides economic poverty, the Indian society suffers from large-scale social poverty. In fact, the two have been so compounded recently as to generate new violence and bitterness. The technical meaning of the poverty line is that people living below it do not get adequate nutrition because of an inadequate calorie and protein intake. More and more people have been pushed below the poverty line. It is no exaggeration that India is going through biological decay and this decay is severe in the case of destitutes. If this situation persists, in two decades from now at least 20 per cent of the children born will be morons. Yet we take pride in the fact that we have a sophisticated medical education system. India is the only country in the world in which the poor pay for the health of the rich. This is also true of other social services such as education.

Indeed, the nation is getting divided against itself everywhere. There are two Indias in more than one sense and they are moving into a collision course: (a) those below the poverty line and those above it; (b) the relatively developing eight States and the stagnanat rest; (c) areas that are becoming susceptible to permanent militant intervention and the rest; (d) the minority of the English language educated elite and the rest; (e) one set of communal and caste clusters against the others. Rural-urban dichotomies and rigidities have reached a stage at which economic policies relating to both have become impossible to pursue and which are pushing urban and rural elite into a serious collision.

AUTHORITARIANISM

We have left behind practically all the optimism, assumptions and beliefs about what Independence was to bring. Every belief now seems to have been grossly misconceived. The emotions stirred by the rising tide of nationalism have become feelings

of bitterness. Democracy may or may not have had much significance for the bottom half of the population, but the survival of democratic institutions had been regarded more confidently by the other half. Now that hope has gradually disappeared, if not into the actual death of democracy, at least into the fear of its future extinction. Politics is in the malevolent grip of those who have no respect for democratic norms and, instead, have the guts to treat people with contempt. The scale of hopes unfulfilled was seen during the Emergency and the Janata rule, and is now seen in the rising tide of the new and old forces of corrupt authoritarianism.

COMPLEXITY

If India's leaders do not change their methods, values and commitments, the country's very survival may necessitate military intervention. Students of Indian political change have so far concentrated their attention - and probably rightly - on institutions, leaders, the party system and the bargaining system. The role of the armed forces in politics was not studied because, for a variety of reasons, they were given no role. Their history, their structure and organisation and their ethics - all pointed to their political neutrality. Most of all, the complexity of the Indian society and the checks and balances built into the armed forces on the basis of that social complexity ruled out any adventurist military intervention in politics. However, the situation has now changed and points towards the strong probability of their intervention unless the above mentioned four threats to India's survival are removed and a responsible, competent and honest political leadership emerges.

There is a limit to which crises can go on multiplying and deepening. Beyond that limit there can only be an explosion. There is, however, no chance of a revolution because the Indian Left still live in the sub-thirties. When corruption becomes a routine, hypocrisy and lies become norms and cynicism and opportunism are indispensable, there is bound to be complete alienation

between the Government and the elite on the one side and the people on the other. When the Government moves either too late or too little or leaps too far and too soon, it is bound to widen that gap further.

I hope and earnestly pray that every word I have written above is unlikely to prove right.

Mr. J.D. Sethi is a scholar, economist, former member of the Planning Commission and Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Research.

From the Editorial of Tribune of the same day:

> "We carry on this page today a long article which some readers will consider as too depressing to be suitable for Independence Day. That the author of the article has painted the future of the country in a language of unrelieved gloom is a fact. We decided to publish his views not to add to the prevailing despondency in the nation, but in the hope that the views expressed by the author after a serious analysis will bring unpleasant realities closer to the public eye. The importance of Independence Day cannot be reduced by words of warning. On the other hand, if India has to survive in one piece and self-respect, it is necessary that those who have the capacity to think should learn to face the truth which is the only way to begin thinking of solution."

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george verghese

Dev 6:22

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PROJECT CHHATERA

- an experiment in development journalism

George Verghese, an Indian journalist and author, was 1975 winner of Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts. The trustees of the Award Foundation especially noted Verghese's "superior development reporting of Indian society, balancing factual accounts of achievements, shortcomings and carefully-researched alternatives".

Verghese has written three books : *A Journey to India*, an incisive situationer for the subcontinent set in 1950s, *Design for Tomorrow*, a study of India's national plans published in 1965, and *Will to New Purpose: Gandhi's Truth Recalled*, published early 1974.

In 1966 **Verghese** became press adviser to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, returning to journalism in 1968 as editor of the **Hindustan Times** where he conceived and created **Project Chhatera.**

if it made news to report on events in Delhi day after day, regular coverage of a village should equally be newsworthy

THE Indian newspaper is very largely an urban phenomenon. This is often so even of the Indian language press. This gulf between town and country is not unique but fairly typical of the urban-elitist orientation of India's growth model and social trends. Much the same would be true of many if not most other developing societies and calls for a conscious corrective effort if the urban-rural dichotomy is not to become a destabilising social influence.

It was with the object of trying to open a little urban window on rural India that the **Hindustan Times** decided early in 1969 to start a regular fortnightly column depicting life in a village—any village. The **Hindustan Times** is published from Delhi and distributed over north-western India (circulation 1975 —about 170,000 copies) and we thought that if it made news to report on events in Delhi day after day, week after week, and year after year, regular coverage of an average village in the region should be equally newsworthy.

The news breaks

And so was born **"Our Village, Chhatera"**.

The idea seemed exciting The first task was to locate a suitable village. The criteria for selection were simple. The village should be neither too near Delhi nor so far away in either of the neighbouring States of Haryana or Uttar Pradesh that it would be difficult to reach conveniently. It should be neither too small nor too large. It should not be on the main road (along which urban cultures flow), and yet not so remote as to be inaccessible.

Chhatera filled the bill admirably. It is 25 miles north-west of Delhi, in Haryana, five miles off the Grand Trunk Road. Its relative proximity to the Capital and to a major highway were, however, compensated by the fact that it lies in the "V" of two flood drains

the first splash of Chhatera in print proved it; it was more than just another village, a sleepy hollow; it was news

which at that time were unbridged at this point, thus isolating "our" village from the district and 'block' development headquarters respectively. Chhatera has a population of 1500 made up of landowning Jats and Brahmins, and landless Harijans (lower caste in traditional India; Harijans, the name means sons of God, given to them by Mahatma Gandhi), the normal caste combination in this part of the country. It was on February 23, 1969 that the first instalment of **"Our Village Chhatera"** appeared as the cover-story in the **Hindustan Times Sunday Magazine.** It carried a picture of a group of children grazing sheep in the village, one little Harijan girl, **Premvati,** carrying a ewe lamb on her shoulder. The picture portrayed a charming rustic scene (quite unlike the grim reality of rural squalor and poverty) and symbolised hope in the future. A cut-out of **Premvati** has remained the feature's title piece. Four years later **Premvati** got married. The column has grown with the village.

Villagers take pride

We were not sure what we expected of **"Our Village Chhatera"** when it was first started. Initially the villagers were shy, except for the children who delighted in being photographed. The first splash of **Chhatera** in print was a matter of considerable pride for many villagers. **Chhatera** was more than just another village, a sleepy hollow. It was news. The ice was broken. Confidence was established. Friendships grew. At first we described the village and its institutions and, of course, the people. The farmers and elders began to tell us their problems. These were reported. The major flood drain that flowed alongside the village, Drain No.8, could only be crossed by an old swing bridge, by then in a total state of disrepair. It had begun to sag and fall apart and the carriageway would get submerged during the monsoon. More than one person had lost his life on the bridge or in trying to cross the drain during the floods. With 80 per cent of the village fields on the other side of the drain, cultivation was affected during the *Kharif season which coincided

*Kharif=summer

Urban w

the project had become a change agent, playing the role of a catalyst, planting new ideas and articulating aspirations

with the monsoon. Although the block development office and the headquarters of the extension worker were only a few miles away, officials seldom visited the village. There were problems of education, health, communications, sanitation, availability of fertiliser and a hundred other things. But above all, there was the problem of the bridge. Chhatera wanted and needed a proper, "allweather" bridge. Would we please write about all this and publish photographs to drive the point home?

We did. The authorities took notice. The district officials visited **Chhatera.** A new bridge was sanctioned. Within 18 months traffic was moving across the bridge, including a short-lived bus service, its life cut short by local politics. The block development officer visited the village. The extension worker showed up. **Chhatera** had got the ear of the Deputy Commissioner at district headquarters, and of the State Government in **Chandigarh** 120 miles away.

"Our Village, Chhatera" had become a change-agent, and publicity an input in development. The **Hindustan Times** found itself playing the role of a catalyst, planting new ideas in the minds of the villagers and articulating their aspirations. It seemed logical at this stage to approach various technical and other agencies in Delhi to help **Chhatera** help itself. We approached the Indian Agricultural Research Institute to provide extension cover and the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences to provide some simple medicare, a fortnightly out-patient service under the giant *neem trees that provide a canopy above the Jat Chaupal (meeting place) where we usually met, with raucous peacocks screeching overhead. They were happy to oblige, faculty members and young interns glad for an opportunity for fieldwork. The village received them with open arms.

comes to Chhatera

Waterlogging of certain farmlands on account of the backwash from Drain No. 8 had resulted in saline patches and had affected certain wells. Farmers lined

*Neem = margosa

up to have their water tested as an *IARI analyst took samples in a test tube and added some chemicals to show varying reactions in accordance with the quality of water. Science had come to Chhatera. Later, the IARI conducted a complete soil and water analysis in Chhatera and worked out a new crop and rotational pattern on the basis of the findings. A "green revolution" followed, as elsewhere in Punjab and Haryana, with the introduction of high-yielding seeds, chemical fertilisers and more irrigation, the number of tubewells having more than doubled since 1969.

The **AIIMS doctors made a health status survey and started an immunisation campaign, giving antigen vaccine shots to all newborns and children below the age of six. At one time as much as 70 per cent of the village had been covered before the programme unfortunately fizzled out for lack of logistical support. Social health workers began to talk about general health care, nutrition and family planning. A contributory medicine chest was set up, a number of drugs being stocked for common ailments and dispensed by Dr. Maha Singh, one of the village leaders with some basic medical knowledge. The system worked. It helped the villagers and, like much else, greatly educated us. I recall one autumn when an inspection showed that the medicine chest was empty. Inquiries revealed that the monthly contribution for the purchase of drugs had not been collected. We asked the reason for this apparent loss of interest. Came the reply, "At this time of year no one can afford to be ill". It was the harvest season. Illness is regarded only as a discomfort or an inconvenience, its debilitating effects being insidious and often unseen. But on work — timely agricultural operations in this instance — depends survival. The morning's experience taught us more about rural health problems than all the findings of urban seminars that we had ever reported.

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*IARI=Indian Agricultural Research Institute
**AIIMS=All-India Institute of Medical Sciences

the three major communities in the village had always lived in harmony, but never met socially

With income generation, farmers tend to spend a good deal of money renovating their houses or even rebuilding them—ugly, dysfunctional, expensive brick-and-cement structures, imitative of the worst in suburbia. We called in the School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi. The Professor of Town Planning set his second year students to prepare a master plan and regional plan for **Chhatera** and its neighbourhood, 1971—1991. The young architects-to-be set to the task with enthusiasm. They camped in the village, surveyed and photographed it, talked to the people, made projections, and produced an admirable "master plan" with models of new-design dwelling units, improved drainage systems, paved streets and the rest. The plan was never implemented although the villagers, and especially the womenfolk, evinced great interest in an elaborate exhibit put up in the village with charts, pictures and models explaining the salient features. Be that as it may, the students who prepared the plan probably learnt a great deal more from the experience than from classroom lectures. **Chhatera had become a School.**

The Department of Atomic Energy (which then also looked after space) initiated a scheme to place television sets in 80 villages around Delhi in order to pre-test a bi-weekly farmers programme, **Krishi Darshan**, with the accent on improved agriculture. This was the harbinger of the bigger Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) which India conducted between August 1975 and July 1976 with the aid of the United States' ATS-6, an advanced technology satellite. Since **Chhatera** was just within the viewing range of the pilot TV station in Delhi, we persuaded the sponsors to install a television set in the village. The Jat Chaupal was selected as the location for the set as it had a platform, storage, an electric connection, and enough open space in front to seat an audience of a few hundred. It was made a condition that everybody, irrespective of caste or sex, should be permitted to visit the Jat Chaupal.

if television brought the village together as a community, it divided it another way; it accentuated the generation gap

Television comes to the village

The TV set was installed with due ceremony and villagers gathered from miles around to see the wonder box. Social taboos broke down. Men of all castes gathered together in one place, something that had seldom happened before. Although the three major communities in the village had always lived in harmony there was no occasion for them to meet socially. Television brought them together. The segregation of the sexes broke down as women joined the audience, seated on one side. Yet another taboo fell as the women included not only daughters (who belong to the village and later marry outside) but wives (who belong to other villages), the privilege of visiting the Chaupal (if ever occasion demanded) hitherto resting only with the daughters.

However, if TV brought the village together as a community, it divided it another way. It accentuated the generation gap. The children of all communities joined together to insist on viewing all programmes, educational or otherwise—including the popular hip-swinging Saturday feature films. The elders of all communities kept protesting and tut-tutting about the corrupting influence of cinematographic immorality and the fact that the children were out watching TV evening after evening when they should be at home attending to their school homework. The argument raged for months and the TV set was locked away for a while. Ultimately the kids won. **Their horizons expanded.**

The first signs of opposition

Superstitions die hard, especially among the old. Rattan Singh, the wealthiest man in the village and a retired headmaster would never use fertiliser. Ramu, an amusing old codger, is a progressive farmer but not one to be taken in by TV. Came the American moon-landing which was billed for screening on TV. We informed the villagers. Ramu, however, simply laughed off the whole thing. The proposition, he patiently explained, was absurd. No one could touch Chandrama (literally Mother Moon). The Americans were obviously engaging in a hoax. The smart thing to do, he said, would be for Mrs Gandhi to call their bluff by telling them that the Indians were going to land on the sun.

when the Syndicate Bank opened in Chhatera, money hoarded in earthern pots flowed in almost instantly

Although **Chhatera** has a cooperative, it barely functions and has been unable to cater to the farmers' credit needs. The village decided that **Chhatera** needed a bank. We sought out one of the major banks with an innovative record in rural business. The Syndicate Bank made a quick survey and decided that it would be a viable proposition. A few months later, early in 1970, the Syndicate Bank's Chhatera branch opened its doors in rented premises. Over Rs. 20,000 was deposited within a couple of hours, wizened-women digging out earthern pots buried in the ground or embedded in the walls of their houses, stuffed with old coins and dirty currency notes. Several accounts were opened, and even as the deposits were coming in, the bank began lending operations. Loans were sought for the purchase of buffaloes or bullocks, for drilling and energising tubewells, for buying tractors, and much else besides. Today the bank serves about a dozen villages around **Chhatera** within a radius of about six to eight miles. By the end of 1975 its deposits had exceeded Rs. 500,000 and the branch manager had set himself a target of doubling this figure within a year.

tors enter

With more tubewell irrigation and multiple cropping, some farmers had registered their names for the purchase of tractors. But the waiting list was inordinately long. We approached a leading tractor manufacturer and managed to get five tractors allocated to the village from the Directors' quota. The problem now was to decide how to distribute these among the 10 applicants. There was a great palaver at the Chaupal. Ultimately we were asked to arbitrate. We proposed a draw of lots. A week or two later five new tractors were operating in **Chhatera**. One or two of the new owners found excellent business in custom-hiring their tractors within a radius of 10-15 miles.

The tractor firm began sending its farm extension team to **Chhatera**. Other firms followed suit—fertiliser companies laying on fertiliser demonstra-

tions, pesticides firms following up with trial demonstrations. An electric company offered to put up a street lighting system, but the village panchayat (council) could not process its application for the additional load with the State electricity authorities and the offer ultimately lapsed. One large fertiliser company, Coromandel Fertilisers, gifted three tonnes of ammonium phosphate for two consecutive years. The arrangement was that the fertiliser would be sold at cost to all farmers on an equitable basis, the payments being deposited in the bank in a new account, the Coromandel Gift Account. Funds from this account were subsequently disbursed by us to finance the renovation and modernisation of a Harijan well, an extension to the middle school (which was itself initially built soon after our arrival, substantially through village contributions), and for other purposes. A leading manufacturer of sewing machines, Usha, donated a couple of units for a newly formed mahila mandal or women's club which, however, only functioned fitfully for lack of a permanent teacher-supervisor.

Lack of community leadership

Chhatera's *panchayat has unfortunately remained a faction-ridden body and unable to provide the kind of community leadership that would have made a difference. In its absence the Village Welfare Association began to spearhead all new activities. A new grain storage bin was introduced but, though effective, never caught on; and more recently one of the villagers put up a 1000 cubic feet cow-dung gas plant which provides sufficient fuel for the family kitchen and rich residual fertiliser which is returned to the owner's field. Our efforts at encouraging tree planting met with only limited success—in the school compound. Some streets were paved. But drainage and sanitation never improved and we failed to persuade the villagers to build public latrines rather than have men and women use the fields.

We had long tried to introduce poultry and improved dairying without success. However, in 1975 a

*Panchayat=Village Council

our anxiety was to avoid creating a sense of dependence on Hindustan Times as some kind of a fairy godmother

voluntary agency, *AFPRO took a hand with organisation and finance and in collaboration with the National Dairy Research Institute, at Karnal (50 miles away) launched an ambitious programme of crossbreeding. The village has set aside 10 acres of common land on which a tubewell has been dug to produce fodder for sale, especially to the landless dairy farmers who are being financed by the bank. If this programme takes off, it could make a qualitative difference to **Chhatera** in terms of income-generation, organisation, and the employment of landless farmers. Simultaneously, AFPRO has taken up a poultry development programme which has evoked a response. Once again, the bank is financing would-be entrepreneurs.

One problem we came up against quite early on, though it took us a while to recognise it, was a certain coldness towards us on the part of the non-agriculturist population of **Chhatera** who seemed to think that we were principally the farmers' friend. The bridge apart, the emphasis on improving agricultural productivity, and the ability of the wealthier and more advanced families, generally landed, and the bigger farmers among them, to take the most advantage of the new facilities and opportunities probably accentuated this feeling. We did try to correct this impression by attempting to focus equally on common problems of health, sanitation, schooling and so on. Nevertheless, I suspect we were never quite able to shake off our initial reputation in the minds of some. Our other anxiety was to avoid creating a sense of dependence on the **Hindustan Times** as some kind of fairy godmother. We tried to ensure that the villagers did what they could and that "external assistance" was only made available to the extent that technical or other resources simply had to come from outside. Even so, I am not sure how far we really succeeded. But of a certain awakening in Chhatera there can be little doubt.

Class bias

Partly in order to correct any impression of class bias and party in order to widen our base, the **Hindustan Times** sometime in 1972 extended the

*AFPRO=Action for Food Production

a newspaper and magazine agency was started and about 40 daily newspapers, mostly in Hindi, sold at local wayside railway station

village coverage from **Chhatera** to its two immediate neighbours, **Majra** and **Barota**.

In **Majra** we concentrated solely on the Harijan weaving community, encouraging them to form a cooperative, improve their designs and product mix, and reach out to wider national and export markets. Weaving is a traditional village occupation among certain castes. The Muslim weavers of these parts migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and with the growing competition of cheaper and more varied mill cloth the village weaving industry, now confined to Harijans, had begun to die. In **Chhatera** only one family continues to weave and its only loom is often still. In **Barota** nobody weaves any more, preferring to buy from neighbours. Thus **Majra** had begun increasingly to serve a whole group of villages—weaving cotton mats (generally used on beds rather than on the floor), and colourful farmers' seed bags for sowing. The bags are attractive and we found an exporter, **Fab India**, willing to provide orders on the basis of new designs and colour combinations provided by the firm. The industry immediately picked up. New looms were installed in a freshly acquired weaving shed. A cooperative was registered. The Bank at **Chhatera** put up finance. **Majra** bags were exported to Singapore, Australia, the United States and elsewhere. However it soon appeared that the "cooperative" had become a cover for something akin to a master-weaver system.

Spur to action

In **Barota**, we worked with the Yuvak Kalyan Sabha—the Youth Welfare League, headed by a bright graduate who had just been employed in the forensic science laboratory in nearby Rohtak but who returned home every weekend. Under the auspices of the YKS there developed a nursery school, sewing class for girls, a first aid class, a reading room, and a mobile library carried on a tin trunk on the back of a bicycle which did the round of some six villages every weekend. A newspaper and magazine agency was also started and about 40 daily newspapers, mostly in Hindi, sold at the local wayside railway station. The **Hindustan Times** and others helped out with books. The publicity

acted as a spur to action. The activities however began to fall away as the youth leadership got dissipated, the Rohtak scientist getting pinned down to his official duties.

In a sense, the **Hindustan Times** has returned once more to being primarily a reporter. AFPRO and the National Dairy Research Institute are perhaps now the primary catalysts. Maybe this is how it had to be. A newspaper is not equipped to be a rural extension agent and community development project manager. Our fortnightly visits were in any case too infrequent for supervision, though they did help to stimulate action. About 20 other agencies, public and private institutions, visited **Chhatera** with us. Since **Chhatera** was an extra-curricular activity for them, they had no independent budget for on-going visits and programmes and were wholly dependent on the **Hindustan Times** for transport. Wherever and whenever there was local leadership, ideas quickly took root and programmes thrived. Again, whenever a project or programme brought commercial benefit or other direct and visible gain, as in the case of the farm programmes and the bank, the response was positive and sustained. The AFPRO-NDRI dairy project has a built-in extension element which is why it seems likely to succeed. Perhaps if the **Hindustan Times** had employed a multi-purpose extension agent in **Chhatera**, who also visited **Majra** and **Barota**, it could have made a qualitative difference. But that would have entailed going far beyond our domain. The alternative might have been for all the agencies involved jointly to appoint a coordinator and expediter. The absence of either a strong panchayat or cooperative in **Chhatera** was a major weakness which the enthusiasm of the Village Welfare Association (and the Yuvak Kalyan Sangh in Barota) could not entirely remedy in the absence of a weak official extension structure as well. The experience has certain lessons.

indow on
ural India

Even so, **Chhatera** is today possibly the best documented village in the country and **"Our Village, Chhatera"** cotinues to serve its original and intended purpose—to tell the urban reader something about

the project has given an added dimension to journalism, has won the affection of a village and community and in some little measure has helped and encouraged it to grow—and that is surely sufficient reward

what is happening in all the country's Chhateras, each of them next door and yet half a world away. In that, and even by that count alone, the column has eminently succeeded. It has given an added dimension to journalism. The teams of reporters and photographers, young men and women of the **Hindustan Times**, who have covered **Chhatera** at various times became better journalists and more fully rounded Indians for the assignment which many of them came genuinely to enjoy. It was for almost all of them an altogether new experience that has enriched their careers. Not all **Hindustan Times** readers have appreciated **"Our Village, Chhatera"**. Many have been frankly bored and others outraged by this perverse and persistent "waste of space", as their letters to the Editor indicated. But over the years the column, periodically reproduced in the Overseas Hindustan Times Weekly, has won a devoted readership of scholars, administrators, planners, communicators, extension workers, business executives concerned with rural sales and trends, diplomats, and others. Above all, the **Hindustan Times** has won the affection of a village community and in some little measure has helped and encouraged it to grow. And that, in a cynical world, is surely sufficient reward.

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Dev 6:23

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

In India, especially after the independence, we see thousands of individuals and groups engaged in the field of development either full time or part time. To be a social worker or development worker, to some extent adds to ones status and position in society today. In spite of all these countless efforts we hardly see any significant changes in the life of the nation as a whole. A national net work for a concerted effort in the field of development is yet to be evolved.

A close look at these groups and individuals in the field of development will show us that their understanding of poverty and the corresponding approaches to development varies and in certain cases diametrically oppose each other. Though one cann't question their good will and sincerity of purpose, we should know that, mere good will and a sense of sacrifice and committment do not indeed suffice to make our contribution to development and social justice meaningful.

The approaches commonly adopted by different people in the development field can be classified into three. They are :

1) Welfare approach;
2) modernization approach
3) social justice approach

All these approaches proceeds from a clear and definite analysis and understanding of poverty or underdevelopment, however scientific or unscientific the analysis may be.

Before we proceed further, let us be clear about certain initial facts.

1 Our ability to identify factors and forces that create wealth and poverty determines our ability to tackle the problem.

2 Each one of us has an understanding of poverty and underdevelopment, whether at the conscious or sub-conscious level. We may have never formulated it, but a closer look at our work will reveal it to us. Always the solutions and methods adopted, follows from our analysis.

3 Our understanding of underdevelopment and analysis of the problems are largely influenced or conditioned by our own socio-economic background.

Our preception of reality is conditioned by our position in the society. Thus the causes of poverty identified by the rich may not be the same as those indicated by the poor.

1) The Welfare Approach :

This approach is deeply rooted in the mentality of religious minded people and humanists and is favoured by many private agencies and governments in both developed and in developing countries. The fabulous investments in men and money that welfare enjoys, compels us to reflect seriously on whether it deserves it or not.

In this approach, development and under development are considered as two parallel realities that have always co-existed, and that will always co-exist. Here poverty is accepted as a normal result of forces outside the control of man. These forces are identified as natural and super-natural. Here the symptoms are treated with a rather fatalistic approach, rather than the root causes of the problem with a critical analysis. Natural forces are seen as disasters, epidemics, earthquakes, cyclones, floods, draughts, etc. over which man has no control. In the supernatural sphere, man's status in life is seen as predetermined. It is his fate, it is in the plan of God, and explanation of poverty reflects a religious tone. Development workers with this understanding regrets poverty, but accept it as fate.

People who see poverty as created by forces outside the control of man, see little possibility for change. The solution is seen as a sharing of material goods and talents by the blessed and privileged, and the acceptance of these goods and services by those who are in need of them. The disposition advocated is a basic contentment with one's state of life. Work for the poor assumes the nature of alleviating the suffering of the poor rather than eradicating poverty itself. Development work here becomes an ongoing relief or charity, characterised by 'dolling out' benefit to the poor people according to their needs. (Giving the man the fish) It is often a spontaneous response to a situation with little effort made to identify and tackle the root causes of the problem.

And in the recipients, it often develops attitudes of dependence, laziness and passivity and sometimes creates division among the poor. It always diverts the attention of the poor from the real issues and anaesthatizes them.

Even a limited study of the history of the welfare approach and a superficial analysis of the functioning of society reveal that most of the evils treated by the welfare approach are the inevitable by products of certain forms of social organization.

2) Modernization approach

Like the previous approach modernization too rests on a certain understanding of poverty and under development. The cake, they say has to be bigger before it can be shared. So in this approach increased production and economic growth is stressed, to remove poverty. Here it is implied that people are poor because there is not enough production of goods. Modernization approach relies on industrialization and on rather sophisticated and capital intensive technology. Family planning compaigns are also of prime importance to keep down the birth rate and thus to promote economic growth.

Here, development is seen as the successful utilization of resources, natural and human. Such an understanding stresses the need for patience, hard work, self descipline, sacrifice investments and quality education, needed for the production of bigger cake. Under development is seen as the result of the slow and inadequate establishment of the system of production and consumption present in the developed countries. To a great extent modernization then means westernization - following closely the methods and patterns of the developed. The advanced countries become the guides of the developing countries. On the cultural level it leads to the acceptance of the ideals of western countries and the adoption of their attitudes and values.

Those who can produce more are encouraged to the level best, with the contention that the benefits will 'trickel down' to all. This method of 'Backing the strong' (green revolution) is easily recognizable in our five year plans, government policies and in the projects run by voluntary agencies.

Even though impressive statistics can be given on the growth of agricultural and Industrial production, on the number of students enrolled in educational institutions, education and public services, a question could be asked : who progresses?

The rich, who only posses the purchasing power, with their demands, command and control the market, and often fund to imitate western standards of living. Industrialization responds to this demand and produces luxury articles which give higher rates of profit. The production is done at the minimum cost often introducing sophisticated and capital intensive technology, thus increasing unemployment. Poverty and unemployment place the workers at the mercy of the landlords and industrialists, with low wages, and miserable and inhuman conditions of work. The state accentuates the situation by limiting or forbidding strikes. Whenever the labour force is so large and employment so scarce, favoritism and corruption unavoidably prevail. Extreme poverty drives poeple to borrow for their subsistence and social needs; money lenders prosper, for no bank or credit society would lend money in such circumstances. All this creates a vicious circle.

In a society where serious inequalities already exist a technological advance leading to increased productivity is likely to be limited to those endowed with superior wealth and social status to the exclusion of the poor majority' says the United Nations research institute for social development, Geneva.

The modernization approach, therefore, ends with the abundence of luxury articles and the scarcity of basic goods; with sophisticated technology and unemployment, low wages, debts and bonded labours. It produces the wealth of the few and the poverty of the many. The limited resources of the nation are thus used by a small groups for their selfish interests.

3) Social Justice Approach

The Failure of the modernization and welfare approach lead some to evolve a different approach to development based on a critical analysis of the various forces and dynamics at work in the society. It examines the organization of society and it's functioning at both micro and macro levels.

There is the conviction that non-economic factors that is the overall social context of society with its institutions and structures - Play a very important role in development. It tries to tackle the root causes of poverty and pays great attention to the proper distirbution of wealth. It does not accept mass poverty or under development as a fate. Modernization becomes important only when fare shares to the masses are possible. The root causes of under development according to this approach is injustice. If 85% of Indian population are below or just above poverty line, it is because 15% unjustly enjoy the results of the labour of the 85%.

In this approach one is convinced that deprived groups and nations can develop only in the context of a direct attack on poverty and a move for just distribution of wealth and power. Instead of depending dispropotionately on capital formation and move modern attitudes and values, development ultimately depends on land ownership, land utilization, employment, wages and the level of food comsumption. What would development mean in this historically created condition of under development. It means the restructuring of society! Efforts in this direction can be seen in Trade Union, (Balance of power in the production sector through collective bargaining) marketing co-operatives (challenge to the unscruplous exploitation of middleman) credit unions, (against money lenders) Mahila mandals (against low status of women). Always it was the awareness of injustice and exploitation in these cases that resulted in the organization of people at various levels. So in this understanding of development, the approach one would adopt will be awareness building which will definitely culminate in action.

Genuinely effective development work will have to challenge and re-organise the relations between the substructures in the society. The wealthy are the socially privileged, and the politically powerful. Power and privilege proceed from economic standing. Culture and religion seem to reinforce the interrelationship by providing sanctions andjustifications. A total transformation of these structures and support, is inevitable. In the economic sphere, this would mean policies geared to serve the needs of the people and not as at present, for the profit of a few. This would require that the means of production, land and capital be socially owned. On the social and cultural levels, this would mean relationships of equality between groups of people;

New ways of thinking feeling and acting, collective promotion rather than individual promotion. On the political level, to evolve an organizational set up that makes possible real and effective decision making power for the people. Thus this approach aims at a socialist society.

Unlike the previous two approaches to development, this one is a rather distributing approach, as it demands a commitment to struggle, and a struggle against the powerful dominant group; and it is no easy task. As development workers, what options does our above understanding leave us with? Can our sincere desire to alleviate the wretched misery of our countrymen express itself in meaningful actions that contribute to this process of collective awareness, collective organization and collective struggle?

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GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT A VILLAGE

Most of us do not belong to the village where we actually work and therefore, it is most important for us that we learn as much as we can. These guidelines meant to help you in collecting information on the village where you live or where you intend to develop a community health programme.

THESE GUIDELINES ARE NOT MEANT FOR YOU TO CONDUCT A FORMAL SURVEY

Most of this information should be got through informal discussions with groups or individuals in the village. Observe as much time as you can with the people in your visits. When people come to know you better they will be more willing to talk openly about the real problems facing them.

There are two types of information we need to collect. One is facts. Eg: Location, population, number of schools, number of wells etc. The other is related to what people think and feel. Eg : what do people and feel and think about the schools, drinking water facility etc. We also need to know how people relate to each other in the village.

It is important to collect both types of information. Facts are easier to collect. It will take longer to find out what poeple feel and think. Therefore, it is essential to build a good relationship with all the people in a village.

INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED

Read these guidelines carefully and remember what you should find out when you go to the village. Do not take these guidelines with you when you go to the village. If you do, people will think you are conducting survey. These guidelines are by no means complete. You may want to collect more detailed information on some of the points given below :

1. LOCATION

- Name of village/block/tehsil/district/state.

- Distance of village from block office/tehsil office/district head-quarters and nearest town.
- Are there any important rivers, forests, dams, factories, markets etc. nearby?

2. GEOGRAPHICAL SET-UP

- Type of land(sandy, rocky, hilly etc)
- Rainfall, floods, drought etc.

3. COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

- How do people travel?
- What is the condition of roads (kutcha, pakka)?
- Frequentcy of transport (buses, trains etc) (goods trains & passenger trains)?
- What are the links with the outside (Eg. information through people working in towns, radio, TV, through extension workers visiting the village etc.)?

What do people think and feel

- About the transport facilities
- About information from outside (Do they feel isolated, do they feel the need for more information on outside happenings etc.?)

4. ABOUT THE POPULATION

- Total number of people, number of households, hamlets etc.)
- Caste, religions

5. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

- Schools (primary, secondary, technical etc.) and where are they located, who runs them?
- Are they for boys and girls, if not where do girls study ?
- Do teachers come regularly ?
- How many students in village school and who are they ?
- How many adults know how to read and write ?
- Was this village included in the National Adult Education Programme ?

What do people feel

- Is school education important for children - for boys, for girls ?
- What would they like their children to learn ?
- Do adults feel the need to know how to read and write ?

6. ECONOMIC LIFE

A) What is main occupation in the village (agriculture, looking after animals, local craft, quarry workers)?

AGRICULTURE :

- Total land in village available for cultivation
- Any land not being cultivated in village (if yes, how many acres and why ?)
- How much land is irrigated ?
- Source of irrigation(river, canal, dam, tube well etc.)
- How many crops grown in a year and what is grown ?
- How much is produced per acre on the average (for wet land and dry land)?
- Does village get any agricultural help from BDO ?

LAND HOLDING :

- Who owns most of the land in the village, is it irrigated ?
- How many families cultivate land belonging to others ?
- How many families work as labourers in fields belonging to others ?
- How much land would a family of six require to produce enough food for themselves for the whole year ?

EMPLOYMENT :

- For how many months do families work on land ?
- How many families migrate, for how many months and where do they go ?
- What are the wages per day for agricultural labour in the village and when they migrate ?
- Are the wages different for men, women and children ?

What do people think

- About land distribution
- About irrigation facilities
- About help from the block development office
- About wages
- About employment

LIVESTOCKS, POULTRY ETC

- Are there buffaloes, cows, goats, sheep, pigs, hens, etc. in the village ? (is it the main source of income ?)
- Who owns the majority of these animals ?
- Is there any organized dairy, poultry in the village ?
- Is there any potential for developing this ?

- What do people think

- Is there possibility of expanding this craft ?
- Is there need to start some village craft ?

B. ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS

- To whom does a small farmer sell his products ?
- When does he sell it ?
- How much does he sell it for ?
- How much does he have to pay, when he needs to buy it back ?
- Who are the money lenders in the village ?
- How many acres does the money lender own ?
- What rate of interest do they charge ?
- What happens if the person is not able to repay the loan ?
- Which group of people are mainly borrowing money ?
- What do they borrow the money for ?
- What is the approximate amount borrowed by an average family ?
- What govt. facilities are available for loans (eg. banks, cooperatives) ?
- Who uses these facilities ?

What do people feel and think

- What do people feel about the money lender's system ?
- Are they satisfied with the selling and buying rates ?
- Do people think it is possible to have grains/seed/ fertilizer banks ?

7. SOCIAL - POLITICAL FORCES

A. Social forces :

- What are the main castes in the village ?
- Which caste has the most power ?
- How does the caste feeling affect the day to day lives of the people ?
- Do different caste groups live separately from each other ?
- Is untouchability practiced ?
- Is everyone allowed to take water from the same well ?

b. Political Forces :

- Who makes the decisions affecting the village ?
- Who is the Sarpanch and what is his economic status ?
- What castes does he belong to ?
- Who are the panchayat members ?

- What is their economic status and what caste do they belong to ?
- Who are the other leaders in the village ?
- What influences do they have in the village ?
- In what ways do the different leaders influence the community ?

8. CULTURAL PATTERNS

- What are the main festivals in the village ?
- What are the customs related to marriage, childbirth, death etc. ?
- How much money do people spend to perform such rites ?
- What are some of the important beliefs of people regarding religion, superstition etc. ?

9. SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Drinking water facility and cleanliness of drinking water.
- Bank services
- Government services like development of agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, welfare activity like anganwadi etc.
- Health services - PHC, sub centres, Malaria workers etc.

10. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- What is the diet of an average family , poor family ?
- What are some of the beliefs related to nutrition of infants, small children, pregnant mothers, in specific diseases ?
- Where do people go when they fall sick (local healers, ANM, PHC, private doctor etc.)
- Who conducts deliveries in the village and what are the practices followed during delivery ?
- What are the common diseases in the village ?
- What is general sanitation in the village ?

What do people think

- Is health important ?
- About the causes of ill-health ?
- When do they consider themselves sick ?
- Are health services adequate ?
- About cost of health services (local healer, dai, ANM, private doctors)

11. ORGANIZATIONS IN THE VILLAGE

- Are there any farmers clubs, youth clubs, mahila mandals, coperatives etc. ?
- Who are the members and leaders ?
- What do these organizations do ?
- Were there any such Organizations which have ceased to exist ?

What do the people think

- Are they satisfied with the organizations existing in the village ?
- What are some of the problems faced by these organizations ?
- Is there need for such organizations ?

CONCLUSION

As already stated, the points mentioned above are only GUIDELINES. Once you start discussing these points with people, many more questions will come to your mind. It is up to you to find out more about the life of people in the village. It is also important to know if people have taken any initiative whatsoever in changing their life situation and with what result.

Do you and the people think that some action can be taken for bringing about change for the better ?

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14-11-87/200

QUESTIONNAIRE

a. Read the list of adjectives given below. Which six adjectives seem to you to be the most accurate when describing villagers.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Shrewd	Analytical	Powerful	Sensitive
Competent	Generous	Over-bearing	Weak
Lazy	Shallow	Exploited	Backward
Reliable	Insecure	Risk-taking	Hard-working
Mature	Conservative	Impulsive	Immature
Unco-operative	Emotional	Naive	Idealistic
Irresponsible	Restless	Progressive	Apathetic
Enthusiastic	Frustrated	Uncommunicative	Responsible
Money-minded	Confused	Helpful	Appreciative
Unreliable	Dogmatic	Concerned	Incompetent
Ignorant	Efficient	Childish	Cautious
Stupid	Paternalistic	Unkind	Independent
Kind	Dependent	Supportive	Skillful

b. From the same list, which six adjectives seem to you to be the most accurate when describing yourself?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

c. From the same list, which six adjectives do you think would describe qualities most desirable in a development worker?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

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STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS :

(This is an attempt to understand and explain certain terms and expressions often used by Social Scientists and others to express their understanding of Society and to analyse it. This is not a critique of the structures and systems but just a theoritical description)

The term 'Structure' is used today to understand various realities, which are related to man's life. The word 'structure' evokes in our minds the image of various parts, components or elements organised into a unit. Infact the different elements of a structure can be understood only in through their relationship with one another and the totality. There is a functional relation between them. This can be illustrated by the example of the diverse organs of the human body, which are parts of a whole, as as such draw their meaning from their relationship with one another and the whole.

When we apply this concept of structure to the field of human activity we can identify certain structures there too. For instance, a family, an army, an institution, in it each person possesses his position and status as well as his own role and funtion. Each person carries on his task in relation to others and to Society.

In the simplest understanding this term is applied to understand a construction, a building, a set up because of which the transformation or change of structure is often understood as getting rid of a demolition of a building or an institution. We use this term to understand the social realities and functions of the Society. Social position can be defined as the particular point occupied by a person or group in a Social Structure. This is often identified with social status and includes the set of attributes or priviliges attached to that position. In the context for example we have the caste system, the hierarchy of castes with their attributes and previliges or discriminations.

In a social structure, the interactions between persons and groups are regulated by various values, norma, controls and sanctions.

There are established patterns of behaviours and standardised procedures - and we can say that the interactions are institutionally defined and controlled. In other words, we can say that a Social Structure is a set of - institutionally defined and controlled - relations between individuals and especially groups; these relations are studied and understood through a proper analysis of the society which will bring out the various control measures and hidden mechanisms which control and limit man's life and actions.

Different structures have different interests and values, often they become conflicting and one tries to control the other or overpower the other, which leads to disharmony, tension and exploitation. Thus the very structure itself becomes oppressive, dehumanizing and exploitative. The powerful structures force their ideology, values, rules and regulations on therestof the community to dominate them and keep them under their control, unless suitably challenged gives them more power and better positions in the Society. This controlling mechanisms is often not understood by the vast majority of the poor sections of the society and thus not in a position to counteract, as often the powerful use ideological system to achieve this end. In this process the injustices get institutionalized and in turn internalized by the society. Thus it becomes an established order of behaviour and remained unchallenged until someone wakes up andunderstands the undercurrents and the diverse mechanisms employed to achieve this end. This structure today we call an unjust structure.

A social system can be defined as a coherent complex of structures and behaviour arranged according to time and space. A system is a broad unit comprising several structures which interact as different components do in a structure. The structures of Production, distribution, exchange and consumption for example interact and form a single economic system. And the various social systems similarly interact and make a 'global system' or Society. A Society is comprised of the economic, political, social, religious, cultural and ideological systems. The first three systems concern the organization of Society while the last three deal with the meaning that men give to their individual and collective life.

According to Marxist thinking the economic system is the infra structure of the Society while the social and political systems form the superstructure.

Religious and cultural systems don't seem to be of much concern to them, though Marx has a critique on religion.

Economic Systems

Every individual and Society has to satisfy certain physical and psychological needs or wants, as for example food, clothing, shelter, medicine, entertainment etc. Man's Primary and basic activity is that of Production. The economic system comprises of four basic structures : Production, distribution, exchange and consumption. In the process of producing and circulating the material goods that meet these needs man relates to nature through certain technological tools called instruments of labour. They also relate to one another and form certain relations. The sum total of all these is called the economic system.

The Political System

Man basically is a being with intellect and will which enable him to make decisions for his own benefit and that of the society. But when there is a bigger group, individual decisions can affect the common good and hence there is need for a joint decision making to ensure the benefit of all the members of the society. This process of making the decisions is the political system. When this decision making power is exercised through the elected representatives of the people we have a democracy ; a rule (govt.) of the people, for the people and by the people. This is to ensure a smooth functioning of the Society/Nation. The decision making power is handed over to the elected representative so that rules and regulations can be made to the advantage of the whole community. Historically speaking we also come across many others forms of government. Autocratic, Military and Monarchy. Even in a democratic system the common good very much depends on the ideology behind, namely capitalist or Socialist approach.

The Social System

Interactions between man and man, and between social groups when structured and institutionalized becomes the Social System. This concept implies a certain distribution of Social Prestige and Status, or in other words a certain Social Stratification understood as the differential ranking of human individuals, their treatment as superior or inferior etc.

Various factors do, or can contribute to form this social stratification in different types of societies. In the Indian context the social system influenced and determined by caste system , which divide the people into high and low on the basis of birth. Set of rules and regulations are established by the society in terms of man's life, relationships and behaviour, hence traditions, customs become part of this system. But today we realise that there is a class caste combination which controls and dominates each aspect of Indian Society.

Religious System

Religion basically is the established form of Man & God relationship. This relationship when organised and institutionalised becomes a religious system which regulated and controls various aspects and structures in terms of worship, Morality, ethics and values. It is distinguished from other meaning systems by its emphasis on the ultimate. It offers a systematic message capable of giving a unified meaning to life, by proposing a coherent vision of the world and of human existence, and by giving them the means to bring about the systematic integration of their daily behaviour. This message is always situated in a precise historical context, and provides believers, reasons justifying their existence as in a given social position.

Cultural System

Culture could be said as the sum total of Man's Social Life in a geographical, historical context in terms of the values expressed through attitudes, thinking pattern and behaviour which are manifested in the customs and traditions in a given sociological Milieu. Knowing the people is to know their culture : Why they behave and act in a particular way, what decides their life circle, why certain parctices exist, why they have certain value systems etc. The value system in turn also influences their life and activity. The very value system is also very much influenced by the religion they practice. Thus culture and religion has a close link.

Ideological System

The term ideology was first used in 1797 by Claude De Tracy as the 'Science of ideas'. Most contemporary Sociologist, understand ideology as an explicit and generally oragnised system of

ideas and judgements which serves to describe, explain, interpret or justify the situation of a group or collectivity and which largely inspired by values proposes a precise orientation to the historical action of this group or collectivity. Houtart speaks of ideology as a system of explanations bearing on the existence of the social group, its history and ins projection into the future, and rationalising a particular type of power relationship : The legitimation that an ideology provides to a social group is never absolutely logical, but contains emotional elements which are capable of motivating men and giving them a feeling of security. Ideology is thus a fundamental element in the culture of every human, ethnic, social or even religious group. In this modern sense, ideology always includes in a more or less explicit manner an understanding (analysis) of society, a vision of the future, and a choice of strategies and tactics understood in this way. The concept of ideology can be used for both a small group (trade union, political party etc.) and a whole society or nation. They foster the interest of a particular group in society, and promote a specific socio economic and political organisation. They can be classified as reactionary, conservative, liberal and revolutionary.

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SOLVING PROBLEMS AND MAKING DECISIONS
(Training paper VII)

When a group (or an individual) is faced with solving a problem or making a decision, there are five steps which can be followed. These steps will make for greater clarity and effectiveness while considering the problem or the deicision, and they will also lead to a better final decision.

1. Define the problem

Ask yourselves, "What is the real problem before us?" If you cannot agree on what the problem is, you certainly will not agree on the solution! A clearly-defined problem is already a great help towards a solution.

What appears to be the problem may be only a superficial symptom. Underneath there may be larger and deeper issues.

Express the problem in "How to..." terms. Do not say, 'The problem is moderating discussions'; but, "The problem is how to learn to moderate discussions effectively."

2. Collect possible solutions

Ask yourselves, "What are the possible solutions to this problem?" Make a list of all the ideas, possible solutions and suggestions without evaluating any of them. (The process is similar to 'brain-storming').

It is important to separate the collecting of ideas in this step from evaluation: the evaluation should come only in the third step. If you evaluate ideas in this second step, it will inhibit the contribution of further ideas.

Make the list of possible solutions as long and complete as possible. Some people believe that the quality of the final decision depends on the number of possible solutions collected during this second step.

3. Evaluate the possible solutions and choose the best

Ask yourselves, "Of all the alternatives we have listed, which is the best solution?"

Weigh the pros and cons of each possible solution.

Encourage dissent and disagreement among the members of the group. This will help in the complete examination of every possibility. Beware of easy agreements-they probably have not been thought through completely. At the same time, avoid being defensive or making others feel defensive. Try to separate the ideas and solutions from the individuals who contributed them.

There are two important aspects to an effective decision. One is the quality of the decision. Ask yourselves, "Does this decision accomplish our purpose? Will it effectively solve the problem?" The second aspect is the acceptability of the decision to those who have to carry it out.

If you find that you now need further information or an expert opinion, get it before the decision is made, not afterwards!

Consider whether the group itself is ready to make a decision. Sometimes groups (like individuals) need time to 'think over' a decision before finally making it.

....2

4. Implement the decision

Decide on the steps for implementing the decisions. Ask yourselves, "Who is going to do what? When? How? Be specific: put names against actions.

A decision which does not include details of how the decision is to be implemented may be ineffective and even useless. Lots of good ideas are never translated into action because their implementation is not taken care of.

• As well as deciding who will do what, when and how, there may be other questions, such as, "Who else should be informed of this decision?".

5. Follow-up

Ask yourselves, "How will we check on how this decision is working in action?" It is important that the group decides at the time they make the decision how they are going to arrange for follow-up and feedback.

Source: McGrath, E.H., Basic Managerial Skills for All, XLRI, Jamshedpur, 1978.

PEOPLE IN DEVELOPMENT - A Trainer's Manual for Groups
John Staley

SETTING GOALS (Training paper VIII)

Most of us live and work far below our capacity. We are like bits of wood, floating passively on a river. We are carried here and there by the currents of the river without any aim of our own.

Setting goals for ourselves can free us from the aimlessness and inertia of floating on the river. Goals can help to give meaning and direction to our lives. They can help us to use our capabilities more fully and effectively. They can help us to develop our potentials. They can help us to use our resources, our time, and our energies more effectively. They can guide us when we have to take decisions and make plans. They can help us to change ourselves. They can help us to work for change in society.

Research has shown th t commitment to clearly stated goals leads to the achievement of these goals. Yet this commitment is not acquired easily. Commitment to personal life-goals can be especially costly. To choose one goal is to reject others. You can't be a development worker and a businessman too.

Further, once we set goals for ourselves, we must have the courage to risk failure in reaching those goals. One who sets no goals for himself does not run the risk of failing to reach his goals.

Often we confuse activities-doing things-with achieving goals. We invest ourselves and our own resources (our time, our capabilities, our efforts, our commitment) into activities (work, talk, journeys, visits, leisure, social events, training or whatever it may be) without thought for the end-result of such activities. Unless the end-result is clear, the purpose of the activities may not be clear. Setting goals, which are the end-results we want to achieve, can bring purpose and meaning to our activities.

To be able to set meaningful and attainable goals, we must know ourselves. What do we do best? What do we enjoy doing? What are our strengths? How can be build on our strengths? How can we change ourselves?

If we want to change ourselves-to acquire and practise new skills, or to behave differently-goals can help us. For one thing they help us to compare what we want to do with what we actually do now. They also, in themselves, help to motivate us us to achieve the changes we want, and they reinforce our efforts to change. Goals that are associated with an enahanced self-image will help to motivate us further.

Our goals must be challenging. If they are not sufficiently challenging-ro. if we are not going to make the necessary efforts-there is no point in getting goals. We might as well continue as we are doing already.

On the other hand, we must be realistic in setting goals. We must assess our opportunities and situation carefully. What goals would be realistic and within our reach? If we set unrealistic goals, we shall not be able to achieve them, and this will lead to frustration and disappointment. Moreover, once we have set goals, we must have enough self-confidence to reach out towards them. If we feel our situation to be hopeless, our goal-setting will be in a vain and will again lead to frustration.

....2

But if the goal is important to us, if we subject it to continual reassessment, and if we seek feedback in our efforts from those who count in our lifes, we may reasonably assume that we can achieve the goal we set for ourselves. Even the very process of setting goals-even thinking about them-can help us to achieve them.

We can distinguish between long-term and short-term goals. Long-term goals are to do with our lives: the overall direction of our lives, our career, our ambition, our personal growth, etc. For setting long-term goals we should consult our hearts as well as our heads. Short-term goals are more 'action-centred'. They can be related to improving skills, developing relationships, study and learning, solving a problem-or indeed any area or aspect of our day-to-day lives during a limited period of time. Our short-term goals must be consistent with our long-term goals.

Finally our goals-especially our short-term goals-should be precise, concrete and measurable. They should be linked with some record of progress. Otherwise we shall not be able to tell if and when we have achieved them. A goal such as, "To read as many books on development as possible and to understand them to my utmost ability in a very short time", is not a good goal. It is too vague; and it cannot be measured. "To read C.T.Kurien's Poverty and Development, and to discuss anything in the book which I do not understand with Venkatesh and Mr. Ramappa by 31st December", would be a better goal.

When setting short-term goals it may be helpful to use the ART formula:

A= Aspect or area e.g., learning, relationships, leisure, skill
R= Result to be achieved
T= Time limit

Once we have set our goals we should keep them constantly in mind. This will prevent us from being side-tracked. Using our imagination can also help us. If we can imagine in detail what it will be like to achieve our goals, it will act as an additional incentive.

If we can anticipate likely or possible obstacles in our way, we can think about them in advance and plan how we are going to overcome them. Breaking down major goals into smaller steps can also help. Every journey, however long, begins with a single step. It will help us further if we talk over our goals with friends, and with people with special skills who can guide and advise us.

Source: Currie, 1975, pp.136-9; McGrath, 1975, pp. 93-5; Britto, 1978; and other sources.

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(This is an attempt to understand and explain certain terms and expressions often used by Social Scientists and others to express their understanding of Society and to analyse it. This is not a critique of the structures and systems but just a theoritical description)

The term 'Structure' is used today to understand various realities, which are related to man's life. The word 'structure' evokes in our minds the image of various parts, components or elements organised into a unit. Infact the different elements of a structure can be understood only in through their relationship with one another and the totality. There is a functional relation between them. This can be illustrated by the example of the diverse organs of the human body, which are parts of a whole, as as such draw their meaning from their relationship with che another and the whole.

When we apply this concept of structure to the field of human activity we can identify certain structures there too. For instance, a family, an army, an institution, in it each person possesses his position and status as well as his own role and funtion. Each person carries on his task in relation to others and to Society.

In the simplest understanding this term is applied to understand a construction, a building, a set up because of which the transformation or change of structure is often understood as getting rid of a demolition of a building or an institution. We use this term to understand the social realities and functions of the Society. Social position can be defined as the particular point occupied by a person or group in a Social Structure. This is often identified with social status and includes the set of attributes or priviliges attached to that position. In the context for example we have the caste system, the hierarchy of castes with their attributes and previliges or discriminations.

In a social structure, the interactions between persons and groups are regulated by various values, norma, controls and sanctions.

There are established patterns of behaviours and standardised procedures - and we can say that the interactions are institutionally defined and controlled. In other words, we can say that a Social Structure is a set of - institutionally defined and controlled - relations between individuals and especially groups; these relations are studied and understood through a proper analysis of the society which will bring out the various control measures and hidden mechanisms which control and limit man's life and actions.

Different structures have different interests and values, often they become conflicting and one tries to control the other or overpower the other, which leads to disharmony, tension and exploitation. Thus the very structure itself becomes oppressive, dehumanizing and exploitative. The powerful structures force their ideology, values, rules and regulations on therestof the community to dominate them and keep them under their control, unless suitably challenged gives them more power and better positions in the Society. This controlling mechanisms is often not understood by the vast majority of the poor sections of the society and thus not in a position to counteract, as often the powerful use ideological system to achieve this end. In this process the injustices get institutionalized and in turn internalized by the society. Thus it becomes an established order of behaviour and remained unchallenged until someone wakes up andunderstands the undercurrents and the diverse mechanisms employed to achieve this end. This structure today we call an unjust structure.

A social system can be defined as a coherent complex of structures and behaviour arranged according to time and space. A system is a broad unit comprising several structures which interact as different components do in a structure. The structures of Production, distribution, exchange and consumption for example interact and form a single economic system. And the various social systems similarly interact and make a 'global system' or Society. A Society is comprised of the economic, political, social, religious, cultural and ideological systems. The first three systems concern the organization of Society while the last three deal with the meaning that men give to their individual and collective life.

According to Marxist thinking the economic system is the infra structure of the Society while the social and political systems form the superstructure.

Religious and cultural systems don't seem to be of much concern to them, though Marx has a critique on religion.

Economic Systems

Every individual and Society has to satisfy certain physical and psychological needs or wants, as for example food, clothing, shelter, medicine, entertainment etc. Man's Primary and basic activity is that of Production. The economic system comprises of four basic structures : Production, distribution, exchange and consumption. In the process of producing and circulating the material goods that meet these needs man relates to nature through certain technological tools called instruments of labour. They also relate to one another and form certain relations. The sum total of all these is called the economic system.

The Political System

Man basically is a being with intellect and will which enable him to make decisions for his own benefit and that of the society. But when there is a bigger group, individual decisions can affect the common good and hence there is need for a joint decision making to ensure the benefit of all the members of the society. This process of making the decisions is the political system. When this decision making power is exercised through the elected representatives of the people we have a democracy ; a rule (govt.) of the people, for the people and by the people. This is to ensure a smooth functioning of the Society/Nation. The decision making power is handed over to the elected representative so that rules and regulations can be made to the advantage of the whole community. Historically speaking we also come across many others forms of government. Autocratic, Military and Monarchy. Even in a democratic system the common good very much depends on the ideology behind, namely capitalist or Socialist approach.

The Social System

Interactions between man and man, and between social groups when structured and institutionalized becomes the Social System. This concept implies a certain distribution of Social Prestige and Status, or in other words a certain Social Stratification understood as the differential ranking of human individuals, their treatment as superior or inferior etc.

Various factors do, or can contribute to form this social stratification in different types of societies. In the Indian context the social system influenced and determined by caste system , which divide the people into high and low on the basis of birth. Set of rules and regulations are established by the society in terms of man's life, relationships and behaviour, hence traditions, customs become part of this system. But today we realise that there is a class caste combination which controls and dominates each aspect of Indian Society.

Religious System

Religion basically is the established form of Man & God relationship. This relationship when organised and institutionalised becomes a religious system which regulated and controls various aspects and structures in terms of worship, Morality, ethics and values. It is distinguished from other meaning systems by its emphasis on the ultimate. It offers a systematic message capable of giving a unified meaning to life, by proposing a coherent vision of the world and of human existence, and by giving them the means to bring about the systematic integration of their daily behaviour. This message is always situated in a precise historical context, and provides believers, reasons justifying their existence as in a given social position.

Cultural System

Culture could be said as the sum total of Man's Social Life in a geographical, historical context in terms of the values expressed through attitudes, thinking pattern and behaviour which are manifested in the customs and traditions in a given sociological Milieu. Knowing the people is to know their culture : Why they behave and act in a particular way, what decides their life circle, why certain parctices exist, why they have certain value systems etc. The value system in turn also influences their life and activity. The very value system is also very much influenced by the religion they practice. Thus culture and religion has a close link.

Ideological System

The term ideology was first used in 1797 by Claude De Tracy as the 'Science of ideas'. Most contemporary Sociologist, understand ideology as an explicit and generally oragnised system of

ideas and judgements which serves to describe, explain, interpret or justify the situation of a group or collectivity and which largely inspired by values proposes a precise orientation to the historical action of this group or collectivity. Houtart speaks of ideology as a system of explanations bearing on the existence of the social group, its history and ins projection into the future, and rationalising a particular type of power relationship : The legitimation that an ideology provides to a social group is never absolutely logical, but contains emotional elements which are capable of motivating men and giving them a feeling of security. Ideology is thus a fundamental element in the culture of every human, ethnic, social or even religious group. In this modern sense, ideology always includes in a more or less explicit manner an understanding (analysis) of society, a vision of the future, and a choice of strategies and tactics understood in this way. The concept of ideology can be used for both a small group (trade union, political party etc.) and a whole society or nation. They foster the interest of a particular group in society, and promote a specific socio economic and political organisation. They can be classified as reactionary, conservative, liberal and revolutionary.

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RAMAKK'S STORY

Ramakka, wife of Veerabadrappa has two children. She goes to work in Periaswamy's field for the wage of 1 rupee a day. Her younger son, Linga, only 11 months old, got diarrhoea which is a common problem leading to death in the village. With one rupee which she got as that day's wage, she bought 50 paise worth of powder medicine from the nearby petty shop. 50 paise worth of flowers she offered in the temple for the cure of her son. As the diarrhoea continued she approached the local Dai Yellamma for help. She gave her some herbal medicines. But the situation became worse and so Ramakka, with the money her husband borrowed, took the child to the local doctor, who has no training but some knowledge received by watching his uncle who was a compounder. He gave an injection worth Rs. 7/-. The child got temporary relief. When the sedation power of the injection got over, the diarrhoea started again. The local Dia, advised Ramakka to take the child to the district hospital 20 Kms away. She borrowed Rs. 20/- from the money lender on the condition that the amount with the one third of it as interest will be paid pack in paddy, during the harvest season.

Thus they reached the hospital. She was ignorant of the proceedures of the government hospital. She had to give Rs. 2/- to the gate keeper for entry. The hospital personnel were so busy that they could attend to the child only very late. They scolded Ramakka for the delay in bringing the child for medical care. She could not tell the doctor that their trip cost her three week's pay which she should pay back with interest. The doctor also scolded Ramakka for not bringing the child early, and furiously wrote a long prescription including four I.V. fluids. The pharmacist billed her Rs. 60/-. But Ramakka did not have that much money. She bought few tablets and returned home. While on her way back home, the child breathed it's last on Ramakka's shoulder.

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The Catholic Hospital Association of India

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Ref. No. ..... Date .....

STORY OF VASU

Vasu, an eight year old boy was the only child of his parents, who were very poor. They worked as bonded labourers under the landlord who had very little concern for his workers. The family found it very difficult to meet their daily needs. Vasu used to help his parents by cutting grass from the forest for the animals.

There was a Government subcentre about 2 K.M away from Vasu's house. The ANMs used to visit the village but since the villagers were not co-operating with them, they stoped their work in that village.

As usual, one day Vasu went to the forest to cut the grass and he had a thorn prick on his foot, since he had no chappals. The parents treated him with country medicine, and applying cow dung on the wound. As the days went Vasu's condition become very serious and they thought of taking him to the hospital. Since they had no money his father borrowed Rs.100/- from the landlord, and took him to the PHC. Since Vasu had developed signs of tetanus by this time, P H C. was not able to treat and adviced the parent to take Vasu to the District Hospital; which was situated very far.

Since the money they had with them was not enough, the parents decided to return home. On the following day Vasu died.

- Why did Vasu Die?

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MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH IN HEALTH SERVICES

Introduction :

"Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel".

- Synod of Bishops 1971

"Behind the revolutions of our day, is man's struggle for human dignity. Christ is at work here and we cannot proclaim Him to contemporary man if we do not participate in this struggle. In such participation we have to work with men of all faiths and no faith. Christian living is, in this sense, living in response to the WORD and to the world. It demands the conscious transcendence of our limited groups solidarities and moving towards the new humanity which is free from all discriminations".

- National consultation on the role of Church in contemporary India, 1966.

"If we wish to be faithful to Christ and take up this attitudes with regard to our fellowman, we must work for the over all development of each man, and focus on the sick person more than on his sickness. Since development also means solidarity we must necessarily turn our attention towards the human community of the patient, his family first, but also his neighbourhood or village. This means we must practice community medicine".

- Pontifical Council Cor Unum, Document on Primary Health Care Work, 1978.

"The mission that we have given is a call for a true conversion of our hearts and also of our methods. Secularization is spreading in people's hearts from the industrialized and technological world to the developing world countries. We need to be converted all the time in order to bear witness as Christians to the sick who, through our work, will discover the love of Christ. The rapid development in the field of health service technology has often meant installing expensive equipment in the hospitals, requiring a large number of staff for a relatively low number of patients, while in many of the same countries in the world, upto 80% of the population are still without health care services.

Since Christians are the leaven, we must reach out towards the masses by providing simple, accessible and promotional health care according to our own possibilities, modest as they are, or in conjuction with the public services, where this is allowed.

Let us ever be mindful of the fact that service to the sick begins and continues to operate through the patient's human environment. COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE IS THEREFORE PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PASTORAL WORK OF THE CHURCH".

- Cor Unum Document, 1978.

"Presently, despite the constraint of resources, there is disproportionate emphasis on the establishment of curative centres - dispensaries, hospitals institutions for specialised treatment - the large majority of which are located in the urban areas of the country .... A dynamic process of change and innovation is required to be brought in the entire approach to health man power development ensuring the emergence of fully integrated bands of workers functioning within the "Health Team" approach".

- New National Health Policy, 1982.

"The demand for justice has been one of the dominant notes of this half of the country. Perhaps no other period in History has witnessed a greater denial of justice also ..... 'The Church, bearing within itself the pledge of the fullness of the Kingdom, views with joy the present concern for justice and with anxiety the grave threats to justice all around us. It is her endeavour to interpret the implications of the Gospel message of justice and peace in the varying situations being unfolded in the course of the human pilgrimage on earth. She has to be the 'Leaven' and the 'salt' of the earth in the confusion likely to prevail in the search for justice".

- CBCI, 1978.

"The Church should give its whole hearted support to the peaceful social changes taking place in the country by verbalising its support of any efforts made for bridging the gap between the rich and poor.

"The Church should actively involve itself in removing concrete cases of injustices happening in the society in which it exists".

- CBCI, 1972.

"We want our health services to take primary health care to the masses, particularly in the rural and urban slums. Catholic Hospitals and dispensaries should stress the preventive and promotive aspects of health care. Specifically, we would urge them to join hands with the civil authorities in their programme for the eradication of leprosy.

Our health outreach programmes may demand a change in the routine especially of religious communities of men and women involved in this work, and their formation should prepare them to meet the new spiritual challenges that are posed".

- CBCI, 1978.

" The commission being conscious of :

a the situation of massive poverty of over 60% of our people;
b the unjust structures which maintain and perpetuate it;
c the injustices perpetuated on the weaker section of the people;

considers it imperative to reaffirm our commitment to the poor in imitation of Christ's preferential option for the poor.

The creative struggle of the people to bring about a new society invites us to enter into critical collaboration with people of all religions, ideologies and agencies who strive after a just society.

A meaningful participation in this struggle calls for :

a. a serious analysis of society with the tools of social sciences and in the light of faith;
b. taking definite and unambiguous stand on various issues;
c. initiating concrete action programmes for change.

As a credible sign of this process the Church initiates action for justice within its own structure. In this context participation of all sections of people especially of the laity is of vital importance".

- CBCI, 1983.

"With this orientation in view the Commission proposes the following priorities of work, in the field of health :

1 Promote Community Health Programmes on the Priority basis;
2 Train health care personnel with a bias to rural health programmes. In this connection it is of utmost importance to reorient doctors, nurses & para-medical personnel in our institutions and programmes with Christian values.

3 A commission could be set up to study the prevailing conditions and problems, attitudes and values of doctors, nurses, para-medical personnel and other employees.

- CBCI, 1983.

The relevance of quotations cited above can be viewed by different people differently depending on the concept of health one has. One thing is getting more and more clear that health is no more an isolated factor and it is not merely the absence of sickness but the total well being social, physical, mental and spiritual of individuals, families and communities. It is in this sense that the above quotations have their relevance when dealing with ministry of the Church in Health Care.

Health care is a field in which the Church in India has been busy for over a hundred years. With more than 2000 health care institutions all over the country run directly by the dioceses or religious congregations, the volume of work done by the church is enormous. With one well established medical college and more than hundred nurses' training institutions we train every year an army of health care personnel and add to the already existing ones in the field. With the emphasis since some years on the field of community health, a new army of village level health workers (called under different names) are trained and they are in the field. We have also national organisations, under the auspices of the Church, dealing with various aspects of health care i.e. the Catholic Hospital Association of India, Catholic Nurses' Guild, Catholic Doctors' Guild, Natural Family Planning Association of India etc. This certainly shows the richness of the resources at our hand. The question will have to be asked is are all these properly utilised for the best interest of the people of God in India particularly the vast majority of them living in rural areas and urban slums.

1. COMMUNITY HEALTH :

CHAI has definitely committed to this cause for the coming years. And we do hope to do something thereby contributing our share to achieve the goal set by WHO and accepted by our country, i.e. Health For All by 2000 A.D. This we hope to achieve through our member institutions and others, and with the cooperation, help and guidence particularly from the members of the CBCI and CRI. We have now an eight member team for the promotion of Community Health. The team has worked out a philosophy and vision for our community health programme and a broad plan of action.

2. Promotion of Pro-Life Activities :

Efforts will have to be made by all concerned to bring an awareness about the seriousness of this all important aspect of life. CHAI will be taking some definite steps in this regard in the coming years.

3. Pastoral aspect of health care :

This is a field rather neglected by the Church. Complaints about even rude behaviour by the Staff towards patients in our health care institutions are not a rare phenomenon. Then the question is, have we given them the necessary training and orientation ? Keeping this in mind CHAI organises seminars for health care personnel from time to time. It is our plan to develop a separate department in CHAI to meet this crying need in our country. We also plan to organise regular residential course for Chaplains etc. in the future.

Against all what has been mentioned, particularly the various documents mentioned, the following suggestions are put forward for Justice, Development and Peace in General and the health section in particular. In this connection, it was very meaningful to have put the health section with commission for justice, development and peace.

1. To have an evaluation of our existing institutions for education, training and services in the field of health in accordance with the present concept of health mentioned in the documents (of also the CHAI documents)
2. Community Health Programme accepted as a priority should be promoted in all the Dioceses. The members of the CBCI and CRI should accept this end and make it known to all our health care institutions.
3. In order to implement this, St. John's Medical College, National Organizations like CHAI, NEPAI, CARITAS INDIA, IGSSS etc. will have to plan together in collaboration with other organisations in the field such as VHAI, CMAI, ISI etc.
4. Possibility of organisations like, CHAI, Catholic Nurses' Guild, NEPAI to work together will have to be explored, for better effect and to avoid any unnecessary duplications.
5. The teaching of the concept of Community Health based on the various documents dealing with the subject should find a place in the Curricular in Seminaries and Religious formation houses.

6. In this connection this commission will have to work in collaboration with the commission on Seminary Training etc.

7. This commission should also work in collaboration with the commission for Laity and Family.

These are a few suggestions, however practical they may be which came to my mind. The implementation of them may be difficult but necessary if we want to respond to the needs of the time. We all agree that making statements (for which we seem to be experts in this country) alone will not solve the problems. We need to translate them into action, which is by far difficult. But we are left with no choice but to do it if we want to be meaningful to the society today and faithful to the gospel message. Let me conclude this with another quotation, this time from Ashok Menta.

"We must reclaim 900 million people (the number is more now) of the world who are today in a state of abject depression. This human reclamation requires a peculiar type of social engineering. This is to my mind the big challenge that all people, all men of religion, all men of God have to face. And if it is the proud claim of the Christian Churches that they have that spiritual understanding, that spirited agony and that spiritual out glow is greater than that of other men of God, it has to be proved, as I said in the crucible of life itself. If it is the claim of Christians that even to this day they feel the agony of Christ on the Cross whenever humanity suffers as it were, it has to be proved, in action and not by statement".

Fr John Vattamattom svd
Executive Director
Catholic Hospital Association
of India.

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KATHA

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION UNIT

PUDAR

IEC DIV.

In Bengali language KATHA implies to DIALOGUE. PUDAR firmly believes in Development From Below. But in reality an elitist perception of the paradigm- "Development" predominates. KATHA would initiate a dialogue between thoughts and ideas related to composite development emerging from all corners and will try to synthesise them. We hope KATHA becomes a platform for development dialogue and be the harbinger of a New Era.

A group of social activists of various ethnic, religious and linguistic background coalesced together in the year 1980 with the sole objective of bringing about positive changes in Indian Society which will lead to a more just and egalitarian social order. In order to fructify their aims, a non-profit, Non-Government Organisation was formed, christened as People's Union for Development and Reconstruction, in brief PUDAR. To express concern towards the injustices faced by the marginalised and oppressed sections of society such as women, children, dalits and tribals who form the majority became the cornerstone of the organisation.

PUDAR is a consortium of various grass-root level organisations. Instead of a centralised, bureaucratic structure, PUDAR has a network and general body. This general body is a forum of many voluntary bodies involved in developmental activities in both rural and urban areas upholding the noble cause of poverty alleviation and economic emancipation for the socially, economically weaker segment. In the begining it started with 8 affiliates. Prsently PUDAR is working with 26 affiliates spread over its geographical matrix mentioned, viz.

West Bengal = 12 units
Bihar = 9 units
Orissa = 4 units
Uttar Pradesh = 1 unit.

The basic approach of PUDAR is Man to Community.

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THE RURAL POOR, AGRICULTURE & GLOBALISATION:

An Indian Scenario.

The impact of globalisation on agricultural process is critically appraised by many an analyst who also look at the new recipes being projected by international agencies of power, wealth and commerce. While seemingly beneficial these packages are actually a dependency trap for the Indian farmer who constitutes largely the poorer segment of the country.

We are much acquainted with the idiom like sustainable development. In case of agriculture, sustainable farming is based on the sustainable use of natural resources, land, water and agricultural bio-diversity including plants and animals. The sustainable use of these resources in turn requires their vital linkage with decentralised agricultural communities. This denotes the ownership and control of these resources by the communities. All these are connected with the people's endeavours to generate their livelihood, access to food and conserve natural resources. These dimensions of ecological security, livelihood security and food security are essential elements of an agriculture policy which ought to be sustainable and equitable. The curent mode of globalisation in the sphere of agriculture of the Third World threatens to undermine all these three dimensions of sustainability. The livelihood-base of millions of farmers and the food security at the household, regional and national level, is severely threatened. The diversion of our natural resources from ecological maintenance, protection of livelihood and basic needs-satisfaction to luxury exports and corporate profits has been made possible because of the present economic policies of globalisation. Of course, in the past three decades of India's agriculture policy, agriculture was commercialised among the rich farmers under the patronage of state's subsidies in form of supply of chemical fertiliser to the farmers at a subsidised rate and that happened in the name of the so-called Green Revolution. All ecological sustainability had been ignored ruthlessly. The green revolution has been able to produce a considerable group of rich farmers and the inequality between the rich and the poor farmers has been increased by leaps and bounds. The liberalisation and New Economic Policy have produced various changes in our socio-economic formation and complexion. No doubt, the political order will also rotate around it. Under this new transformation we should also look at the rural women, affected by the process of new economic policy and the oft-quoted structural adjustment.

The farming activity comprises of many jobs which are done by the women farmer. In rice cultivation, for example, this includes transplanting, weedding , manuring and lentilising, harvesting,threshing, winnowing, drying, staking and carrying the produce. Agricultural and other allied activities absorb over 80% of the female work force. But she has very little control over the mode of production. As in decision making level,

women are not very much in evidence.In the changed local self-government or panchyat structure provisions are made for the women's participation but this process is yet to take shape on a large scale. In the Human Development Reports 1995 references have been made to womens' role in home management and child care. In developed countries, a women spends on average, 34% of her time on activities where her contribution to the national accounts is recorded and 66% on activities not so recorded. For men, the ratios are reversed, and 66% of time is spent on activities included in the national accounting system. In addition, in terms of time spent, the actual burden of work is greater for women than men. When necessary women are available for other work. This could be skilled, home-based production or manual labour. But women's work, and work burdens are not easy to define. And this elasticity is often at great cost to her own health. In examining the impact of globalisation on rural women, it is necessary to understand the changes in the environment and resource availability in response to production and trade changes. The rural sector has already shown changes in the cropping and trade patterns. Subsistence farming is increasingly giving way to commercial relations. Area under foodgrains is declining and that under commercial crops increasing. At the same time the proportion of output that is sold in the market is increasing.

Opportunities for women from the reformation and new system are closely linked to their ability to move to new skills and new types of employment. But it is important to remember that the response to new opportunity is closely linked in gender role. To derive benefit from the new system requires lots of skills and training which are not open to the rural women in particular and the poor in general. Restricted mobility of women is also determined in their intrahousehold allocation of duties where the rights and obligations are not distributed evenly. Male supremacy over the society and decision making criteria, reduce incentive for women to undertake new activities. Moreover, the health situation of the rural women and the existing poor medical care facilities also results in de-skilling, termination of long-term jobs and obviously deterioration of health.

We need to spell out diferent indicators to monitor the impact of new economic policy felt in the various spheres of environment, health, gender and poverty issues.

At the macro-level it is important to emphasise the importance of investments to ensure sanitation, safe drinking water, school education and public health. The WHO survey shows the 3.7 per cent of the non-urban populace are only covered by the running water facilities in the third world countries and these are far from the safe drinking water category. Owing to the current trend of privatisation and structural adjustment policy the public-utility services like the safe drinking-water supply expansion, provision of efficient primary health care, public housing assistance, provision of link roads, nutritional support during early childhood, schooling, public distribution system and universalisation of primary education would be facing many constraints.

From the top-notches of the World Bank and IMF to the bureaucrats of our health and welfare departments, the 'empowerment of women' is a catchy phrase. How the economic policy of globalisation is affecting the existing empowerment system of the tribal women in Eastern regions like Chotonagpur plateaux of India is an issue to be probed. The tribal woman enjoys an equal status in their community than their non-tribal counterpart because of her control of the bio diversified agriculture and exchange or marketing structure and other important domains of their horticultural subsistence farming. Where the tilling or ploughing by the dint of animal power and mono-cropping are employed the male domination is much more visible than the horticultural zones. The biodiversity maintained by practice keeps the varieties of rice cereal which are produced alone in the plateaux of Chotonagpur (Bihar state of India) by the tribal or indigenous women. This cultivation has reached the level of almost an art thanks to the empirical knowledge of the women handed down to them from many centuries.

Now the patent system enforced by the new policy also includes the production and preservation of seeds which is going to affect the existing biodiversity. As only the commercially viable seeds are to be preserved, this will certainly affect the crop-variety-system practiced in the aforesaid region This increasing commercialisation is a real threat to the existing biodiversity and its social-economic formation permeating tribal women's empowerment.

If liberalisation means a reduction of bureaucratic controls and their despicable 'red-tapeism', it should also stand for locally relevant and locally devised solutions, relevant to the balancing costs and benefits are to be controlled by those most directly affected, i.e., not the building from above but from below.

Prof S. K. Basu-Mallik
Chairman, PUDAR.

This doucument is part of a series of technical papers being prepared for the World Food Summit. It is circulated in advance for review and comment. The final version will be issued closer to the time of the Summit.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 The world is developing in remarkable ways, unforseen even a decade ago; these changes have important implications for food security. New states, new issues and new institutions are reshaping international political, economic and environmental relations even as the old ones remain albeit in some attenuated form. Nevertheless, the new trends are clear: most countries are seeking economic policies that are more market-oriented; they desire broader international cooperation and sustainable development together with the political structures to promote and support them.

1.2 The quest for new policies to shape contemporary institutions is taking place alongside a wider examination of the basic role of government in forms that are scaled down from those of the past. It has been prompted partly by governents' own need to optimize

resource efficiency in the face of growing deficits and partly by the demands of tax-weary citizens who find themselves with stagnating real incomes and who blame government for unsatisfactory economic performance. Shifiting international relations and a sharply altered global economic situation result in new challenges to national and global stability; meanwhile, local problems and conflicts go unresolved. Together, these issues shape food security.

1.3 Essentialy food security means that all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. This definition implies three dimensions to food security, namely availability, access and stability and various levels of aggregation, i.e. global, national, household and individual. Given this multi-dimensional framework, it becomes obvious that achievement of universal food security at the individual level, which implies achievement at the more aggregate levels, is constrained or facilitated by a combination of social, political and economic conditions. And, it is clear that the relevance of these conditions to food security at one level of aggregation is not restricted to the state of conditions at the same level of aggregation. That is, for example, the ability to achieve food security in one country can be affected by conditions (economic, political, and social, etc.) in other countries; as the world economy becomes more integrated it becomes more difficult for a country to insulate itself from the decisions and actions of others. At the same time, this same integration offers the potential for spreading the effects of production shortfalls in one country over the world and thus greatly reducing the negative impact on food security in any one country.

1.4 Because they affect agriculture, global, national, and local shifts in national political and economic relations and structure have implications for food security. Firstly, how food is to be produced and distributed are fundamental concerns of national economies and contribute to on going policy debates about how to restructure economic and political systems.

1.5 Secondly, agriculture's technological transformation increasingly links the input market to other sectors of the economy while international trade joins producers in the national economy to consumers globally.

1.6 Thirdly, no other sectors has such wide-reaching effects on the sustainability of the environment and natural resources: farming affects the world's forests, soils, fresh water, and fisheries.

1.7 Finally, war and peace, hostility and detente, confrontation and cooperation in political relations temper the global environment and influence food security. A principal benefit of the end of the Cold War is disarmament from which a "peace dividend" is being realized as the high-income countries reduce to an extent their military expenditures. This dividend seems to be tapering off, although some economic development and food security gains can reasonably be expected.

1.8 The global political environment influence the level and destination of resource flows, including international trade in food and assistance for agriculture and food production.

1.9 At the national level, politics governs policy priorities. The final decisions on the sometimes conflicting objectives of development, stabilization, national security, and social equity reflect the relative power of a country's various political factions and how national consensus is reached. The primary responsibility for the level of food security in any country depends on the political choices it makes. "Bad government begets food insecurity," aptly remarked the representative of Uganda at the FAO Council in November 1994.

1.10 This paper examines how international relations, economic structures, political systems, and global issues are related to food security. After reviewing the global political environment since the 1974 World Food Conference, discussion turns to the contemporary economic environment, and how trends in market liberalization in the transitional economies and structural adjustment in the developing and industrial countries are affecting national-level food production and consumption. Also explored are the food security implications of the recently concluded Uruguay Round of GATT and global trends towards regional trade blocs, as well as issues of natural resources and the environment. Finally, the policy implications for achieving food security are drawn along with a prospectus for the future.

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 The two decades since the World Food Conference have brought about enormous changes on the world's political stage. In the mid 1970s, the end of the Vietnam war helped to ease political tensions world-wide, but especially among the superpowers. The two Germanies joined the United Nations and a flurry of 1970s' treaties greatly relaxed East-West tensions in Europe.

2.2 While there was wide divergence between countries and regions, the 1960s and 1970s marked a period of overall positive economic growth for many developing countries. Between 1965 and 1973 economic growth in the developing world was 3.9 percent annually, an all time record; this figure declined to 2.9 percent in the 1973-80 period largely due to the oil crises (in the high debt-problem years there was a rapid drop-off to a 1.2 percent economic growth rate between 1980-1990).

2.3 Contrasting these positive developments, however, progress in disarmament was disappointing, the growing dissension between China and the former USSR added a new dimensions to the balance of world political influences.

2.4 The 1970s also witnessed a period of reaffirmation of the developing countries' role in the global economic and political scene. In the wake of the oil embargo in 1973 by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and subsequent pricing policies, many developing nations, especially those with oil, renewed efforts to reduce their political and economic dependence on industrial countries, to

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
LIBRARY
AND
DOCUMENTATION

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION TRAINING JHARGRAM

Two mushroom training camps were held at Jhargram and Deorah in the month of May 1996. The duration of the camps were for a month each. There were 24 beneficiaries who belonged to the low income level and were selected at the affiliate level. Mushroom being a high protein source will improve the quality of diet increasing their basic nutritional level and can also be a profitable income generation prog. (IGP)

POULTRY & DUCK FARMING TRAINING

A 5-day training camp on poultry and duck farming was organised at our Belanagar centre from 12 Aug.-17 Aug. 1996. The beneficiaries were selected mainly from the SC community. The camp was conducted in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry Dept. Hooghly, Govt. of W. Bengal. The Training Cell of the department imparted the training. The Deputy Director and the Asst. Director were also present.

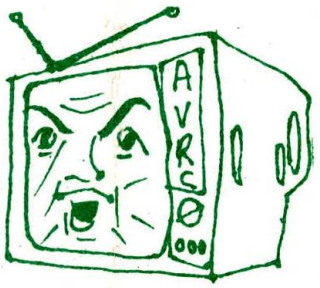
FIELD NOTES

MADHUPUR

The most fertile piece of land in Madhuasthali near Madhupur town - in an otherwise arid area - was forcibly snatched by toughs engaged by some businessmen with the intention of buiding up a high profile public school. The farmers were forced to accept Rs. 50/- per cottah of land under the influence of alcohol. Disgruntled women got together to voice their anguish and drove the construcition workers away from the site. They submitted a petition to the Dist. Magistrate demanding justice and have pledged to continue the agitation until an acceptable decision is reached.

Nagarik Mancha, a Calcutta based worker's solidarity alongwith many trade unions, barring CITU, had filed an appeal before the Supreme Court regarding occupational hazards focussing particularly on the Silicosis victims of Surendra Khanij Pvt. Ltd. of Chinchurgheria, Jhargram.

A bench headed by Justice Kuldeep Singh has ordered the Health Dept. to extend medical aid to 22 sick workers. It has also ordered an Enquiry Commission to probe into the present situation and a report is to be submitted. Compensation to the next of kin of the deceased will be decided later. In the court proceedings, the film on Silicosis victims WAIT UNTILL DEATH served as a live document of the whole incident.



AVRC

Our Audio Visual Resource Centre has collected Feature Films and Documentaries (VHS) on on a variety of subjects such as media, women, children, environment, communalism, development etc. The centre also produces filmsand capsules on various social issues and prepares IEC materials for trainings and campaigns.

Contact us for SCREENINGS.

WAIT UNTIL DEATH (Bengali with Eng. subtitles) directed and produced by Perspective Audiovisuals, is about a tribal village called Chichurgheria in the Midnapore district of W. Bengal where adivasis are dying due to Silicosis caused by a stone-curshing unit.

VHS (PAL) copies are available for sale at our AVRC priced at Rs. 400/- for individuals & Rs. 750/- for institutions.

NEWS FLASH

FILM-MAKER JOURNALISTS ASSAULTED

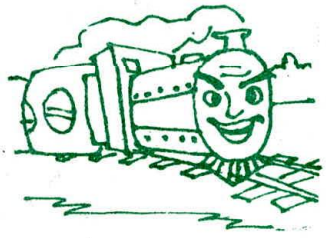
A Ranchi based film activist Sriprakash, Mr. G. S. Ojha and Mr. Niraj Sinha of the ANI got severely beaten up while covering a demonstration rally agianst the Surangi Dam Project at Vijaygiri, 22km from Tamar in the Ranchi dist, of Bihar. Police remained mute onlookers.

TWO DOWN THREE TO GO

Noted film-maker Anand Patwardhan recently won a case filed by him against Doordarshan when it had refused to telecast his film "In Memory of Friends" on the Punjab problem. Three other films by Anand are lying subjudice. In his film-making career of almost 25 years, Doordarshan has telecast only one of his films-" Bombay Our City", that too in a late night slot with no prior intimation.

BOOK POST
KATHA
A PUDAR Publication
Combined issue '96
For Private Circulation Only
PUDAR
30/3A, N. S. Dutta Road
Howrah, West Bengal
711101

revealing that much of Latin America was in similar financial straits; political fragility accompaned the economic problems. Many governments lost the capacity to resist external political and economic pressure and room for domestic policy manoeuvring came to be severely circumscribed. Pressing day-to-day financial concerns forced many countries to postpone the long-term developoment, equity and poverty alleviation objectives that afforded such bright hope in the 1970s. Concomitantly, the process of regional cooperation and integration slowed or came to a complete standstill.



EXPOSURES

★ Ms. Soma Bose, our Prgramme Officer for Health, Nutrition & Community Organisation was selected to attend the International Course on Food & Nutrition Prog. Management at the International Agricultural Centre, Wageningen, The Netherlands from 22 Oct. - 2 Dec. 1995.

★ Samit Basu-Mallick and Akbar Mallik, prog. officers of our IEC Division participated in a workshop on "The Use and Possibilities of Video for Awareness Building" as Resource Persons, organised by ALCOM as a part of Communication Resource Network (CRN) supported by CAPART from Feb. 21-24, 1996 at Thrissur, Kerala.

★ Prof. S. K. Basu-Mallik, our Chairman, attended the conference on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture : "Towards The World Food Summit 1996" organised by FAO and Danchurch Aid in Copenhagen, Denmark from 3-7 March 1996.

★ Ms. Soma Bose participated in a course on Design & Management of Community Based Family Planning conducted by The Asian Centre, Bangkok, Thailand from II Mar.-29 Mar. 1996.

★ Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) of Bangkok held its 21st PPP (People's Planning Prog.) in the month of March this year in Kathmandu, Nepal. Mr. D. Guha, one of our prog. officers was nominated to attend the seminar. The main focus of the forum is to strengthen people's initiatives in developmental planning. He was invited by CORSO, one of our partners in New Zealand.

★ Prof. S. K. Basu-Mallik and Dr. (Mrs.) Gauri Bhattacharya, Secy. IPWS and Head, Dept. of Folk Music, Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta, left for New Zealand on a lecture tour. Trade Unions, Universities, Maori Activist Groups invited them to lecture on various subjects pertaining to Social Anthropology, Education, Development and Culture of the Indigenous People etc. Prof. Basu-Mallik was also invited to speak on the Indian Perspective of Globalization in a conference : Alternative Forum on Free Trade organised by GATT Watchdog, Christchurch, New Zealand between July 12 and July 14, 1996.

★ Mr. R. Mallick led a team of 8 members reperesentating NGOs to participate in the UN Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul from 31 May - 14 June 1996. The Conference was attended by more than 6000 delegates from various countries. The team participated in many workshops and seminars organised there and spoke on Eviction and Housing Rights, Women and Housing etc. In this connection Perspective Audiovisuals and IEC Div. of PUDAR prepared posters, banners and a 20 minute Video Capsule "THE SHELTER" on Urban Poor on Calcutta. The film was screened on 10 June at the Conference Projection Hall.

REPORTS

FIVE 2-DAY WORKSHOPS ON VISUAL LITERACY

A 2-day orientation workshop on visual literacy and introduction to media activism (Ist. module) was held at five affiliate centres from Dec. '95 to Mar. '96. The basic idea was to shatter the misconceptions woven around rustic ignorance vis-a-vis films, more specifically documentaries. Another objective was to facilitate articulation on various social issues. The participants were VLWs. of the project "In Search of Food Security". The workshops were designed and conducted by the I E C Division.

TWO 12-DAY LEADERSHIP TRAINNING FOR VLWS & CO-ORDINATORS

12-day leadership training for VLWs and Co-ordinators was organised in two phases at IITD, Calcutta in Feb. and Mar. 1996. The objectives were to develop conceptual clarity regarding Food Security Management, Community, Health & Nutrition, Community Organistion, Community Leadership, Self-reliance through self-help group formation, Human Relation & Effective Communication, Project Planning, Management & Implementation. The training programmes were designed by our Training Cell and conducted by WBVHA. 75 Field workers participated in these camps.

CONVENTION ON HABITAT II

PUDAR in collaboration with CISRS organised a preparatory conference entitled "National Convention of the Urban Poor in the context of Habitat II" from 7-9 March 1996, at Salt lake Stadium, Calcutta.

Noted architect and activist, Mr. Kirti Shah, Dr. Sudhendu Mukherjee, eminent anthropologist, Dr. Vinay Lall, Consultant to GOI for UN Habitat II, Mr. P. Chatterjee, Mayor of Calcutta spoke on different aspects of Habitat. Also an international delegation led by Ms Mario Fides and Mrs. Alice Murphy representing Urban Poor Associates of Philipines deliberated on the South-East Asian experience. More than 100 NGO and CBO representatives from eleven Indian cities participated in the convention. A Public Lecture was organised on the 9th March at the Bangla Academy, Calcutta.

be more articulate and exert more power in the conduct of world affairs. The oil-rich countries also attempted to utilize their newly found economic power to set the terms and write the rules affecting trade, transfer of technology and foreign assistance. The ideas of a united Third World, which Nehru and other legendary leaders fostered, gained ground as did the concept of a more just New International Economic Order (NIEO), non-alignment and self-reliance.

2.5 A number of initiatives for common action emerged from developing country meetings at Algiers in 1973 and Sri Lanka in 1976, resulting in Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC). The mid 1970s also marked the emergence of a new policy approach to development which was based on empirical studies that showed it was possible for economies to have rapid growth and attain a more equitable distribution of income simultaneously. Equity considerations were, for a while, placed high on the agenda as was the achievement of "basic needs" in developing economies. These were emphases that fostered food security achievement.

2.6 The idea of an assertive and united developing world capable of resisting external intervention by both of the dominant political blocs of the time was frustrated by developments which led to growing diversity among the developing countries, and by ideological and political confrontations among them. Often while professing solidarity, countries moved to uncoordinated initiatives, sometimes in tune with varying outside patrons, sometimes not; meanwhile it became increasingly obvious that there were no shortcuts to successful nationhood and self-reliant development and no recipe for a successful developing-country bloc.

2.7 The 1980s saw a return to Cold War tensions. The invasion of Afghanistan, regional conflicts in the Middle East and Central America, extended civil wars in Angola and Mozambique, the prolonged Iraq-Iran war, and internal conflicts in Cambodia are examples; the tensions resulted in a renewed and extravagant armaments race. To this day, the developing countries continue to increase their military spending. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that the developing economies have increased their defence expenditures by 8 percent a year since 1960 and sub-Saharan Africa, the region that can least afford it, has increased the portion of its regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) devoted to the military from about 0.7 percent in 1960 to about 3 percent today. Most of these funds are not used in guarding the country from outside attack, but in fighting factions of their own citizens. Every dollar spent for the millitary is one less towards providing for economic development and food security. Ideological confrontations and open conflict form the basis for much food insecurity.

2.8 In Central and Eastern Europe and the USSR of the 1980s, the twin objectives of military strength and socio-economic progress proved increasingly difficult to achieve simultaneously. The resulting strains on centrally-planned economic systems precipitated the major transformations that began in the late 1980s.

2.9 Meanwhile, in many of the developed countries, the global recession of the early 1980s was followed by an unusually long period of sustained growth, stability and integration that strengthened their position in world affairs.

2.10 Events of the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s were among the most momentous of the century. In a short period, radical political and economic transformations swept across Eastern Europe and the Republics of the former USSR. The principles of centrally-planned economic management were abandoned in favour of a more market-oriented approach. The political complexities of the transition were compounded by the revolutionary and unprecedented character of the institutional change and the absence of a supporting political and economic theoretical framework. For most of these formerly centrally-plannned economies the initial phase of the reform translated into profound and polarizing dislocations.

2.11 Some feel that the nadir has now been reached; to date privatization has been accompanied by uneployment, reduced production, lack of credit and consumer and producer subsidies, political instability, and growing inegalitarianism in size distribution of incomes and resources. These phenomena challenge food security in the region. Problems associated with transition, especially in the former USSR. have required the mobilization of human and financial resouces and have become a predominant concern of the international community. In addition, they have tended to divert funds from sub-Saharan Africa, in which development programmes have done poorly and in which population growth has consistently outrun economic growth and food security is most jecpardized.

2.12 Experiences in Central and Eastern Europe and in Central Asia contrasted sharply with that in China, where economic reforms began in 1978. While land remained in the hands of the state, the Household Responsibility System (HRS) broke communes into individual farms and, in a major ideological shift, encouraged profit maximization. The HRS (together with some supplementary measures which occured at the same time) contributed to the lifting of millions of families out of poverty during the 1980s when people realized that they could consume and invest the products of their labour rather than ceding them to the state. This major alteration of the farm-level institution brought an effective end to the free-rider problem which was a major reason why farmers on jointwork communes worked at less than their capacity. Farm production rose rapidly as a result, ultimately helping to fuel the economic boom of the mid-and late-1980s and the 1990s.

2.13 For most of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, the 1980s represented a decade of economic and financial crisis. Indeed, a long period of recession and adjustment followed Mexico's admission that it had over borrowed and under invested in the 1970s; in 1982 it could not continue to make payments on its debt. The debt crisis spread quickly to other con-

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KARNATAKA STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION

FINANCE TO EX-SERVICEMEN

1. OBJECTIVE:

Ex-servicemen constitute an important target group which deserves special attention in the matter of institutional finance. By providing financial assistance in the forms of Term Loan and Seed Capital on soft terms, the scheme aims at their resettlement with starting of small scale industries including transport and other services for gainful self-employment.

2. ELIGIBILITY:

Ex-servicemen (including Widows of Ex-service men) and disabled service personnel as defined by the Government of India and sponsored for assistance under the scheme by the Director General (Resettlement), Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India, (DG (R)) after screening by a committee constituted for the purpose, are eligible to get assistance under the scheme.

3. PURPOSE:

New Industrial Projects in small scale sector including transport and other eligible services, proposed to be set up by Ex-servicemen at a cost not exceeding Rs.12 lakhs are eligible for financial assistance under the scheme.

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4. MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE:

Maximum term loan assistance available under this scheme is Rs.9 lakhs per project. Projects costing upto Rs.50,000/- are eligible to be covered under the composite loan scheme with 100% finance.

5. SEED CAPITAL ASSISTANCE:

a. AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE:

IDBI and DG (R) provide Seed Capital assistance through SFCs' to meet the gap in the promoter's equity upto 15% of the total cost of the project and subject to a maximum of Rs.1,80,000 per project (Rs. 90,000 each from IDBI and DG(R)) to maintain a debt equity ratio of 3:1.

b. MODE OF ASSISTANCE:

The Seed Capital assistance will be sanctioned after satisfying the eligibility of Ex-servicemen and viability of the project, simultaneously along with the normal term loan.

c. RATE OF INTEREST:

It carries a nominal interest of 1% p.a. However, if the financial position and profitability of the unit permit, a higher rate of interest not exceeding the applicable rate for normal term loan will be charged.

...3...

d. MORATORIUM AND REPAYMENT OF SEED CAPITAL:

The seed capital assistance will be repayable over a period of 10 years including a moratorium period of upto 5 years. In the case of transport operators, the seed capital has to be repaid over a period of 5 years including a moratorium period of 3 years.

e. SECURITY:

Soft Seed Capital assistance under the scheme will be unsecured. Hence, charge on main security or collateral security will not be insisted for grant of Seed Capital assistance.

6. APPLICATION PROCESSING FEE:

Application processing fee is charged at the following rates:

Loan Amount		Processing Fee
Upto Rs.10,000	:	Nil
Above Rs.10,000 & upto Rs.40,000	:	Rs.100/-
Above Rs.40,000 & upto Rs.2.00 lakhs	:	1/4% of the loan amount
Above Rs.2.00 lakhs	:	1/2% of the loan amount

7. SECURITY MARGIN:

A security margin of 25% will be retained against the assets created out of the term loan

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8. PROMOTER'S CONTRIBUTION:

Promoter's contribution under this scheme is 10% of the cost of the project.

9. DEBT-EQUITY RATIO:

Debt-Equity Ratio applicable under the scheme is 3:1. Central/State subsidies if any, will be retained for working capital requirements.

10. RATE OF INTEREST:

The gross rate of interest applicable on term loan is given below:

Area	Interest p.a.
a. Notified backward areas	13.5%
b. Forward areas	14.5%
For Transport Vehicles:	
Irrespective of Location	13.5%

A rebate of 1% will be allowed on prompt payment of instalments of interest or interest and principal. In case of default in payment of instalment of interest and/or principal, an enhanced interest of 1½% over and above the contract rate will be charged on the defaulted instalments for the period of default.

11. MORATORIUM AND REPAYMENT:

The term loan will be repayable within a period of 10 years including a moratorium period of 1 to 1½ years.

...5...

12. COMMITMENT CHARGE:

No commitment charge for any delay in drawal of loan will be levied.

13. TRAINING:

Ex-servicemen seeking financial assistance under the scheme must have undergone EDP training organised for them under the scheme. Service personnel nearing retirement age intending setting up projects under the scheme will also be eligible for such training facility. Training expenses will be borne by DG (R) and IDBI.

14. SPECIAL INCENTIVE:

CONSULTANCY SUPPORT:

IDBI will arrange with TCO/SISI or other approved agencies, wherever necessary, for consultancy services including for preparation of project reports, at a cost not exceeding Rs.2,500 per beneficiary. Such consultancy charges will be borne by IDBI.

15. ASSISTANCE TO TRANSPORT OPERATORS UNDER EX-SERVICEMEN SCHEME:

Financial assistance under the scheme will be extended in respect of co-operatives/companies of Ex-servicemen (including Widows of Ex-servicemen) upto a maximum of 20 vehicles per borrower. Promoter's contribution will be 10%.

* * * * * *

K.S.S.I.D.C. — Sheds

" Kayaji Area — W. Ch. Rd (Veerya)

K.I.A.D.B → Ind Area Khanda
Ind Area

"GIGAVE"

IDOLA Sonllekh

Nrupatunga Road
opp. K.I.S.I

Tech. Centre
Agri. Univ
Bangalore

(Technical Centre for Agricultural Equipment)

TCO

7 (Seven)

(Rep. Bharatam Sonlekh)

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Lokayan

An Agenda for India III

Re. 1

This is a shortened and revised version of *An Agenda for India*. The Agenda was first prepared in 1979 by a group composed of Romesh Thapar, Rajni Kothari, Bashiruddin Ahmed, George Verghese, Kuldip Nayar and Mrinal Datta-Chaudhuri. It was circulated to some 100 persons all over the country for their comments and, after amendments and adjustments, was published in *Seminar* in January 1980, with 50 people signing it. It was then discussed in a national convention on April 1980, in which some 200 persons representing diverse points of view participated. This was in the nature of a preliminary exercise.

The edited transcript of the discussions at the convention was reproduced in the July 1980 issue of *Seminar*. On the basis of this discussion, and comments received from those who could not attend the convention, the Agenda was rewritten in the form of a detailed 120 page monograph and put out by the Steering Committee for the Agenda in March 1981. This has been widely reported in the press.

The present — third — version is a shorter and more concise and focussed statement of the Agenda, and to that end revised in parts. It appeared in the August 1981 issue of Seminar. It is being published in the hope that it will provide a basis for sustained thought and discussion among political, social activist, intellectual and other circles and hopefully lead to a framework for an alternative polity and a basis for concerted action on the part of those who are interested in restructuring Indian society towards a more just, humane and truly democratic order.

The ideas and concepts in the Agenda are open to modification and alteration in a changing situation.

A DIFFERENT kind of crisis faces India today. It is a crisis of change, not of stagnation. It is a crisis borne out of the incapacity of institutions to respond to a deep and far-reaching process of social turmoil. Having run its course, the old order has lost its earlier consensus and legitimacy. Old relationships are being questioned and so are the concepts and symbols handed down by tradition and history. The questionings come from a new awakening and a new sensibility, a comprehensive search for a new order, for new social content in the functioning of institutions and new institutions for implementing a new social agenda. India is in the throes of a crisis alright but it is a crisis that is borne out of heightened consciousness and a far-reaching response to the democratic ideology. We should welcome the crisis and turn it into a challenge and an opportunity. That is the call of history.

The Challenge of Change: During the last decade, both political and economic processes have brought sections of the peripheral and deprived social strata into the active political community. The polity is still less than the population but has grown beyond the elites and upper classes that inherited the Raj to embrace a wider circle of politically conscious and economically powerful castes and classes which now acquired a stake in the system. Certain middle-peasant castes have dramatically improved their position, asserting equality of status and privilege with the upper castes and mounting considerable pressure for redefining rural-urban relations. At the same time they are unwilling to extend the same rights to the lower castes in both rural and urban areas.

The broad lower tier of the social pyramid consisting of the poor and under-privileged and exploited sections of the population is however no longer willing to accept a submissive role. They are in turn asserting their rights in relation to the dominant structures of hegemony and control; they too want to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Accommodation is no longer possible within the old structure which was narrowly cocooned in privilege. Millions remained, and continue to remain, outside the system which has become ever more distant and alien and has ceased to be meaningful for them.

No surprise then that the processes of change and transformation should cause turbulence and turmoil, and that once cherished attitudes and concepts and institutions should be questioned. That such challenge to established forms should occur at a time when the elites themselves, in their scramble for power and resources and unmindful of larger considerations, feel incapacitated and bewildered at the pressures building from below is not surprising. For it is a challenge that is a direct result of a non-performing and a non-responding apparatus, a direct consequence of the failure of the system to respond to the new demands that were inherent in the democratic process.

Indeed, without such infusions from the bottom, there seems to be little hope of change. The system has failed to deliver for a long time now. Hopes of top-down betterment have been belied because in a highly divided society suffering not just from extremes of want but also from inhuman social arrangements, the 'surplus' that is generated is either consumed in perpetuating the status quo or is intercepted and diverted into the newly emergent middle strata of society. The bottom tiers continue to remain deprived.

The related theory of the benefits of large modern investments radiating outwards was similarly belied. These remained enclaves, cases of plenty unable to transform a desert of want. Demonstrative measures presumed to deliver social justice, and the competition in radical slogan-mongering that followed, resulted in the growth of parallel systems: a parallel economy based on black money, vote banks based on electoral manipulation of the poor and the socially discriminated, and a parallel structure of political management based on a new breed of politicians and dadas peddling in money and violence.

The Issue of Democracy: If India is to grow into a performing democracy, it will become necessary to discard or alter those aspects of the system which inhibit the attainment of distributive justice in a framework of freedom while strengthening and creating institutions and practices without which this cannot be done. The present failure and crisis have grown out of the incapacity of the modernist elite — urban-based, western-educated and alienated from the masses — to do this.

This elite seems also incapable of responding to India's immense size and complexity which have come alive with increasing politicization. To im-

agine that India is a monolith that can or will respond to omnibus *firmans* issued by a presumably omnipotent Centre, or even any of the State capitals, is to ignore the reality of its inherent and rich complexity.

Development, if it is not to degenerate into an oppressive system which it has in large parts of the world, must encompass all segments and interests and blend them into a wider national perspective. This is not possible without further elaboration and institutionalization of the democratic framework. Decentralization would therefore appear to be a key instrumentality in making a smooth transition based on strengthening the self-reliant capacities of the people. The question is: what patterns and instrumentalities are involved in moving towards a decentralized order? And decentralization of what? For whom? Through what precise processes? These are questions that take us to the heart of the whole agenda of political and economic restructuring and their inevitable intertwining.

The Issue of Decentralization: The concept of decentralization has often been criticized on the ground that it might only promote localism and sharpen exploitation by local dominant groups without any of the restraints imposed by larger agglomerations. Such warnings cannot be ignored and every attempt should be made to overcome such possibilities through accelerated development arising out of the involvement of the people who are more knowledgable about local conditions than distant officialdom and extension agencies. But aren't those who criticize decentralization on grounds of local dominance themselves dominating the entire political and economic landscape from the Centre and State capitals, a small urban middle class elite that has had all the benefits of the present structure and is hence unwilling to share power? The risks of domination are always there in an unequal society; the real issue is how and at what levels can it be countered through the organized strength of the poor and the under-privileged. Decentralization is not a panacea for all the country's ills, but offers an obvious and fairly effective starting point for reducing the stanglehold of existing vested interests and imparting fresh vigour and purpose to the system.

The mistake so far has been to consider decentralization in formal institutional and power terms without a simultaneous attack on socio-economic inequities. This is not our view of a decentralized polity. We too are convinced that mere decentraliz-

ation of political power to the lower tiers of the system will not by itself provide the requisite economic power to the people, although we do believe that it is a necessary component of a reconstructed social and economic order in which the people exercise power instead of being at the receiving end of a bureaucratically administered welfare State. We are convinced that without such a political definition of economic rights the latter will never be achieved. Indeed, this can be taken as the point of departure of this Agenda.

Economic Structure

It is necessary, then, to initiate the restructuring of economic and social relations by placing it on the agenda of democratic politics. For, the reasons underlying the existing concentration of power at higher levels — as well as the reasons that have so far prevented the decentralization of administrative and political power and legislative reforms affecting land and property relations from being implemented — are to be found in the prevailing socio-economic structure. It is a structure which makes for dependencies based on property relations on the one hand and access to State patronage on the other. The result is that private economic privilege, social status and State patronage all converge into a powerful intermesh of interests. The mere devolution of political power will have little meaning if the existing structure of economic power and social status and privilege, and their close alliance with the State apparatus, are left intact. It is to these substantive dimensions that we shall now turn before laying out any model of an alternative polity.

India's chronic economic condition is epitomised in growing poverty. About 48 per cent of the population or 308 million people continue to suffer the scourge of poverty and their number grows about 5 million a year. Low productivity of means of production and a low rate of growth are only part of the explanation of the unprecedented mass of poverty. The main explanation is unequal distribution of the means of production, and unjust terms on which labour and capital combine to produce wealth. These production relations account for the slow and limited diffusion of productive technology. They also account for the fact that the income generated by production remains excessively concentrated. The resulting imbalance between the growth of productive capacity and the growth of mass purchasing power has already generated unreal surpluses and excess capacities, and decelerated industrial growth.

Not that there have been no gains. Despite lapses and a lot of slippage, the Indian economy has registered progress in various aspects of agriculture and industry and the development of a technological base which stand us in good stead today. Even so, development has been fitful and its gains have not only been inequitably distributed but have benefitted groups who have little stake in the further growth of the economy. Today the traditional constraints on growth have gone. There is both a grain as well as a foreign exchange 'surplus' though threatened from time to time. Yet, the economy is in trouble, with the system itself acting as a constraint on growth. There is urgent need for restructuring with specific measures for the various sub-sectors of the economy.

Land Relations: Almost 80 per cent of the population lives in rural India and some 72 per cent earn their livelihood from the land. And yet after zamindari abolition in the 1950s, agrarian reform has been stalled despite considerable legislation and endless rhetoric. Ceiling legislation has been evaded with benami transactions resulting in mass evictions in certain areas. Vested interests and the absence of accurate and up to date records of rights have thwarted progress. The situation in the permanently settled areas of eastern and southern India and the plight of sharecroppers are particularly distressing.

Minimum wages are widely evaded. Some advance has been made in distributing homestead plots, but bonded labour survives in various garbs. Tribal lands have been illegally alienated; rural debts have not really decreased despite periodic scaling down; and the small and marginal farmer does not have equal access to available input supplies, credit, extension services and marketing facilities. Feudalism still reigns supreme in a State like Bihar.

Redistribution: A time-bound programme to distribute the 5.5 million acres of surplus land already identified is absolutely essential. The required machinery for this has been detailed in the first report of the Land Reforms Committee (1978). Additional surplus land (estimated to be around 20 million acres) should also be identified by plugging loopholes in the legal definition of surplus land. All personally cultivating tenants and share-croppers should be given title-deeds conferring on them the ownership of the lands they till on the basis of quick, on-the-spot, inquiries by appropriately empowered authorities. The procedures can be similar to those adopted in Kerala, West Bengal

and Karnataka. All currently cultivating tenants can thus be made owners within five years.

Block-level committees and tribunals should be appointed to implement land ceilings and tenacy reforms. The landless and the tenants should have at least 50 per cent representation on these bodies. This is crucial. Experience of many countries shows that by and large it is where the prospective beneficiaries have participated in structural reform that effective land reforms have been possible.

Employment: A Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, on the (improved) Maharashtra pattern, though avoiding the pitfalls of the scheme, must be extended, in phases, to all regions of the country. For the formulation of efficient full employment plans for all blocks, techno-economic project formulation units must be established in all districts and blocks. The plans must specially cover every poor underemployed family on the *antyodaya* pattern. A work guarantee should be declared in a block as soon as a block plan for full employment has been made and approved.

Elementary Economic Rights: Access to the following items of infrastructure and social services must be recognised as the elementary right of all, especially of the deprived communities and the rural poor:

1. an ample and clean water supply;

2. adequate health and nutrition and the necessary provision, costing and distribution of food items for this;

3. literacy and elementary education, as well as continuing adult education to generate awareness of socio-economic rights and create opportunities for continuous improvement of skills;

4. sanitation, with increasingly mechanised and covered waste and sewage disposal and recycling with a view to reducing the drudgery and social stigma attached to them;

5. basic housing needs and commensurate services; and

6. access to energy, including alternative sources of fuel and fodder, if the land and forests are to be conserved.

Similar services and related infrastructure must also be made available to urban slum-dwellers.

Organization of the Rural Poor: Such a minimum programme of rural reconstruction cannot be achieved by mere preaching or rhetoric. Crucial to the whole enterprise is the organization of the rural poor and the marginalised peasantry to enable them to take direct actions to press and secure these measures as their rights. A national fund for the organization of the poor needs to be created to support and sustain them regardless of political affiliations. The funds so provided could be proportional to the judicially ascertained membership of every union.

Similarly, widespread bondage, unpaid or low-paid labour and purchase or sale of produce at exploitative prices must be ended soon by a series of coordinated actions. Workers released from bondage should get guaranteed public employment under employment guarantee schemes, and in the event of their belonging to farm families, preferential and subsidised allocation of credit, inputs and technical assistance under marginal farmer schemes.

Institutions to meet the consumption credit needs of the poor must be set up on the lines indicated by the National Commission on Agriculture. Competition in trading and money-lending must be intensified in backward areas by public alongside private agencies, so that the poor have more options to borrow, buy and sell on better terms. The problems of the poor need to be tackled through a comprehensive effort at economic improvement, not by doles meted out in a condescending and *ma-baap* style.

The customary rights of adivasis and hill-people to gather freely and sell forest produce in demarcated tracts must continue, for this is often their only means of livelihood. If households are given individual patches in a 'tree reform' analogous to 'land reform', and the allottees are given technical help, recycled tree-farming will grow automatically.

Since official agencies have so far failed to implement these measures, the rural poor, adivasis and bonded workers must be politicised, unionised and enabled to take direct actions to press and secure these measures as their demands.

Industrial Policy: The foregoing policies — and politics — are essential ingredients of a direct attack on poverty. But a high rate of growth of production and investment is also a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for the eradication of poverty. For breaking the low-growth

syndrome the following kinds of structural changes would be necessary in the '80s.

In production and investment as well as distribution, a *rational dualism* should be the basic policy. This would mean, in concrete terms, that whereas about half or more than half of annual investment may remain in the government sector, the rest of the investment in the private sector should be progressively freed from bureaucratic controls after a quick examination of the social need and efficiency of every control by a standing expert commission.

The crisis in the management of three vital sectors — coal, power and transport — is now so crippling that a rational dualism should be introduced even in these sectors so that a reasonable fraction of the capacity in these sectors may be allowed to be owned and/or operated by the private sector in competition with the public sector. Some of the old and new mines can be thrown open to either private management or professional cadres organised along cooperative or self-management principles. More private thermal, mini-hydel, solar and biogas power units can be freely allowed to service particular areas or sectors. This policy would quickly augment capacity and relieve the unending misery of coal and power consumers.

From the social point of view, absolutely identical criteria (a minimum social rate of return and/or minimum contributions to employment, equity or self-reliance) must be used to assess the performance of public as well as private enterprises. And, therefore, in general, in all civilian production sectors, private enterprises found inefficient along these criterea should be brought under public control and public sector enterprises found inefficient along the same criteria, should be handed over to specialized bodies of experts through a system of competitive bidding. Except in the armament sector, dualist competition must in fact be introduced in all sectors to ensure more rapid growth and operational efficiency.

There is no case in democratic socialist theory for the State condemning the people for ever to chronic shortages and despicable service and supply standards maintained by callous and corrupt, irresponsible and rapacious, State monopolies. A rational and competitive economic dualism of the type indicated can bring some relief to the harassed populace.

Another structural reform needed to keep up the

rate of investment is that savings invested in scheduled assets should be made progressively exempt from taxation (subject of course to reasonable ceilings) while consumption continues to be heavily and progressively taxed.

And, finally, in order to promote industrial peace as well as efficiency, it is essential that there be national guidelines for wage contracts, linking all increases in emoluments, in the organised public sector and the private sector, to increase in objective indices of performance in every industry, moderated where economically feasible by cost of living indices estimated by expert bodies. Whenever collective bargaining fails there must be rigorously enforced compulsory, but time-bound arbitration of every dispute, conforming to national guidelines. All systems of contract labour and other means adopted to undermine unionised organization of labour should be abolished.

In the corporate sector, a ceiling on assets controlled by top business houses must be administered. And a law should be enacted to provide tax and non-tax incentives for companies making their permanent workers shareholders out of a part of their gross profits. Public sector companies must be directed to give a lead in this direction. This is the only approach to true socialisation of industrial property as distinguished from its mere governmentalisation which so frequently passes as 'socialism'.

Technology: Development in the 80s will have to be steered with a heightened awareness of technology, resource depletion and environment. India cannot afford to repudiate modern technology but must consciously determine the mix and pace of technological change. The term 'appropriate technology' has often been misunderstood. What is appropriate is not static but dynamic, changing with time, space and sector. And what is appropriate may in certain cases be the very latest and best. The unlettered Indian farmer, for example, is operating near the frontiers of technology. Likewise, there is no sensible alternative to current offshore drilling technologies that India is employing, or to remote sensing, and much else besides. But there are other areas where bamboo borewells, biogas and improved bullock carts might be the appropriate answer as part of an overall mix. Nor are large-scale technology and efficiency inflexibly tied. There are areas where the economies of large scale operation are overwhelming, and others where the small is not just beautiful but also more economical, in terms of

social benefits and costs. Only detailed studies can determine the appropriate mix of techniques for each sector.

Environment: There is however one aspect of appropriateness on which there should be little disagreement. This relates to the choice of techniques and modes of resource-use which do the least violence to nature in the form of pollution and disfigurement, and reduce the rate of net depletion of non-renewable resources. Conservation must therefore be made a key development concept and not a fad. Forests, for instance, mediate between land and atmosphere, moderate the climate, conserve moisture, produce humus, hold the soil, yield innumerable products other than timber — edible, industrial, medicinal — and constitute a social good and joy in themselves. Our economic policies and elite lifestyles have eroded all this and deprived the people of their most primary rights. It is essential to restore these to the Indian people and especially the poor among them.

Energy: The energy and transport sectors too are composed of many layers and are in need of innovative handling in view of the oil crisis. India obviously needs to use a lot more coal — of which it has a sufficiency, though not a plentitude as some imagine — and, more so, hydro-power. The neglect of hydro-electricity (especially in view of its link with water resource development, irrigation storages and flood control) has been particularly striking. Here is a huge block of cheap, clean, renewable energy waiting to be tapped — a major asset, relatively unused. Unconventional sources of energy are being sought but rather haltingly. The bio-gas (as opppsed to the purely gobar gas) plant holds out promise at a certain level, especially if human and agricultural wastes, water hyacinth and weeds, and crop residues can be recycled through them to produce organic manure and fuel for domestic cooking and lighting and for operating small motors. Social forestry and fuel plantations also offer great possibilities and would be obvious means of tapping solar energy — through photosynthesis. The option fits with land use planning, ecological considerations and employment generation and merits high priority. Above all, it makes decentralization an inherent feature of resource planning and popular access and gives it tremendous potency for a socially just and ecologically sustainable mode of development.

In short, development in the 1980s will have to be steered with a heightened awareness of technology,

depleting resources and the environment. While India cannot afford to repudiate modern technology, it must consciously determine the mix and pace of technological change and restrain modern technology from becoming a Frankenstein.

Rural Development; The renewed emphasis on rural development and raising the share of investment in agriculture today derives not only from the obvious point that food is the most basic need but also from the fact that the accrual of income from agriculture is fairly widespread and so is participation. The bulk of the poor live in the rural areas and are only loosely integrated with the non-agricultural sectors of the economy. The major thrust of the poverty eradication strategy, and of the specific programmes for particular poverty groups, will therefore have to be rural.

Restraints on Consumption: Taxation must level down as much as level up. There has to be a massive income transfer through fiscal policy to the most needy sections of the population through a corresponding transfer from unnecesssary private consumption to a level of social consumption that permanently improves the lives and capabilities of the poor. It is difficult to ask people to work for an acceptable minima when others flaunt their wealth and status.

Basic Needs Strategy: The basic needs programme and public distribution system (including food-for-work) are instrumentalities for effecting such an income transfer in order to promote equity and socially desirable consumption — of education, health, nutrition, housing and elements of social security. Distributive justice is imperative not merely on moral considerations but on political and economic grounds as well. An unequal society will be riddled with group tensions that must at some stage burst the bounds of tolerance. Conversely, a sense of movement towards more equitable and less oppressive social and economic relationships has been shown to be a powerful spur to mass endeavour. If India is to move, the masses must move; and if the masses are to move they must be inspired to move. They will no longer be driven.

Eradicating Poverty: All such policies are essential ingredients of a direct attack on poverty. Democracy, equity and the quality of life can have no meaning without human sustenance and growth, without moving the society out of economic stagnation and exploitation. There is no contradiction between bread and freedom but the prospects of

democracy are dim indeed if the ranks of the poor keep growing and their condition keeps deteriorating. It is, therefore, imperative that the structural changes discussed earlier be carried through so that the economy moves out of the low-growth, high social injustice syndrome in the current decade.

Health: Nothing is more crucial to well-being, indeed survival itself, than health. Yet this is one aspect of social life that has been woefully neglected in India. The debilitating and disabling repercussions of ill-health on the economy in terms of low productivity and stamina and high absenteeism, morbidity, morality and human suffering has seldom been calculated. The results of protein-calorie malnutrition are pitiably evident, though the greater part of the damage caused to the physical and intellectual growth of the population has not been so obviously measured. To strain for material improvements in living standards while accepting an impaired quality of life at the threshold is a contradiction in terms.

Health Delivery: The Indian health system is an inverted pyramid resting on hospitals, highly trained doctors and expensive drugs, mostly concentrated in and around the towns and cities and better-off sections within them. There are more doctors than nurses on the Indian medical register and the medical outreach excludes the vast bulk of the population in any effective sense. There are some 180,000 registered practitioners of modern medicine of whom 80 per cent are located in urban India while the 576,000 villages are served by the rest. Some 20,000 or more doctors are abroad while over 10,000 of them are unemployed and listed in the live register of the employment exchanges. And this in a country where health for most people is permanently at risk and where the infant mortality rate at 138 per 1000 is amongst the highest in the world.

It is no use blaming the doctors, although the medical establishment is powerful, like its counterparts in other professions, and conservative. The system is wrong. Health is not accorded a priority rating appropriate to its true importance. And vested interests, as in all other areas, are strong and articulate.

Whatever their conceptual and operational shortcomings, the recently launched Community Health Volunteer Scheme and the draft National Health Policy (1979) strike out in the right direction. Of course India needs more and better medicare; but without denying this it is possible and necessary to

argue for better health care. The switch from curative to preventive, promotive and community health is therefore right. Likewise, the effort to democratise and decentralise the delivery system by helping each community to become health conscious and begin to take care of its own health through community workers who belong to the neighbourhood.

Education and Equity: Structural change is a multi-dimensional concept and must simultaneously attack on both the material basis of life and the role of consciousness in restructuring the material base. Crucial to any structural change is the role of education. Our founding fathers saw universal literacy and a minimal thereshold of educational opportunity as a necessary (even if by itself inadequate) foundation for equity. The target has not been met and, on current showing, may not be realised in the near future. There are an estimated 240 million illiterates in the country. The leeway needs to be made good with the least possible delay.

Adult Education: While formal education is important, adult education (as opposed merely to literacy) has become a social and economic imperative. Few programmes are more germane to equity and social change. It is true that the general processes of development, the opening up of the countryside and the spread of communications have resulted in the steady growth of social and political consciousness. However, ignorance, superstition and inertia still hold down millions of people who, while being aware of their condition, continue to accept their continuing exploitation and destitution. They have to be made aware of their human, constitutional, legal and civic rights and encouraged, in fact organised, to assert them.

Consciousness-raising at all levels is therefore the prime task, but nowhere so much as at the submerged base of the social pyramid. People have to know that they are being exploited by their fellow-beings and that they have the right and command the means to change their condition. This is the beginning of democracy and social justce.

Towards a New Pedagogy: Few topics generate such indignation in urban parlours as the state of education in India today. Parents, teachers, politicians and the public generally clamour for educational reform. Unfortunately they have been looking in the wrong direction for change. Educational reform is basically a political issue and relates to the values a nation seeks and the skills with which it equips the people in order to enable them to fulfil

their aspirations. Macaulay set the trend of education for a ruling class which has essentially continued to this day. It caters to an elitist system and is therefore necessarily top-down. Like much else, it is imitative and curiously unrelated to the Indian environment, a transplant.

The pattern of formal schooling with its single-point entry, sequential progress, and full time requirement denies access to many and compels others to drop out for social and economic reasons. The educational process is marked by progressive subsidies: and higher education, in the memorable words of the Education Commission, has become a substitute for work rather than a preparation for it. According to recent estimates, barely 20 per cent of those enrolling in Class I matriculate. The wastage is enormous. While education upto the middle or matriculation level should be a right, higher education should be thought of as a privilege that must be earned or at least paid for without State subsidies. Jobs should be delinked from degrees and employers or some other national agency could organise objective tests as a basic for selection.

Neighbourhood Schools: A common school system is necessary and even if not immediately possible must be accepted as a short-to-intermediate range educational goal. It has been argued that it serves nothing to incapacitate or close down public schools and other private schools of quality and that the real task should be to level up. But the problem lies in the social exclusiveness bred by those institutions that foster a different and, by contrast, elitist culture. Levelling up, though necessary, would still result in two parallel systems, perhaps equal but nonetheless separate. The answer would lie in developing better neighbourhood schools and giving their students some preference in admission to vocational and professional institutions and universities and for purposes of public employment.

Social Restructuring

No less important than economic, technological and educational restructuring is the whole question of structural change in the social order itself. Indeed, in some ways this is the crucial sphere. For, the big issue facing India is the increasing inequity of the social order. The achievement of an equitable social order has to be a central and direct goal, the concept of development having failed to bring it about. Likewise, the closely related concept of fraternity. If equity connotes sharing, fraternity connotes a wider sense of community and a positive

opportunity for cultural growth for all sections of the people. There has so far been a rather limited focus on fighting communalism and casteism and promoting 'integration'. Important as these concerns are, they cannot in fact be adequately dealt with in the absence of a larger framework of identity and allegiance.

Women: The unfavourable and steadily declining sex ratio — that is the number of women per 1000 men in the population — in all States, except Kerala, is evidence of a tradition of social discrimination which must be ended. The status of women is more than a matter of 'women's lib.' An enhanced, dignified and confident status for women in social and economic terms is necessary for liberating society and promoting positive social change.

Dalits: The dalits and adivasis constitute a vast submerged, under privileged mass that largely make the base of the social pyramid and account for 15 and 7 per cent of the total population respectively.

Untouchability stands abolished under the Constitution but social practice still sadly trails behind the law to the country's shame. Nor is reservation the final answer, useful though it is, and will continue to be for some time, in inducting these historically submerged strata into the administration, the public sector and institutions of higher learning and in producing an elite that any community needs in its struggle for social justice. The real solution lies in further politicization, education, organization and mobility through the opening up of new avocations. The dalits themselves are not a monolith but an internally stratified community with several caste gradations within the larger definition. The processes of change must reach out to all segments from the bottom upwards.

Even today, many landless agricultural labourers and rural artisans, mostly marginalised Harijans, migrate to the cities as much in search of a new life with dignity as of employment and income. Anonymity and transplantation to a new social milieu gives them opportunity for a fresh beginning. On the other hand, urban and industrial employment also makes possible unionisation with sufficient clout and imparts dignity and pride of identity. 'Atrocities' on the dalits and other underprivileged groups generally implies a pre-emptive strike by dominant castes against their former serfs or servants who now demand equity, minimum wages, human and legal rights, access to development and the right to participate. Rape too is becoming as

much a political act as a consequence of lust, a crude and violent demonstration of overlordship, a last show of authority. But these too must come to pass. Basic to all this is a pervasive sense of threat among the dominant castes (including and often especially the 'backward' castes) who then act ruthlessly in an effort to stem the tide. It is time they realized the futility of such action, accept the logic of democracy and the dalits as integral parts of the social order. If they don't they will be the ultimate losers in the long suppressed anger of resentment and revenge that follows.

Tribals: If the dalits have been grossly and continuously exploited, the tribals have in addition often been ignored. This is no longer possible. Tribal India is stirring and seeking new alignments and forms of political and social expression as it struggles to reassert a lost identity. What is happening in the North-East is only one facet of a larger awakening and ferment that is rapidly manifesting itself through the predominantly tribal belt of middle India. Development and the construction of border roads for security reasons have opened up remote and inaccessible tribal regions. Dam sites and mineral deposits tend to be in the hills and forests and projects for their exploitation have resulted in an extractive, export-oriented, colonial-type pattern of development. Forests have been devastated in response to pressures on forest departments to augment commercial revenues or on account of the greed of forest contractors. Apart from the ecological need for a more conservation oriented and protective forest policy, unthinking inroads into forests have offended tribal sentiments and been seen as a threat to their culture and homelands.

The situation in the North-East is particularly critical and has not been properly understood. Following independence, the small tribal populations on the rim of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys found themselves involuntarily absorbed in a concept of nationhood that they took time to comprehend. In turn their reaction was mistakenly interpreted by the metropolitan power as rejection or secessionism, especially as the areas in question lay along sensitive international boundaries.

There is much offence to the tribal sense of dignity. Jharkhand and Bastar are instances in point. These mineral rich areas have attracted huge investments in the coal, steel and railway sectors, with supporting power and communications systems Large areas have been acquired and modern townships built for the in-migrant population of skilled

workers, professionals, traders, contractors, entrepreneurs and administrators who have inevitably followed. The local people, with a significant element of scheduled tribes and castes among them, have been economically and politically swamped. They may have been compensated for their lands but have had nowhere to go. They have been trapped in drink and indebtedness and the naturally free ways of their women have been sexually exploited. This cultural rape of innocent communities has been a major social tragedy. The resultant coming together of tribals and Harijans as communities of oppressed people is no accident, whether as dalits in Western India or as part of the Jharkhand or Uttarakhand movements in the east.

The Issue of Culture: The interrelationship between culture, development and transformation merits far more perceptive study and reflection in political thinking and administrative protocols. Ethnicity is a legitimate human response and does not necessarily have to be viewed with suspicion except where it degenerates into regional chauvinism, which must be resisted. This distinction between legitimate cultural aspirations of a whole people and chauvinism of entrenched elites applies equally to India's federal relations (on which more later).

There has been a tragic failure to understand the processes of acculturation and instead a display of impatience and cultural arrogance in dealing with highly complex and delicate problems of nation-building. It is easy, even if unconsciously, to think of 'we' and 'they' and to invite 'them' to join 'the national mainstream'. India is not merely a geographical entity but must be seen as a political space large and bountiful enough to accommodate, honour and cherish a diversity of cultures. Here, again, political and economic decentralization would give considerable local satisfaction while imaginative use could be made of the fifth, sixth and seventh schedules of the Constitution to create appropriate building blocks with which to construct a richly variegated yet strong and secure national edifice.

The Muslims: Religion has been possibly even more divisive than caste and tribe, certainly in modern India. The 'communal problem' is rooted in historical memory with different communities harking back to some earlier golden age when 'they' ruled the land. The mistaken notion that certain periods of history 'belonged' to certain communities has been fostered in the division of

Indian history into periods inaccurately described as 'Hindu', 'Muslim' and 'British'. This reading of history as no more than the glory or tyranny of kings and dynasties ignored the sweep of social history, the story of peoples and movements and their response to change.

The Issue of Secularism: Independent India perhaps rightly proclaimed itself a secular State. However, the whole concept of secularism has been somewhat narrowly conceived in Indian political thought as separation of church from State—there being no established faith — and equal respect for all religions. These are commendable principles, but inadequate in themselves and have, in the absence of a broader social theory or ideology, given rise to the belief that the role of the State and society is somewhat negatively to safeguard secularism instead of more actively seeking to promote it. Hence the attitude of leaving the minorities alone within a restricted separate-but-equal frame.

In part this is understandable. For, in the pressing preoccupation with fighting communalism as manifested in bloody riots and group tensions, an environment conducive to a more positive approach has not been available. But it is necessary not to postpone this too long. The clue lies in the state of the Muslim mind following a long period of Hindu-Muslim political rivalry and the two-nation theory. Shaken, bewildered and largely bereft of the modernising Muslim elite (which went to Pakistan) or even the feudal elite (which was dispossessed by the integration of the princely States and the abolition of zamindari), the mass of Muslim Indians retreated into a ghetto, aloof and isolated, dependent on the traditional religious orthodoxy for leadership and clutching symbols such as Aligarh, Urdu and personal law. Theirs was and still is an identity crisis. As for the political and intellectual elite that emerged after 1947, it seems to have taken or played a rather opportunistic role. Harping on their minority status and putting on a progressivistic mask, these politicians and intellectuals remain alienated from the wider community and have only contributed further to the identity crisis.

Economic causes have of course reinforced such a state of the mind. In a situation of shortage of jobs and opportunities, Muslims have been discriminated against positively, as well as negatively, in so far as each caste or regional or linguistic group tended to discriminate in favour of its own kind. With fewer Muslims in positions of patronage, their share of the spoils was necessarily small. Even

here, however, there is a more important reason at work. The community has failed to compete. Having stepped on to the modernising escalator of higher education and professional and technical training rather later than others, Muslim Indians found themselves disadvantaged and therefore unwilling to offer themselves for competitive opportunities. The feeling of discrimination worked backwards into a state of resignation even with regard to the utility of investing on education and training.

Aligarh and Urdu are important symbols – a fact dramatically brought home by the fierce battles over bestowing a special minority status to the Aligarh Muslim University. But, essentially, both are marginal to the real problems of the Muslims, and in some respects highly detrimental. The real problems are rooted in the massive educational, economic and social backwardness of the community. The number of Muslim children in schools is low while the drop out rate is higher than for other communities. Proportionately fewer Muslims matriculate and fewer still go in for higher and technical or professional education. The figures of Muslim women's education is even more dismal. Correspondingly, it would be foolish to believe that symbolism or cosmetic solutions, with a few outstanding Muslims rising or being elevated to high places, is a sufficient answer to a real and substantive problem.

Again, especially after partition, the Muslims have become a relatively more urbanised community. With the collapse of artisan trades in which they were often concentrated, they are not qualified nor have they been consciously helped to move into other more dynamic or new sectors. These are the directions in which deliberate policies and programmes need to be enunciated.

Meanwhile, the very concept of majority and minority needs to be reviewed. In national terms, Hindus may be said to constitute the major community. But to interpret the term Hindu as a monolithic entity in all circumstances would not be correct. There are numerous caste and regional variations. Moreover, regional and local majorities may differ from the notional national majority. Thus the dominant national minority, the Muslim Indians, is the majority in Jammu and Kashmir, though a minority in Jammu and the Leh tehsil. Christians constitute the majority in Mizoram and parts of Kerala; Sikhs in Punjab; and so on. At the micro level, which is the operational level of political and social action to a great extent, the ground

truth defies any simple definition of majority or minority. This is equally true of ethnicity and language and is a point that merits wider understanding. This can take place only if the crucial centres of decision-making move down.

Urbanization: India, like most other developing societies, is witnessing the runaway growth of what has been described as inadvertent cities — refugee camps for the landless and marginalised rural population who are being squeezed out of the countryside, and others in search of fortune. They are by and large running away from, rather than going to something. The graduated stages of migration from the village, to the central village, to the market town and so on through the district centre, the State capital and the regional metropolis have given way to a single-step movement from the remotest village to squatter settlements and rural dormitories in the metropolis. Effective systems of urban government have simply broken down and the cities cannot cope whether it be in terms of housing, civic services, employment or crime.

Rural growth involves the development of service centres and small and medium towns. The latter have considerable potential and could serve as dispersal areas for rural-urban migration, offering economic opportunity and a quality of life that make them attractive. The need is to move from the sharp dichotomy between city and country-side to a structure of settlement and habitation which is based on thousands of composite rural-urban clusters which make for a truly decentralised yet integrated planning of human space. Urbanization is not an evil. Indeed, it is important that the countryside be urbanised so that the percentage of population dependent on agriculture begins to decline well before the end of the century. But the unbalanced growth of a few metro centres should be checked.

Decentralization would naturally foster such trends. Further, there has to be a complete overhaul of municipal administration which must be vested with more executive and financial powers for purposeful urban government with genuine local participation. A meaningful national capital region and autonomous city-government status for certain metropolitan centres would be desirable in order to provide flexibility and to cater to the special needs of these large and influential communities and prevent their dominating the hinterland around them.

At the other end of the scale, we must plan for a

new village movement that uplifts the social and economic level of the basic units of settlement from their present abysmal condition. To glorify the existing or traditional Indian village is to escape from reality. India's 576,000 villages are certainly not necessarily socially harmonious or economically viable units of human settlement any longer. They are highly stratified and often too small even for minimal modern infrastructure. Many villages are really hamlets that could be more meaningfully aggregated in social clusters that become the basis for both local planning and local self-government.

Political Restructuring

Such then are the substantive dimensions of the agenda of restructuring the Indian polity. It will be seen that the multiple challenges posed by the politicization of India's social fabric, whether it be in respect of eradicating poverty and the many layers of inequity through organizations of the poor themselves, or in respect of providing minimum standards of health and education through alternative systems, or again in dealing with the complex issues of caste, ethnicity and religion through organized action by the affected strata, or the fast deteriorating state of the natural environment which again hurts the same strata, it is only through a highly differentiated and decentralized effort that the serious problems facing Indian society can be dealt with.

At the same time our review of the socio-economic scene makes clear that such a model of a decentralized social polity will have to be struggled for all along, and perceived as a process that builds from below upwards, not a dispensation from above provided by the existing elite that controls the State apparatus.

Crisis of the Indian State: The Indian State has already become a source of munificence and plunder by a small, homogenous, urban-based elite — political, bureaucratic, financial and technocratic. To no small extent can the perpetuation of poverty and deprivation, of shortages and inflation, and of a thriving parallel economy, be traced to this transformation in the nature of the Indian State. If the present relationship between economic and politico-bureaucratic tendencies is allowed to continue, it will not be long before a virtual siege of the State by a small coterie would take place as has indeed already happened in a number of other Third World societies. The only difference here is that, thanks to the massive politicization of the

lower classes and the deprived strata of society, there is already under way a raging conflict between those who would profit from such a structure of economic and political patronage and those who would not. This is leading to rising unrest, violence, insecurity and uncertainty, to the unsettling of institutional relations, a choking off of communication channels and growing isolation of various strata and regions, all of this producing conditions of gradual erosion and ultimate collapse of the State.

In a vast, socially heterogenous and multi-layer society, a State can be built and made viable only through a harmonious blending and sustained interplay of its multiplicity. Unity in such a society is achieved by at once rooting it in its diversity and enervating this diversity through a new cultural thrust that is operationalized through a set of institutions, codes of conduct and norms of interaction that are widely accepted, and an elite that continuously mediates in ordering the changing equations of these interactions under condition of social transformation which essentially takes place at the lower levels of the polity. The democratic political process in such a society must of necessity operate at so many levels in territorial and political space, and through a variety of organisations in socioeconomic space, in all of which the people feel enabled to participate and take decisions that are based on certain norms of propriety and justice.

It is necessary to draw the structural and cultural implications of this argument. The usual dichotomies drawn between centralization and decentralization, and between secular and parochial identities, are uncalled for in our situation. For, in point of fact, these polar opposites need to be organically integrated and ordered through a given 'system'. A strong centre cannot be built except by drawing upon the vast resources and diverse skills of the people through a multi-tier and multi-sectoral corpus of institutions; a centre that stands aloof and uninformed becomes alien, loses touch and increasingly fails to command allegiance and loyalty.

On the other hand, a decentralized institutional model cannot ever function effectively or prevent being captured by narrow vested interests except by being organically tied to a functioning federal framework of institutional linkages and policy initiatives. This necessitates a viable State apparatus and a stable centre; in the absence of such ancho-

rage, decentralization could well lead to fragmentation, promiscuous power games and violent social collisions that discredit the whole political process.

Similarly, for the State to acquire secular authority over a large and diverse terrain of caste and community orientations, it is necessary for it not to suppress their interplay but to order it through the political process. A sustained process of politicization only serves to undermine the caste system by generating pressures for social and economic change and new psychological orientations at the base of society. But once the larger institutional framework, within which the processes of politicization and social change went on, begins to get eroded, parochial identities once again re-emerge and take on more exclusive and defiant postures. This is what is currently happening in India with caste groupings taking on an aggressive posture, and collisions between communities taking on communal overtones and local party leaders and *dadas* taking advantage of all of this. Once this happens, the electoral process gets distorted, the fear of losing votes of this or that community leads to irrational postures and deeply affects public policy, and such politicking upsets the fine balance of the social fabric itself.

Beyond the Westminster Model: We have deliberately tried to relate the socio-economic changes we face with the need to restructure the Indian State from its present condition of increasing dissipation and atrophy. For one thing, such a linkage provides major clues to the effort that lies ahead, both in respect of restructuring and transcending the present systems. The restructuring relates to restoring the balance between the central initiatives necessary in operating a modern State and the participatory and politicizing role of the party system, local institutions and local elites. The transcending relates to the need to move out of the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy and start new processes — leading to new structures — that can channelize the deep stirrings and heightened consciousness of our people.

For, while the mainstream political process has been stymied, a new political climate has arisen in the country in the wake of (a) a greatly increased perception among the people at large of the value of politics in the struggle for social change and (b) a growing perception among grass roots activists about the need to link micro movements of constructive work, rural conscientization and organization of the poor to the larger movement of social transformation that is consciously perceived as a

political process, a different kind of political process than the one in which political parties are engaged, but a political process nonetheless. The task now is to make these mass stirrings and the new activism that is emerging at the grass roots the basis of an alternative political process and as the, 'crisis of the State' deepens, make that process the catalyst of a new State structure.

Nature of Democracy: The challenge we face in the eighties is of simultaneously building a viable State, a functioning democracy and a dynamic process of socio-economic restructuring. The concept of democracy that we ought to work with cannot be limited to the functioning of political institutions but must extend to processes of socio-economic transformation from below. In short, the task before the intelligentsia, the micro movements that are stirring the countryside, the middle class conscientizers working at the grass roots, the mass organizations of workers and peasants and of specific underprivileged strata, as well as individual political workers who find common cause with these movements, is to engage in this large process of building a viable social democratic State.

Institutional Pattern of a Decentralized Polity: Having established the larger social contours of restructuring the Indian State, we may at the end turn to the forms and pattern of decentralization that are needed to meet the situation we face. It is a pattern that should take us beyond the constraints of the present Westminster model. It would, of course, need to be made up of many elements. Although India is a union of States, there was an unstated assumption favouring a more liberal federal polity in the early years of Independence. However, thanks both to the inherent centralizing tendency of the Westminster model and the steady erosion of the democratic process in both party and governmental functioning, as well as the growing corruption of party and electoral politics and the State apparatus, there has taken place a massive confrontation of political and economic power in Delhi. This power is concentrated in the hands of a small coterie of influentials, which in turn is financially dependent on both indigenous and foreign agents of corporate capitalism. A presidential government, possibly on the French model, has been advocated from time to time, partly on grounds of providing stability to the political system which is seeing the end of a long period of one party dominance and is caught up in the phenomenon of defections. The prescription is misplaced as it would only further strengthen centralization of authority, and thereby pave the way

for authoritarianism, whereas the basic restructuring needed is in the direction of decentralization and the strengthening of people's organisations.

The main point in dealing with the federal political process, and making it an instrument of social transformation, is to reverse the conception of democracy from a top-down structure of concessions and cooptations to one that provides a framework for enabling the people to come into their own. Such a reversal would provide the key to our conception of decentralization and also ensure that it is multifacetted. The social dimensions of such a reversal have been dealt with. It is to the political and territorial aspects that we now turn.

States Reorganization: The existing States came into being largely as a result of the integration of princely States and a subsequent reorganization on the single principle of language. The reorganized structure failed to relate size to social and economic homogeneity, communication, manageable distance, between State capital and the rural hinterlands, ease of participation and administrative efficiency. The vast geographical spread of certain States and the huge and growing population of others constitute serious handicaps. Uttar Pradesh has a population of over 100 million which is likely to reach 140 million by 2000 A.D. It is clearly of grotesque and unmanageable proportions. Smaller units would automatically bring the administration nearer the people, stimulate participation and development and provide more cohesive and stable governments.

The striking differences in population size between States is destructive of a more even federal balance as between the units. There is no one optimal size as such but populations of around 15 to 25 million would seem desirable, though there need be no bar to smaller units which in fact already exist. Additional costs would be more than offset by gains in efficiency, democratic access and participation, and the economic and cultural energy that would get generated.

Districts: If the States are unwieldy, districts and blocks also suffer from problems of size. There were some 300 districts at the time of Independence and there are just over 400 today. Despite some consequent reduction in size, an average district still has a population of 1.5 million (and likely to touch two million by 2000 A.D.) while some have populations of three and four and, in one case (24-Parganas), eight million. Likewise, certain sparsely populated districts sprawl over vast areas: Kutch, Barmer,

Ladakh. There is need to move towards a viable administrative span in terms of numbers and area through a programme of district reorganization which will lead to the creation of 200 to 400 additional districts which would however provide a homogenous and effective framework of participation. The touchstone should not be numbers but optimum size; not cost but cost-effectiveness.

The Third Tier: Although the States clamour for autonomy, they are not themselves willing to decentralize power to the districts and below. There is need to amend the Constitution and make the district a third tier of government with directly elected zilla parishads and a responsible executive on the pattern of Central and State level councils of ministers. Requisite functions and responsibilities should be devolved to the districts through a new Schedule or by amending the Seventh Schedule.

Panchayati Raj: Panchayati Raj was inaugurated in 1959 and municipal administration far earlier. Neither has been given a fair trial. Few States were serious about Panchayati Raj even at the start while some, where the experiment proved likely to succeed, backed down and emasculated the independent powers of the zilla parishads. The principal obstruction has been the fear of losing or sharing power and patronage. State leaders and even MLAs do not favour the prospect of being undercut at the grass-roots. Elections may or may not be held, and elected bodies can be superceded at will. It is necessary to take the holding of elections to Panchayati Raj bodies outside the purview of State governments and entrust it to either the Election Commission or the State units thereof. This will ensure independence and regularity in the conduct of elections and make the functioning of democracy truly multi-tier.

Urban Self-Government: Like Panchayati Raj institutions, corporations and municipalities have limited powers and less protection. In some respects, the problems are even more serious in the cities. Much municipal legislation is far behind the times and is hardly conducive to nurturing strong, viable and purposeful local bodies, a large majority of which continue to be suspended with no elections held for years. The concept of urban government is yet to develop, and little has been done to try and establish a viable urban-rural nexus within regional planning networks. We have, in a preceding section, laid out a design for such restructuring.

There is need to appoint statutory finance com-

mittees in all States to decide upon resource allocations to individual districts and local bodies in the light of their revenue potential and needs following the award of each Finance Commission. And municipal elections should also be in the charge of the Election Commission.

Electoral Reform: The new politics of the emerging polity we envisage demands electoral reform. The present system has been vitiated by soaring costs which have made money an arbiter of success and have thereby opened the door to questionable and underhand methods of fund raising and corruption with a high multiplier. Violence and the manipulation of vote banks have followed. Caste and other parochial sentiments have been exploited. Parties have been formed merely as electoral machines in order to seize power with little commitment to ideologies or programmes. Defections have been an inevitable consequence.

All this has turned attention to cost-saving procedures such as cutting down the period of the poll. Two other suggestions have been advanced. The first relates to State funding of electoral expenditures incurred by recognized parties at the national and State levels on agreed lines. The second proposal favours introduction of the partial list system whereby half the seats are directly elected and the other half indirectly, through party slates or lists. The Chief Election Commissioner has formally made a number of proposals on these lines which merit urgent political consideration and decision.

Smaller and hence a larger number of constituencies that emphasise the feature of 'representation', and the pursuit of a lot of parliamentary work in committee rather than through general debates as at present, could be other means of combining attributes of decentralization and participation with electoral cost-reduction.

Parliamentary Committees : The question of checks and balances and of wider participation through a decentralized structure are not merely vertical ; they should apply horizontally too to the functioning of representative institutions. In India, as in some other democracies, the role of the elected legislatures has been steadily declining, especially the role of the elected member who is not a Minister. With the new doctrine of 'executive privilege' there is likely to be further erosion in their role. The paradox of our democracy is that while its whole edifice rests on elections, the elected representatives have hardly any effective role to play except respond to

party whips, join factional games, ask questions during Question Hour at someone's beckoning, 'mobilize' people from their constituencies for mass rallies and occasionally be selected for some position of patronage (or go on round-the-world jaunts). They also tend to remain ignorant on major issues facing the country, much less have the capacity of educating the public. There is need greatly to strengthen the system of parliamentary (and legislative) committees, staffed with appropriate secretariats, with power to summon officials to provide information on vital matters. Such a committee structure will at once make for vigilance and accountability, and educate and involve elected members in the functioning of government, thus making them more responsible critics than they presently tend to be.

Decentralization then is a core concept for restructuring the entire political process and making it an instrument of social transformation. Charismatic government implies the emergence of individual saviours and the decline of institutions, a government of men and not of laws, with some more equal than others. The decentralized alternative would bring about a convergence of power and responsibility at many levels, intermeshing rather than pitted in rivalry one against the other. Alongwith organisation of the poor and unionization of the unorganized sector, and spurred continously by grass roots movements, such a model of decentralization would create the instrumentalities of generating people's power and the necessary pressure from below upon institutions of government and party, and provide for their continuous renewal through ever new initiatives and the throwing up of natural leaders.

Agents of Restructuring

What are the instrumentalities through which the new order we seek is going to be realized ? The existing administrative structure was largely inherited from the British. Originally fashioned to undertake law and order and revenue functions, it has been tuned more to procedure than to performance, to conserve (in accordance with precedents) rather than change

Administration: Governments everywhere execute their policies through the bureaucracy. The administration is however not an end in itself—though the reckless expansion of government jobs as a means of employment promotion would suggest otherwise—but a means towards given ends. The instrument must therefore be fashioned for its

allotted task. Numerous committees and commissions have reported on administrative reforms with no more than marginal effect. The Juggernaut moves on. It is time to change.

Some radical departures are needed. First, the administrative caste system that divides service from service and generalist from professional cadres in an elaborate pecking order should be abolished and substituted by a single government service within which there might be several specializations with everybody rising on merit. Secondly, the complexity of modern government calls for inter-disciplinary and inter-departmental action. Specialized teams should be assembled for certain tasks and not perpetuated after the job is done. In other words, much departmental activity should be handed over to task forces vested with special powers and management flexibility, or to corporations and commissions in case the work is likely to be of an on going nature.

The earlier importance given to district administration should be revived and senior officers given field responsibilities instead of being locked in secretariats from misguided notions of status and search for comfort. The high turn-round of staff is also totally destructive of effective and creative administration.

The bureaucracy is constantly blamed for ills that are not necessarily of its making. The system exercises its own compulsions while political interference or lack of direction is responsible for much inaction and misdirection of effort. The independence of the civil and professional services is of paramount importance. This can be safeguarded by security. But excessive security is inimical to efficiency and discipline. Article 311 of the Constitution is the civil servant's shield and anchor. But it entails a rather dilatory process. Article 320(2) vests Public Service Commissions with consultative status in all disciplinary matters. This is too weak. Perhaps the powers under both these articles could be appropriately vested in a civil service commission to safeguard the independence and integrity of the services. The only other answer is the training, tradition and integrity of officials and a vigilant public opinion which cries out against manipulation of civil servants. More lateral entry through short-term contract appointments from the market would also provide an infusion of fresh blood.

The administration, especially at lower levels, is callous and impervious to the needs and problems

of the common man. Corruption intrudes and delays are inordinate. However, change will only come with corresponding change at the top, greater functionality in procedures, and strict internal and external accountability — and above all, decentralization of the governing structure, manageable size of States and districts and a clear policy on the governance of urban metropolitan areas.

Police: No limb of the administration is more alienated from the people than the police. It is tragic that the guardians of the law are feared and disliked. There are many reasons for this sorry state of affairs. The Police Act of 1860 as amended in 1902 continues largely unchanged. The minimum educational requirements on recruitment, training, equipment, conditions of work, recreational facilities, leave, housing, emoluments and force levels are all inadequate despite certain recent improvements. Excepting where the police commissioner system has been introduced in some metropolitan cities, the police functions under the authority of the administrative service at each level. The Evidence Act discounts police evidence and so third degree methods are employed to extract confessions, and hardened criminals and even political activists are sometimes killed in 'encounters', blinded or maimed. Political interference is rampant and corruption grows out of the low morale, temptation and demands (and rewards) for getting the job done unmindful of the law or legitimate procedures. The police has consequently been brutalized.

The police is the guardian of law and must be treated as an adjunct to the judicial process rather than as the long arm of the executive. The constitutional injunction about separating the judiciary from the executive needs to be more widely interpreted to give the police a more independent status than it enjoys at present.

The intelligence agencies, whether criminal, security or revenue, should likewise be accorded an autonomy that has been wilfully destroyed in recent years. Intelligence operations are necessarily sensitive and should be protected from prying eyes. But this cannot be allowed to cloak their misuse for political and partisan ends. There clearly is need therefore to associate a small body of highly respected and independent persons from public life periodically to review intelligence activities. They would be sworn to secrecy and would have access to all papers and personnel and should report directly to the Prime Minister who should be bound to

place their reports before the Cabinet for information and necessary action.

Judiciary: The constitution provides for an elaborate scheme of checks and balances. An independent judiciary is prime among these. While the working of the magistracy has attracted critical notice, the higher judiciary by and large enjoys an enviable reputation and integrity. There is, however, as in so many other areas, a system failure. The judicial process is so dilatory, complex and expensive that justice often eludes those who are not leisured and monied.

Court procedures do not easily preclude prolonged, technical arguments, a tedious and often irrelevant citing of outworn precedents, and innumerable postponement as lawyers are engaged in several cases and several courts at the same time. Injunctions are granted as a matter of course and only heard on merits and then perhaps summarily dismissed weeks and months later. Judgements are often prolix and, in important cases, each judge might pronounce a separate though not dissenting judgement, thus obscuring the clarity of the verdict. Poor and hasty drafting of legislation, failure to weed out obsolete legislation and a tendency to keep amending Acts repeatedly instead of overhauling them completely from time to time, contribute to litigation.

At the lower end of the scale, the formal judicial processes need to be buttressed by less formal structures, some of which are by no means unknown to India. Honorary magistrates and Justices of the Peace could provide quick and easy relief in a number of cases. More important, in the rural areas, nyaya panchayats should be revived and given the mandate and support to function as popular courts operating on commonsense and the judgement of peers. Their role would be more to conciliate and compose differences than to encourage litigation, and to dispose of petty matters.

Nyaya panchayats would be separate from development panchayats and would provide simple and ready justice virtually at the door of the aggrieved party. Legal aid for the needy would also enable people to seek and secure justice. The procedures for appointing High Court and Supreme Court judges should be such as to evoke public confidence and avoid any suspicion that the courts are being packed with 'committed' judges of whatever description while 'difficult' judges are overlooked.

Civil Rights: At a different level, it would perhaps be useful to have a civil rights commission with a role different from the Minorities Commission on the one hand and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission on the other. Such a body could also monitor infringements of civil liberties and observance of the many international conventions to which India is signatory, including the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. India has not ratified the optional protocol attached to the latter Covenant which would enable any citizen to file a complaint of violation before the prescribed international commission. This omission should be made good.

Non-Governmental Agencies: However important the role of State organs, there is no substitute for an informed and alert public opinion and people's action. Social and community groups and activists can mobilise and organise people to constructive action and resist wrongdoing. Voluntary agencies too have a pioneering and pathfinding role to play in innovating programmes and structures and promoting social action. These efforts should not be minimised as their qualitative impact could be considerable.

Other non-governmental agencies, particularly mass organizations like trade unions and peasant organizations, cooperatives and registered societies, can likewise undertake organised action over a wide front. The organization of self-employed and other unorganised workers is an innovation. The trade union movement in India has a long and proud history and must now be persuaded to adopt a wider social frame of action instead of looking merely to the benefits of union members and allied workers. Peasant unions and organisations are still limited but have considerable possibilities.

At a different level, gram sabhas, village welfare associations, artisans' and consumer cooperatives, lok samitis, voters' councils and similar bodies are demonstrating new facets of and new opportunities for voluntary action. These movements deserve every encouragement though their development may be sought to be frustrated by vested interests. Yet, when people take charge of a situation they can become a mighty force. The Assam movement is a recent and spectacular demonstration of *lok shakti.* It is also a manifestation of youth power.

All development and change is politics, though

not necessarily partisan politics. However, the political process on which the governance of any democratic society rests, cannot be dissociated from political leadership which, if not to be authoritarian, must derive from one or several parties and associated organizations of the people.

Restructuring A Democratic Consensus: There was a broad national consensus through the 1950s but this began to wear thin and by the 1970s was lost in confrontation. It is necessary now to restore a framework of national consensus — not the old consensus based on the Congress System which has outlived its utility, but a new one based on the strategy for and the design of a new order which gives new content and validity to India's democracy. We should reject the concept of consensus based on a cooperative, all-inclusive elite and instead move towards one that self-consciously accepts the role of conflict and of pressures from below for system transformation.

Structural and institutional changes are required, the most important among them being a decisive move in the direction of decentralization, creative federalism, access and participation by people — all the people and not just some of them — and their organisation on economic lines. The underprivileged and dispossessed are stirring and have begun to assert their right to equality and fraternity. To deny this would be to spell the end of democracy and to opt for some form of right wing dictatorship. The Brazilian and South Korean 'miracles' are not for India.

The slogan 'development or democracy' is mischievous and unfounded. There is no contradiction: indeed, each is necessary for the other. Any tendency towards centralization of political and economic power, e.g., a presidential system, would therefore run counter to the historic necessity for participation and a significant broadening of the base of the democratic polity. This is a fundamental proposition and the key to the transition that India must make. It is necessary to build a national consensus on this premise, and on the basis of the related structural changes that are inherent in moving towards a decentralized and genuinely democratic and socialist polity. Major elements of this are set out in this Agenda for India.

Closing the Gap: How is one to fight entrenched privilege, organised violence, black money, corruption, cynicism and fear? The democratic majority can do so through the increasing strength and con-

fidence of the organised poor in alliance with enlightened sections of the middle and upper classes who recognise that true democracy entails the welfare of all. Unless this happens, disenchantment with the democratic process will open the door to adventurism.

There has been a steady regression of the power base in India in so far as authority has been eroded at every level. For all its show of strength, the present inequitous and corrupt system is essentially under siege. It is necessary to eliminate conditions favourable for any misguided Bonapartism or authoritarian intervention in the form of political godmen or otherwise in the name of 'saving' the country from chaos and violence, in the name of 'development'. The fact is that, notwithstanding the claims of Bonapartist leaders and their proclaimed concern for the poor and the exploited, the status quo represents established institutional interests and the suffering of the disadvantaged is a product of these long established interests. There can be no progress towards either true democracy or genuine development without undoing these structures and establishing a new framework of power — political, techno-economic, social and juridical.

Restructuring External Relations

The agenda of restructuring which we have presented here cannot be undertaken without a clear policy on our external relations. The crisis of change and transition that engulfs us at home is in some ways part of a global crisis; our effort to respond to it must take account of the fact that it is not just India that is caught up in turmoil and drift; the world as a whole is caught up in a process of radical transformation and uncertainty. It is not merely the Indian polity and State that has lost structure and vitality, but most other political systems seem equally impotent to deal with the challenges posed by a new historical epoch following the revolution in consciousness spurred by the values of democracy, equity and decentralisation.

Internationally, too, the super powers and the States system presided over by them are unable to handle the sources of tension and turmoil in the world, respond in a responsible manner to the large shifts in the global distribution of power which have taken place, and provide a new basis for peace and security in the world. And (as is also the case in domestic settings) the more incapable and insecure the top elites of the world become, the more their tendency to reassert their supremacy and their

power. The result is worldwide militarism supported by corporate capitalism, a world technocratic establishment and a States system based on global and regional hegemonies, all of this leading to a new and frightening prospect of the end of human survival, and of the survival of civilization. At the same time the world status quo is no longer able to hold and traditional power equations are being fast dissolved. Iran on the one hand and Poland on the other provide two startling instances of the changes that are under way.

Caught up in a struggle for political survival at home, the response of the Indian elite to such a situation of challenge to the world status quo and opportunity of restructuring the international order has been halting, peevish and not infrequently downright opportunistic. From being a source of challenge to a world based on domination and exploitation, we seem to be willing to get coopted into it and reap the fruits of such an approach in our own sphere of influence. The policy of non-alignment evolved by Jawaharlal Nehru in cooperation with other leading figures in the Third World was a bold response to a highly unequal world which was also threatened by a dangerous polarization that could undermine the prospects for development of the newly independent countries. So was his intense advocacy of world disarmament and peaceful coexistence. Despite attempts by the western powers to detract from Nehru's moral stature in the world by distorting developments in Kashmir, Goa and Tibet, and despite China's total lack of understanding of the global significance of the Indian position, India's close identity with the struggle of the peoples of the Third World against imperialism and superpower dominance was never in doubt and indeed bestowed on her a position of unquestioned leadership.

Today, however, with the very success of the Third World challenge and the emergence of a multipolar world which has led the two super powers to engage once again in a protracted struggle for world hegemony — most of which is being carried out in the Third World — non-alignment has ceased to be a strategy of change. For many, in whose company we seem to find some comfort at times, it has become a platform and a lobby. A related tendency at work is to detach India from its earlier commitment to the Third World. Even within India there are powerful lobbies urging it on to part company with the rest of the Third World, or at any rate large sections of it, and become part of the global establishment by taking on the 'role' cast for

it by the super powers, a managerial and technocratic and basically amoral and non-ideological role.

We may still be at the beginning of such a relapse from being an agent of world change to becoming an accomplice of the world status quo. But if it remains here, the chances of both restructuring the international order for meeting the aspirations of large sections of humanity, and of restructuring the Indian State for responding to the needs and aspirations of the Indian people, are doomed to failure. With them is also doomed the prospects of Indian democracy which is likely to be overtaken by global tendencies towards militarism, repression and terror.

A strategy of restructuring our external relations and search for a new doctrine for our foreign policy will need to encompass three major dimensions: (a) world disarmament (both nuclear and conventional), (b) a strategy of regional cooperation based on normalcy with China, reconciliation in the subcontinent and the assumption of a larger role in Asia based on new initiatives in our relationship with Japan and Southeast Asia (both the ASEAN group of countries and the Indo-Chinese peninsula) on the one hand and West Asia on the other, and (c) resumption of our traditional role in the Third World and the United Nations, a role that we have been losing by default for the past several years.

Disarmament: This has to be the lynch-pin of our entire global strategy. Our stakes in world politics are high, there is a large measure of correspondence between our own interest and a global strategy of disarmament and demilitarization and we are perhaps the only country that can take on this role in this grimly divided world inching towards a catastrophe.

China: China has thawed and has at last responded to Indian pleas for normalising relations. A new good-neighbourly Sino-Indian relationship will have to be patiently constructed. The Chinese do not recognise the MacMohan Line as such but have suggested acceptance of the eastern boundary as the 'existing reality' in exchange for India similarly recognising China's claim line, currently the 'line of actual control' in Ladakh. Although there is nothing new in this offer—Chou En-Lai proposed it in Delhi as far back as 1960—it nevertheless provides a starting point for negotiation without any fear of prior commitment either way, and may provide the basis of several trade-offs to make up an overall package that would take note of India's interests south of the Himalaya, the integrity of

the North-East, and its traditional relations with Tibet.

South Asia: The habit to respond to super power politics have long obscured India's concerns nearer home. The return to a hard line policy towards neighbours in South Asia is unfortunate. It can only evoke fear and come in the way of regional cooperation which are in India's best interest. Ours is a mammoth country in terms of population and power and understandably evokes a sense of unease among our neighbours who are apprehensive of accepting what they believe would tend to be an unequal relationship. All the more reason therefore to provide reassurance to the smaller nations in South Asia and, while intelligently exposing external designs often reinforced by militarist forces at home, e.g., in Pakistan, to steer a course that instead of escalating suspicion and an arms race, seeks to de-fuse the same.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and U.S. support of 'rebel forces' from across the border with Pakistan provided a major opportunity to initiate a consultation with Pakistan and other neighbours aimed at the common objective of preventing all external interventions in the subcontinent. The late Bangladesh President's initiative in suggesting a South Asian summit should have been siezed to start a process of mutual dialogue as neighbours and lay the foundations of what might over time grow into a loosely institutional arrangement. The Colombo Powers Conference of the mid-1950s — encompassing Sri Lanka, Burma, Indonesia and Pakistan—suggests a precedent. This would not be aimed against anybody but would enhance mutual cooperation and understanding.

A Regional Policy: There is urgent need to shift our sights beyond South Asia—a necessary precondition of which, of course, is a negotiated resolution of tensions in the subcontinent — and to play a responsible role as an Asian power. In fact, South Asia has already ceased to be a relevant geopolitical category ever since the Iranian revolution and the events in Afghanistan exposed it to the politics of the Gulf region, and the permeation of the Sino-Soviet conflict in the Indo-Chinese peninsula (and generally in Southeast Asia) have made the whole of Southern Asia a single strategic area. Add to this the emergence of a yen-fuelled economy which is likely to spread and the rise of Japan as an industrial giant which is however heavily dependent on import of raw materials and oil.

Japan is caught between its traditional dependence on the U.S. for security, its growing dependence on the developing world—especially West Asia—for vital imports and the emergence of China, its immediate neighbour, as a major world power. In the meanwhile, the Arab world itself is caught between using its enormous wealth for gaining influence in the West and the demands of the developing world for using its leverage in the common struggle against western dominance. And it is caught in a prolonged regional warfare spurred by Israel on the one hand and super power politics on the other. There is also a great deal of internal turmoil and repression in this area.

Indian policy-makers can ill-afford to stand by while the region around is undergoing such major changes and which may emerge to be the most important fulcrum of world politics — whether in respect of the location of world energy resources or in respect of the strategic lifelines of the great powers or in respect of the trade-off between development and militarism as also between democratic struggles and repressive regimes. The issues and scenario outlined above provide a tremendous scope for gaining diplomatic flexibility instead of the rigidity that has entered into our foreign policy over the last ten years. They also provide scope for playing our historic role, in cooperation with other newly awakened regions, of providing and consolidating an alternative focus of world politics to that provided by the super powers and, on that basis, trying to realize the larger goals of peace and disarmament.

India, the Third World and the U.N. System: Beyond the role that we ought to play in the Asian region, there is need to resume our earlier strategy of close identity of interest with the countries of the Third World, still struggling to emerge out of a colonial past. The role becomes all the more important in the face of the growing fragmentation of the Third World and its permeation by the big powers. Our traditional emphasis on collective self-reliance aimed at producing a just and equitable world by removing sources of inequity and exploitation on the one hand, and of tension and turbulence injected by super power politics on the other, needs to be reiterated and followed up by concrete diplomacy. So also we need to return to our strident opposition to external interventions and hegemonical structures. And for all this we need to play a more active and purposive role in the United Nations and the larger U.N. system of international economic, technological and cultural cooperation.

Here too we need to contend with the anaemic consequences of super power politics and world disarmament negotiations which increasingly tend to bypass the U.N. system.

Relations with the Super Powers: India has friendly relations with the Soviet Union. But it is important to recognise that these ties have been mutually beneficial and neither side owes any special obligation to the other. Failure to appreciate this would introduce an element of distortion in an otherwise useful relationship. It could unwittingly force us into a subordinate role in a gradually consolidating 'sphere of influence' and cast us into a position in global configurations which would be against our longer term interests as a major Asian power and the flexibility which we need to operate as one. India's ties with the other super power, the United States, has been unstable, swinging from occasional honeymoon periods to hostility or indifference. Both sides are responsible for this state of affairs — the U.S more than India – but both must move to correct it by assuming neither too little, nor too much. We also need to recognize the independent roles that the European Community and Japan are assuming for themselves separate from the super powers.

Larger Issues: India's stand on racialism, apartheid and colonialism is well known. As decolonization has advanced, emphasis has shifted to economic, technological and cultural neo-colonialism, foreign intervention, destabilization and economic penetration through various means including the operation of giant transnational corporations. Resource and development diplomacy has also assumed a more central role through UNCTAD, GATT, the World Bank and other funding agencies. These newer concerns are broadly summed up in the plea for a new international economic order, a new international communications and information order and indeed a new international political order as well as in deliberations on the Law of the Sea and other newer protocols. Above all, there is the urgent and precipitating problem of the cost of energy. These are complex and very technical problems of far-reaching importance. Nevertheless, they need to be more widely discussed and understood in the country. The official structures for dealing with these up coming areas of international diplomacy clearly need to be greatly strengthened on an interdisciplinary and inter-departmental basis with wider public participation and with due role assigned to non-official forums and exchanges.

Defence: In the related area of defence, there is need for a clearer threat perception and avoidance of any tendency to adopt a catch-all policy of 'full preparedness'. Absolute preparedness is a chimera and its pursuit can only arouse apprehensions, and could insidiously promote a national security State. The country's foreign policy is its first and best defence and flexible and imaginative diplomacy its best insurance. It is, of course, extremely difficult to make long-term predictions in a rapidly changing world and India has no crystal ball that can foretell the future. Modern arms systems are highly sophisticated and are only built or acquired over years, and effectively operationalised through prolonged training. These constraints do therefore call for prudence, as being defenceless could invite trouble. Even so, there is no reason to develop overkill capacity or to imagine that non-alignment entails total self-reliance and rules out a network of interdependencies.

The country's nuclear and space programmes undoubtedly have elements of military capacity within them. The government has not given up the nuclear option if the international situation warrants such a choice. India's unwillingness to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty is not because it has military intensions, but because the NPT is clearly an unequal treaty and therefore offensive in principle. But, as already argued, there is need once again to play a major role in world disarmament negotiations. An opportunity for this will soon be provided by the 1982 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament. There is need to put in a lot of advance thinking and planning on this in consultation with likeminded countries — Mexico, Tanzania, Yugoslavia, Sweden, the Netherlands, France and Japan to name just a few. The potential for a new international alignment for peace already exists. We need to play our role in actualizing it.

Ideological Implications

We may end by drawing out the ideological implications of the analysis of the present crisis and the strategy for restructuring the Indian State and its socio-economic basis as laid out in this Agenda. We do not intend to provide a full-blown ideology as we do not believe that that is the way of going about an agenda of reconstruction, especially one that is aimed at building from below instead of foisting a framework from above. This has been the danger — and illusion — of all existing ideologies in the name of which self-styled politicians and bureaucrats

have sought to steamroller entire societies in captive structures of domination and hegemony. At the same time, any strategy of intervention in a given historical situation calls for a clarity of vision and a set of normative criteria based on it, and the manner in which these depart from existing thinking. Although these have already been provided at several points in the body of the Agenda, we may recapitulate the main elements of the basic approach once again.

First, it is necessary to go beyond both the liberal and the statist conceptions of welfare and to reverse the top-down approach implicit in both incremental and radical schools of thought. We are convinced that no amount of centralised planning and financial allocations will in fact benefit the poor and the oppressed strata of society until they themselves become part of the structure of decision-making and implementation. It is to this end of empowering the people themselves that the agenda of restructuring proposed here is aimed. The existing structures, even when well intentioned, necessarily lead instead to enfeeblement of the people.

Second, in such a strategy of restructuring both development and distributive justice are to be lookedupon as essentially political tasks instead of the largely a political and technocratic orientation of present models of development and welfare. This is as true of the specifically economic and social tasks as of the strictly constitutional and administrative ones. Increasingly, even economists who care to deal with the current crisis of performance agree that the eradication of poverty and inequity cannot be achieved through merely economic measures.

Third, both the reversal of structures of decision-making and implementation and the politicization of such a task have to be embedded in the real world. This has three dimensions: (a) the territorial dimension in which people's life and habitat are structured, (b) the community dimension of a multi-ethnic, multi-layer federal society of continental size and great diversity, and (c) the class dimension of given structures of domination and repression and their undermining through organised and unionised activity of the poor and the oppressed.

All three dimensions of restructuring — as well as the restructuring of the international order — go into the conception of decentralization laid out in this Agenda. Unless all three — alongwith their global counterparts — are seen to be part of the same struggle, decentralization would degenerate

into localism and fragmentation and prone to even worse forms of exploitation and oppression than are already in evidence.

In sum, the crux of the normative and ideological disposition involved in this Agenda is a movement towards a genuine social democracy by turning the revolt of the peripheries — which is already on — into a restructuring of the Centre itself. Unless the various struggles in which the people are engaged at the grass roots become part of such an overall design at restructuring the polity as a whole, they will be either suppressed or exhausted and coopted into the existing system. Such an understanding on the part of the various movements for change — local, regional and class-caste based — is at the heart of the strategy of transformation that lies ahead. Only thus can we contend the threats posed by populist slogans on the one hand and Bonapartist politics on the other. Only thus can we become part of the worldwide struggle for the democratic rights of the people.

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Strategy Framework for Engineering Shelters for Sustainable Development

Dr H C Visvesvaraya, *Fellow*

Successful Development within the regime of Sustainable Development would mean simultaneously satisfying a number of conflicting parameters. This would be greatly facilitated if there is a strategy Framework within which the issues involved could be tackled. This paper attempts to indicate the directions in which such a strategy Framework can be worked out with particular reference to Engineering Shelters including consideration to technology transfer aspects and identification of the major parameters involved.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The World Commission on 'Environment and Development', commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, through its Seminal 1987 Report "Our Common Future" brought into common use the term 'sustainable development' defining it as development towards 'meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generations'. Since then the term 'sustainable development' has been widely used, sometimes misused, and perhaps even abused on occasions.

Whilst the ultimate goal of all development is expected to be improvement in the quality of life in society, the concept of 'sustainability' is not yet precisely understood. The task of engineering is to convert available resources into goods and services needed by society for improving its quality of life. Therefore, to say that all natural resources should be preserved as they are — undisturbed — is neither a practical proposition nor an engineering reality. Successful development would undoubtedly involve some disturbances in the environment and, therefore, it is not appropriate to assume that sustainable development is synonymous with zero degradation. Sustainable development has to be understood as an endeavour to minimize the rate of degradation and to ensure that however small a degradation that does occur, is made up in the best acceptable form and as fast as possible.

What constitutes nature is not only the natural resources in terms of their quantum or manifestation in life but also their disposition, their geographical location, their characteristics and so on. Therefore, even arguments that loss of natural resources in one area is made up by replenishment in another area cannot take one far. Sometimes, it is argued that utilization of one resource can be compensated by another; for example, educational, scientific and technical advances add to the human resources and these human resources may more than compensate the losses of material or energy resources in some cases. Such philosophical arguments though true in a limited context cannot be accepted or applied without going into the details and without taking both a holistic as well as a microscopic view.

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INTEGRATING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS CONCERNS INTO A SUSTAINABLE REGIME

The UN General Assembly proclaimed in 1988 a global strategy for human settlements. The strategy provided wide ranging and innovative guidelines to harness human, technical and financial resources of the international community, national governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the formal and informal private sectors and community based organizations to generate improved shelter conditions for the poor.

The Earth Summit in 1992 adopted within its Agenda 21 action plan, a human settlements programme integrating human settlements concerns into the overall sustainable regime that is expected to come into bloom as a result of UNCED.

SHELTER

'Shelter' is not only a roof over one's head; it is not just a building nor even just a house. 'Shelter' includes a range of other supporting facilities which, together with the house, are necessary for an acceptable living environment. These supporting facilities include

- water and energy supplies,
- drainage and sanitation,
- access to transportation and communication systems, and
- an enlivening exposure.

Thus, sheltering has many components and the approach to bring them into the sustainable regime needs that all these components be looked into comprehensively, holistically and in a coordinated manner. This would require formulating developmental strategies and policies relating to sheltering as a whole as well as to its components including

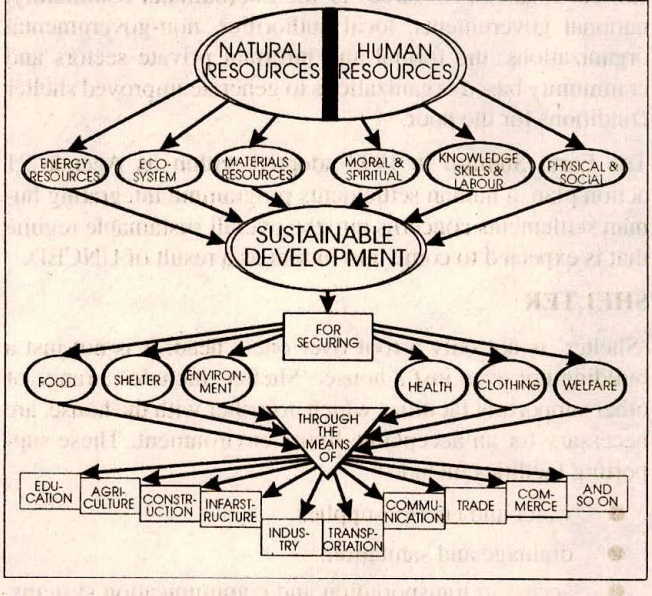
- rural and urban developmental planning,
- human settlements planning,
- land management,
- social housing,
- cooperative housing,
- employees housing,
- social rental housing,
- norms, codes and guidelines for engineering the house and the supporting facilities which constitute the shelters, and

- a host of other similar strategies and policies in regard to water and energy supplies, drainage and sanitation, transport and communications and so on.

Shelters are both creditors and debitors to sustainable development. Shelters are a positive input to sustainable development in that they meet the primary social need of the society and improve productivity of those who are well sheltered. Shelters are also a negative drain on the resources in that the creation of shelters consumes enormous present resources.

Therefore, shelter and sustainable development have interlinkages with several elements interacting in a complex system (Fig 1). The complexities involved do not permit at this stage to deal in depth with all the elements in one holistic frame nor to have immediately a single national or even regional answer. The most practical way, therefore, would be to take the subsystems and study them in some depth keeping as a background the holistic picture.

FIGURE 1
INTERLINKAGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SHELTER



OBJECTIVES OF ENGINEERING SHELTERS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this background and with these interlinkages the objectives of 'Engineering the Shelters for Sustainable Development' would be two-fold. On the one hand to harness the strengths that shelters give to the society and to build further on this strength. On the other to minimize the weaknesses created by way of adverse effects on environment by their consuming present resources and to adopt every possible means to reduce the ill effects of these weaknesses. This would need that the planning, designing, execution and utilization of shelters are looked at in depth at both the macro and micro levels.

Engineering has to ensure that its application in any given issue at any given situation adds to the social and economic values as otherwise it becomes purposeless. Every shelter put up is no doubt an economic as well as a social asset. However, every shelter added does not necessarily add incrementally to an existing asset the same value at all points of time or at all stages of development. The value is obviously higher when the ratio of the stock of shelters to the total number of those

FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUALIZED TREND OF SOCIAL VALUE ADDED BY EACH ADDITIONAL SHELTER

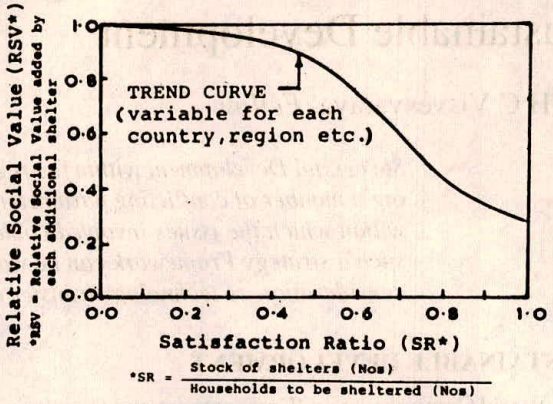
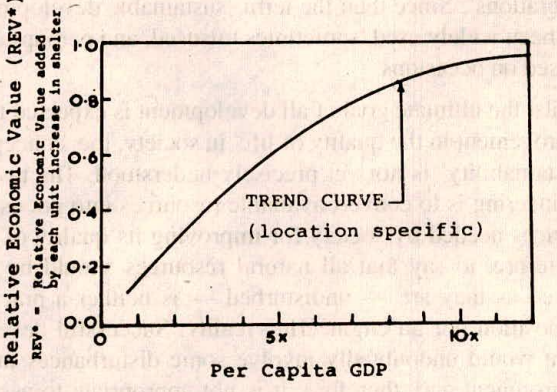


FIGURE 3
CONCEPTUALIZED TREND OF ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED BY EACH UNIT INCREASE IN SHELTER



who are in need of shelter is low and tends to become lower as the satisfaction ratio approaches unity (Fig 2).

At the same time the economic value of providing shelter to the shelterless increases as the stage of development advances (Fig 3).

Figs 2 and 3 are conceptualized trends. These trends need to be studied systematically and exact relations established to enable better fulfilment of the objectives of engineering the shelters in the location under consideration.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY AND SHELTERS

From an engineering perspective, the first and the foremost consideration is the interlinkage of shelter with construction activity as a whole. No sheltering activity can be considered independent of the construction activity in its region. Strategies and trends in construction have continuing influence on the strategies and trends in sheltering even though the rate of growth of shelters or its share may differ at various stages of growth of construction industry. Fig 4 is one such trend study covering several countries.

In India, the share of shelters in total construction since independence has been given in Table 1.

FIGURE 4
SHARE OF SHELTERS, NON-RESIDENTIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN TOTAL CONSTRUCTION

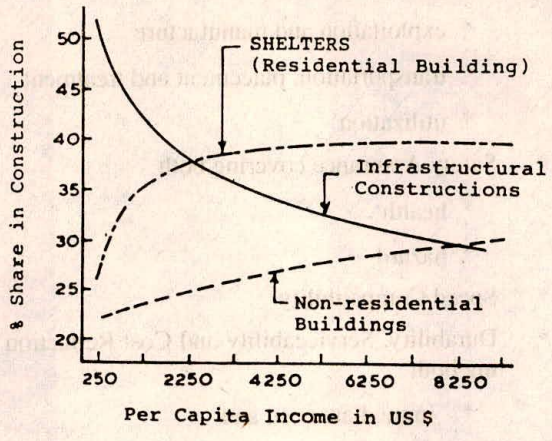


TABLE 1
SHARE OF SHELTERS IN TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST

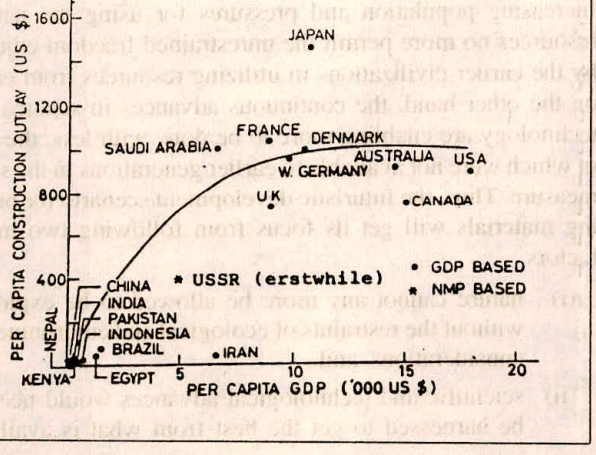
Year	Total Stock of Shelters, (m units)	Investment During the Previous Five Years on Shelters, (in Rs, million)	Share in Total Construction Investment, (%)
1947	48	—	—
1960	68	13 000	19
1970	92	28 000	12
1980	119	47 000	8
1990	148	315 000	20

In the Seventh Five Year Plan of India about Rs 1.57×10^{12} is estimated to account for construction out of which the share of housing or shelter was about Rs 0.315×10^{12}, that is, about 20%. Therefore, engineering shelters for sustainable development has to be understood and carried out, in the background and in the context of the construction industry in the country.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED

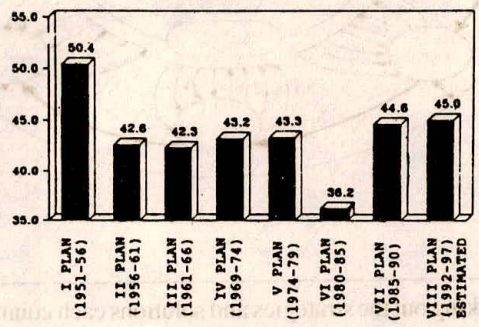
In most countries of the world, and more so in developing countries, construction has been accounting for a substantial part of the national expenditure. Fig 5 illustrates this phenomenon.

FIGURE 5
NATIONAL EXPENDITURE ON CONSTRUCTION



To illustrate, outlay on construction in India accounts for as much as 40% to 50% of the successive national plan outlays (Fig 6).

FIGURE 6
CONSTRUCTION CONTENT AS % OF TOTAL PLAN OUTLAYS IN INDIA



In the Seventh Five Year Plan, out of the total national outlay of about Rs 3.5×10^{12}, about Rs 1.57×10^{12} is estimated to have accounted for construction. In the Eighth Five Year Plan, out of the total national outlay of about Rs 7.98×10^{12}, the construction share is estimated to be about Rs 3.59×10^{12}.

BASIC RESOURCES FOR CONSTRUCTION

To execute such a massive plan of construction, which includes shelters, the basic resources available are :

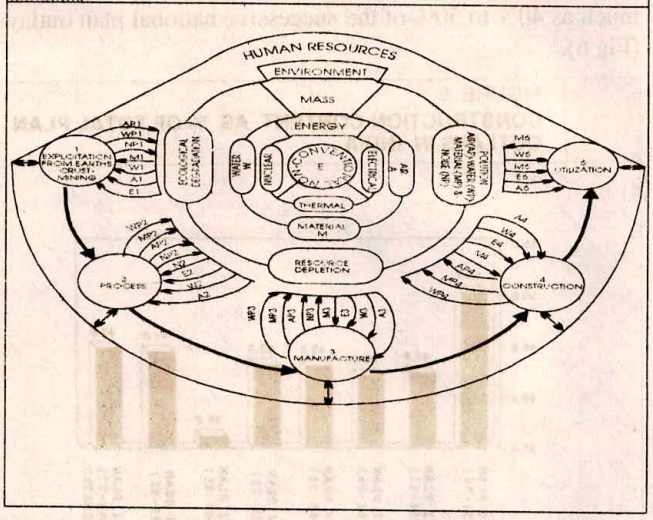
- Human Resources
  - Qualitative - knowledge and skill
  - Quantitative - productive human hours
- Energy Resources
- Materials Resources
- Environmental Resources
  - Ecosystem - including land, flora and fauna

In fact, energy and materials resources and indeed even human resources would all be part of the environmental resources but they are grouped separately in order to draw attention specifically to other resources in the ecosystem.

Since these are the only resources available to achieve the objectives of construction including those of shelters, the first prerequisite is not only to ensure that they are used judiciously but also to understand their interaction and maintain the optimum balance (Fig 7).

Each of these resources and each of the interactions involved have to be considered in-depth to secure construction within the framework of sustainable development. Hence, to deal with all aspects of engineering shelters for sustainable development would be a vast subject. For the present purpose, therefore, it would be sufficient to deal with the framework of the strategies and illustrate them by some examples to demonstrate the approach towards engineering the construction sector and through it to engineer shelters for sustainable development.

FIGURE 7
RESOURCES — ENVIRONMENT BALANCE



In working out the strategies and solutions each country's own parameters of basic resources as stated earlier should be the first guide. It is not uncommon to find that approaches and solutions applied somewhere else in the world are simply adopted in another country even though the parameters for basic resources on the basis of which these approaches and solutions were worked out substantially differ. By way of illustration, India's parameters *vis-a-vis* a few other countries is indicated in Table 2 in so far as earth's crust area resources are concerned. Similar tables can be made for other resources as well.

TABLE 2
SHARING OF EARTH'S CRUST RESOURCES

Country	Year	Population, (million)	Area, million km^2	Average Number of Persons to Share the Resources Available in One km^2
Australia	1989	17	7.7	2
China	1990	1134	9.6	118
India	1992	875	3.3	265
Japan	1990	124	0.4	310
USA	1990	251	9.4	27
USSR (erstwhile)	1990	289	22.4	13

The scenario of per capita availability of resources widely differs and therefore the approaches and solutions to issues could also differ. In view of this, while taking the full advantages of advances in science and technology and experiences elsewhere in the world, each country's approach and solutions for that country have to be in harmony with their relevant parameters. This would also take into account the ability of a country to import resources such as for example, Japan is able to import considerable quantities of oil, coal, iron ore and even granite.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The strategy for achieving the goals stated earlier would be in the framework of the following considerations, with all of them being considered simultaneously.

* Environmental Protection including Ecological Balancing
  * in exploitation of raw materials
  * in process of manufacture and use
  * in disposal when no more needed
* Materials Conservation including Performance Maximization
* Energy Conservation in
  * exploitation and manufacture
  * transportation, placement and treatment
  * utilization
* Safety Assurance covering both
  * health
  * hazard
* Speed Compatibility
* Durability, Serviceability and Cost Reduction covering both
  * immediate cost, and
  * life cycle cost.
* Manpower Optimization
* Ergonomic and Aesthetic Satisfaction

By way of illustrative elaboration of the above strategy framework, some salient aspects are described below.

Environmental Protection including Ecological Balancing

At present, all the building materials consumed in the construction activity put together totals to over 3600 million tonne per year. To provide this the earth's crust in India is degraded every year to the extent of 5000 million tonne. For example, land degradation for various resources during test year is as follows:

(i) to produce 68000 million bricks, 57 000 ha of fertile land were degraded.

(ii) to secure 2.5 million m^3 timber, 450 000 ha of forest were damaged.

(iii) to win other minerals for steel etc, 30 000 ha of land were degraded.

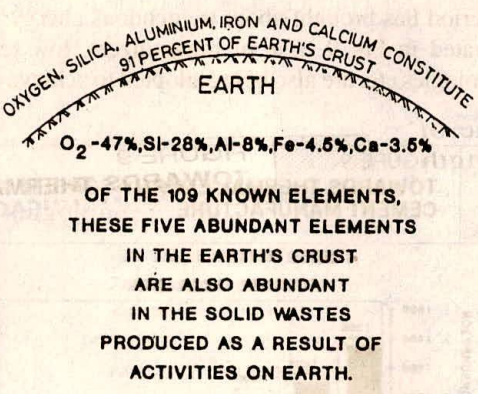
As long as this rate of exploitation continues, there is bound to be serious ecological degradation. So, for achieving sustainable development (a) the quantity of materials consumed has to be reduced so that there is less strain on the resources, and (b) other possible resources have to be explored and used to supplement earth's crust resources.

Increasing population and pressures for using the natural resources no more permit the unrestrained freedom enjoyed by the earlier civilizations in utilizing resources from earth; on the other hand, the continuous advances in science and technology are enabling more to be done with less, the aids of which were not available to earlier generations in the same measure. Thus, the futuristic development scenario for building materials will get its focus from following two major factors :

(i) nature cannot any more be allowed to be exploited without the restraints of ecological and environmental considerations, and

(ii) scientific and technological advances would need to be harnessed to get the best from what is available

FIGURE 8
EARTH'S CRUST ELEMENTS



appropriate to the socio- economic conditions of the place.

Any building material or method which is not in harmony with nature is not likely to succeed in meeting the massive demand of building materials. Since 91% of the earth's crust and human environment are made of the natural elements comprising oxygen, silicon, aluminium, iron and calcium, the major building materials and specifically the largely used building materials have been based essentially on these natural elements (Fig 8).

However, the fact that a majority of the solid wastes have the same elements as the most abundant elements in the earth's crust (Table 3) is leading to their exploitation in the waste recycle technologies for making building materials.

TABLE 3
MAIN CONSTITUENTS OF TYPICAL SOLID WASTES

Typical Solid Wastes	Main Constituents, %				
	O_2	Si	Al	Fe	Ca
Agricultural					
Rice husk ash	50	45	0.5	0.3	1.5
Straw ash	47	43	0.5	0.2	1.3
Industrial					
Flyash	45	25	12	6	3
B F slag	40	16	12	1	25
Rural and urban					
Construction wastes	45	35	4	4	9
Carcasses	45	—	—	—	35

Today over 2600 million tonne of solid wastes are produced which are as follows

(i) 500 million tonne a year from agriculture,

(ii) 300 million tonne a year from industry, and

(iii) 1800 million tonne a year from rural and urban activities.

If these, which have compositions very close to those of the earth's crust, are utilized as resources for building materials, a substantial part of the degradation of the earth's environment could be saved. At the same time, problems faced by way of environmental pollution and of disposal of these wastes would also be greatly solved. Examples of potential uses of wastes in construction are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4
EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL USES OF WASTES IN BUILDING MATERIALS

Wastes	Some Uses
Flyash	Cement, bricks, blocks, light weight aggregates, cellular concrete
Blast furnance slag	Cement, aggregate
Byproduct gypsum	Plaster of Paris, Panels, boards, set retarders, wood substitute shutters
Lime sludge	Limes, cements, mortars
Cinder	Bricks, aggregates
Mining tailings	Bricks, masonry cement, secondary raw materials
Red mud	Binder, blocks, heavy clay products, tiles, panels
Water work's waste	Bricks, cements
Lime kiln rejects	Masonry mortar, lower strength binder
Coal washery rejects	Bricks
Rice husk	Particle boards, pozzolana, cements
Coconut husk	Coir products, particle boards, roofing sheets
Wood shavings	Wood wool boards
Saw dust	Particle boards
Jute sticks	Insulation boards
Groundnut hulls	Particle boards
Rice straw	Fibre boards
Wheat straw	Fibre boards
Corn cobs and stalks	Various building boards
Demolished construction	Aggregates, filters, etc depending on its composition
Iron shavings	Fibre reinforced concrete

Materials Conservation including Performance Maximization

Whether it is from the point of view of reducing ecological degradation or of energy conservation or from basic principles of engineering, there is a need to conserve materials. There are three distinct paths to achieve this which are as follows:

(i) maximizing the performance that can be secured from a given natural resource material by applying the latest knowledge in materials science and technology in its manufacture as well as in its use,

(ii) minimizing the amount of materials used in a construction element by applying the best principles of "Shape Engineering" of elemental sections, and

(iii) minimizing the quantum of structural elements or building materials needed by adopting the best structural configurations and forms.

Conservation of materials by all these methods is all the more urgent and necessary for sustainable development when the fact that the per capita materials resource available in India is relatively quite small as seen from Table 2.

Recommendations like 'Back to Mud a Step Forward' or use of large quantities of lower grade materials compared to what today's science and technology can promise cannot be the right solutions except in some limited local circumstances. Romans and Greeks who built some of the most noted constructions in the world in ancient days have been moving from lower performance materials to higher performance materials. Limestone was first used as building stone. Then limestone was burnt to get building lime to secure certain other performance characteristics. Then came a still better perfor-

ming material — Portland Cement — which in effect was the result of the same limestone and other materials put through a different thermal discipline. Now more recent knowledge of materials science is enabling achievement of higher strength cements such as Pyrament (USA) or other improved performance characteristics in polymer concretes, fibre reinforced concretes, etc. Similarly, there are instances where, with the tools of modern material science, wastes are being converted to ceramics and other high performing materials, some of them having characteristics of metals such as high strength ceramics (Japan), Syngran and Sital (Russia). Yet another approach is lightweight materials.

Building materials are relatively heavy and are used in large quantities in construction. Today, building materials are used 4 tonne to 7 tonne per year per capita; no other material except water is consumed by man in larger quantities. In view of this, transportation of building materials is a major strain on the national system. So, it is imperative that building materials are, as far as possible, found from local resources. Science and technology has to be applied to maximize the performance from a given quantum of material by both the type of processing as well as by the way the processed material is used such as hollow clay bricks, lightweight aggregates, improved cements and concretes, etc.

The final objective of all these would mean securing from any material, component or structure, the HIGHEST possible

- performance-to-weight ratio,
- performance-to-energy ratio,
- performance-to-cost ratio,
- performance-to-time ratio,
- performance-to-utilization ratio, and
- initial performance-to-life cycle performance ratio.

Energy Conservation

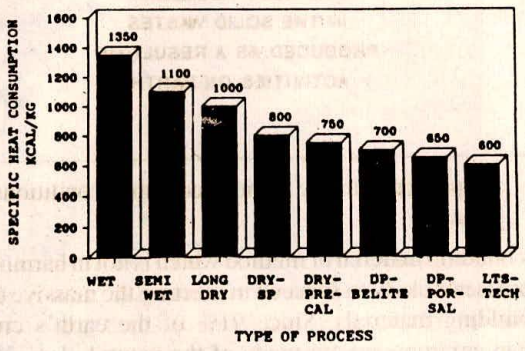
Whilst there is a keen awareness to conserve energy all over the world, the need for conserving energy has become more acute in developing countries because of scarcity of utilizable energy. Out of the total utilizable energy available in the world, 21% of the population living in industrialized countries use 76% of this energy; only a meagre 24% is used by the remaining 79% inhabiting the developing world. Any construction activity has to take this reality into account.

In the total energy concept, the energy used (or released) has to be accounted for at all stages from the beginning to the end, such as:

- energy consumed in the exploitation and manufacture of raw materials, finished products, components and equipment,
- energy consumed in transportation, handling, placement and treatment, and
- energy consumed in the utilization or by the final construction.

In the process of manufacture, in almost every facet, there are developments to save energy. Energy consumption levels in brick manufacture have been brought down by adopting continuous high draft kilns and tunnel kilns in place of intermittent clamped and bulls trench kilns, and further with automatic firing process. Perforated or hollow core bricks have further brought down energy consumption. Use of certain types of wastes such as flyash, rice husk, used tyres etc., have also in various ways brought energy savings. For example, in the manufacture of cement the process changes over the period has brought about tremendous energy savings as illustrated in Fig 9. Use of mineralizers, low temperature technologies etc, are also being adopted to achieve this objective.

FIGURE 9
TOWARDS THERMAL ENERGY CONSERVATION IN CEMENT MANUFACTURE



Whatever may be the energy aspects of the processes or equipment, these are ultimately reflected in the energy content in the building materials. The energy component of some of the commonly known building materials is illustrated in Table 5.

TABLE 5
ENERGY COMPONENT IN BUILDING MATERIALS

Materials	Energy Component	
	MJ/kg	MJ/l
Portland cement	3.8 - 6.2	5.3 - 8.7
Portland slag cement	1.9 - 3.6	2.8 - 5.2
Gypsum	3.2 - 4.0	2.6 - 3.2
Glass	2.9 - 6.9	7.7 - 18.4
Burnt clay bricks*	1.5 - 5.2	2.7 - 9.4
Sand lime bricks	0.8 - 0.9	1.3 - 1.6
Flyash bricks	1.0 - 1.2	1.4 - 1.8
Sand, gravel	0.08 - 0.1	0.1 - 0.2
Lightweight aggregate	3.7 - 4.2	2.3 - 2.5
Mortar (cement and sand)	0.7 - 0.9	1.2 - 1.5
Steel	21.1 - 30	166 - 236
Aluminium	245 - 259	663 - 820.8
Copper	112.5 - 130	1008 - 1165
Zinc	37.9 - 72.2	270.2 - 514.8
Ready mix concrete	0.7 - 0.9	1.7 - 2.1
Reinforced concrete+	1.6 - 1.9	4.0 - 4.9
Lightweight concrete	2.8 - 3.4	5.0 - 6.0
Light weight reinforced concrete+	3.5 - 3.9	6.6 - 7.3
Asbestos cement sheet	0.7 - 0.9	1.7 - 2.1
Galvanised iron sheet	25 - 30	200 - 236
Clay flyash bricks	About 30% less than*	
Concrete blocks	Manual effort, Minor energy	
Stone masonry blocks	Manual effort, Minor energy	

+ with 100 kg reinforcement/m^3 of concrete

When the final product of construction — in this case, shelter, is considered, there are a number of aspects of planning, designing and use which help in saving energy consumption such as through

- building form, landscaping and orientation,
- hollow walls and roofs,
- thermally designed windows,
- appropriate ventilation,
- appropriate lighting, and
- elimination of wastage.

Safety Assurance

Ensuring adequate safety is an important social responsibility at all stages from raw materials to use of shelters through building materials, construction methodology and the use of the final construction in the form of shelter.

Health hazard such as in the case of asbestos fibres processing for making asbestos products or in the case of toxic odour producing plastics, have to be safeguarded against.

Fire hazard in terms of fire performance of materials used, the design features and the usage pattern of the structure have to be carefully taken into account. Radiation and explosion hazards may also be issues to be considered in modern times in some locations.

Speed Compatibility

Unless the speed of construction is as required and planned, the very objective of the construction may get defeated. In the case of shelters, at the time of independence in 1947, the total stock of shelters in India including *pucca*, semi *pucca* and *kutcha* categories was 58 million units. Today the stock is about 150 million units.

The planning commission has estimated that in 1992 the shortage is 23.3 million dwelling units and by the year 2001 an additional 63.8 million dwelling units, comprising 32.6 million in rural areas and 31.2 million in urban areas, are required to meet the incremental housing needs; this means another 87 million units have to be put up in about 9 years to meet the needs of housing without any shortage by the year of 2001. This would require the sheltering activity to provide shelters to the tune of nearly 10 million units a year as against the present rate of only about 3 million units a year.

Out of the present stock of 150 million units, only 49 million are *pucca* units and the rest of 101 million units are of the *kutcha* or semi *pucca* type with 58 million semi *pucca* units, and 43 million *kutcha* units. So the task of taking qualitatively the *kutcha* category into semi *pucca* and the semi *pucca* to the *pucca* category poses yet another challenge.

To achieve these two goals enormous resources have to be provided, and innovative strategies have to be formulated, and appropriate speed has to be adopted. The challenge, therefore, is to mobilize the needed resources on the one hand and increase the speed of construction on the other either by adopting "industrialized" housing construction or extensively "socialized" housing construction. The former would need sufficient quantities of appropriate materials and up-to-date machinery and the latter would require inputs to be provided in a very widely distributed but systematic manner. A judicious combination of the two approaches may also be adopted. Whatever the approach, it has to be in the strategy framework for sustainable development.

Durability, Serviceability and Cost Reduction

Durability and Serviceability

Whilst securing a higher initial performance is the first step, developments in the manufacture, choice and utilization of building materials have pointed out the importance of looking into the durability as an important aspect of performance during the life cycle. The materials and the constructions have to so perform as to last the entire life of the construction without undue deterioration. Corrosion of steel in reinforced or prestressed concrete due to presence of chloride in their environment, and reduction in alkalinity protection around the reinforcement due to carbonation and alkali-silica reaction in the body of the concrete are some typical examples relating to adverse effects on durability.

Even in traditional construction methods there would be a combination of many considerations; to illustrate, typical comparative characteristics of bricks and blocks from this standpoint are indicated in Table 6.

TABLE 6
COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BRICKS AND BLOCKS

Property	Wet Compressive Strength (kg/cm^2)	Reversible Moisture Movement (% linear)	Density (gm/cm^3)	Thermal Conductivity (W/m^oC)	Durability Under Severe Natural Exposure
Stabilized soil blocks	10 to 400	0.02 to 0.2	1.5 to 1.9	0.5 to 0.7	Good to very poor
Conventional burnt clay bricks	35 to 150	0 to 0.02	1.4 to 2.4	0.7 to 1.3	Excellent to very poor
Flyash bricks	120 to 140	0.07 to 0.11	1.2 to 1.6	—	Good to moderate
Calcium silicate bricks	100 to 550	0.01 to 0.035	1.6 to 2.1	1.1 to 1.6	Good to moderate
Dense concrete blocks	70 to 500	0.02 to 0.05	1.7 to 2.2	1.0 to 1.7	Good to moderate
Aerated concrete blocks	20 to 60	0.05 to 0.10	0.4 to 0.9	0.1 to 0.2	Good to moderate
Light weight concrete blocks	20 to 200	0.04 to 0.08	0.6 to 1.6	0.15 to 0.7	Good to moderate

Immediate Costs

On an average, building materials account for more than two-thirds of the cost of construction. Typical price indices variations during the period 1970 to 1992 for cement, bricks, timber, steel, asbestos cement products, ceramic tiles, sanitary ware, aluminium and sheet glass are indicated in Fig 10. Engineering decisions on the use of materials are bound to be influenced by changes in consumer costs. Newer developments will also be influenced by this factor.

The net immediate cost (Fig 11) to the consumer generally comprises :

A: basic cost of the building material at the source such as at the manufacturing plant,

UDC 658

Infrastructure Leasing — A Novel Method of Financing Transport Projects

(Ms) Esther Malini, *Non-member*

Inadequacy of financial resources for the government has resulted in a backlog of capital works and maintenance attention to transport infrastructure, leading to a crisis situation. Infrastructure leasing is a novel method of financing transport projects which merits serious study. The main objective of the present paper is to examine the principle of infrastructure leasing, which is a form of privatization, and its applicability to Indian transport projects with emphasis on road projects. Different methods of leasing and the major issues in such projects in the Indian context are also discussed. An attempt is made to refer to similar leasing projects executed in the recent past in other countries and to learn from their experience.

INTRODUCTION

The magnitude of expenditure on transport infrastructure is an important indicator of the economic development of a country. A detailed study of fifteen countries by Cochrane and Wali[1] has proved that high construction expenditure is strongly related to high economic prosperity. Hence, failure to provide adequate construction investment would inevitably lead to a corresponding deficiency in achieving the required economic growth. While the actual demand for transport infrastructure rises rapidly, the possible supply from budgetary resources of the government falls short of the demand. The condition of needs for infrastructure exceeding the resources for the same has come to be known as the 'Infrastructure Crisis'[2].

Since the costs of road construction and maintenance have steeply increased, and the budgetary allocations of the government are inadequate to provide for the required extent of road infrastructure, many countries are now turning to innovative financing procedures and are successfully tapping the private sector capital[3–7]. There is a gradual shift towards privatization of roads, with the private companies, or consortium of private companies, being encouraged to participate in creating and operating public infrastructure. This paper describes different issues of infrastructure leasing, with parti-cular emphasis on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) model, and examines its applicability to transport projects in India.

INDIAN ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE SCENE

There has been a remarkable five-fold increase in road length from 0.4 Mkm to 2.0 Mkm during the period 1951-91. But the vehicle population has shown an alarming seventy-fold increase from 0.3 M to 21.3 M during the same period. Thus, the growth of roads has not kept pace with the growth in vehicle population. The share of investment in the roads sector in the overall public sector outlay has declined from 6.7% in the First Five-year Plan period (1951-56) to a mere 3.9% in the Eighth Five-year Plan period (1992- 97), resulting in an imbalance in the demand and supply of road infrastructure[8, 9].

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The national highways, which comprise the major road network of the country, are the worst affected as the share of investment in them in the form of creation of new roads and maintenance of existing roads has decreased from 1.4% to 0.57% of the public sector expenditure. They are being inadequately maintained due to budgetary constraints on the one hand, and on the other are being overloaded well above their designed capacities due to exponential traffic growth during the years. As pointed out by Gupta[9], the plan outlay recommended by the working group deputed by the Planning Commission of India for improvement of all categories of roads was a sum of Rs 326 300 M . It is feared that not even half the sum could be mobilized by the government from its treasury. About 4% of the existing national highway road length is being upgraded with foreign financial assistance. The remaining portion of the national highways, the state highways and other roads are being maintained and upgraded with government funds.

Alarmingly diminishing investments on roads, uncontrolled steep rise in traffic, excessive loadings beyond the designed loads and absence of a sound and bold policy to build and maintain roads have taken their toll on the existing road infrastructure in the country. If this trend is allowed to continue unchecked, the future for the country's roads will be bleak. Consequently, a very substantial additional investment on roads and bridges is needed to facilitate economic growth.

NEED FOR PRIVATIZATION

The gap between the demand and the supply of road infrastructure is widening at a very fast rate and it would be impossible for the government to bridge the gap within the scarce budgetary resources. Therefore, an urgent need has been felt to encourage the private sector to enter the field of providing basic public infrastructure, which has so far been predominantly in the domain of the public sector. Privatization has been successfully tried by many countries in different public utilities such as public transport[10], solid waste disposal[2], and airports[7]. The prevailing worldwide movement towards privatization of public utilities, especially roads, is necessitated by a combination of objectives such as relieving the government of fiscal and administrative burdens, improving the efficiency through flexible management practices of the private sector, stimulating private investment and creating

an investment environment to strengthen the functions of various industrial and commercial operations.

Privatization is basically the transfer of ownership and control of any activity, service or enterprise from the public sector to the private sector. It can take many forms, from complete to selective transfer of ownership and control. Privatization could also be in the form of transfer of management, while the government retains the ownership and control, or in the form of leasing arrangements between the government and the private sector. The recent reforms in the Indian economy have created a conducive environment to venture into privatization programmes to use and expand the energies of the private sector for the improvement of the transport infrastructure.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PRIVATIZATION PROJECT

A privatization project is significantly different from a traditional project carried out by the government. The major differences are summarized in Table 1. Experience from other countries suggests that a privatization programme will succeed only if the project is perceived by the private company as one with low risk and high return on investment (ROI), and at the same time the government is convinced that the benefit to the general public is maximized[4].

Privatization has many potential advantages. The chief advantage lies in its facilitating the mobilization of substantial financial resources necessary to create and maintain the infrastructure. Since road projects are capital intensive, financial plans including the identification of various sources of finance, their timing and their rates of interest should be sound and reliable.

Public projects executed by government agencies frequently suffer time and cost overruns due to inherent procedural constraints. On the other hand, private companies with their higher degree of flexibility and freedom to take decisions, strong profit motive, adoption of faster methods of construction, higher productivity and managerial efficiency, are likely to execute a project at a lower overall cost to the community than their public sector counterparts. By making users pay for the use of facilities in proportion to the benefits derived, privatization ensures the most efficient utilization of the resources.

INFRASTRUCTURE LEASING CONCEPT

The concept of leasing an amenity is well known. The lease is a time-bound contract with specific terms and conditions, and the lessor/owner resumes possession of the property after the expiry of the lease period. However, the application of leasing to infrastructure projects is of recent origin. Leasing is more popular or successful with capital intensive transport projects such as roads, bridges, airports and bus/rail terminals than with labour intensive projects like operation of public transport services. Among the capital intensive transport projects built using the leasing principles, bridges have shown greater toll viability than roads as the maintenance cost of bridges during their lifetime is very much smaller than that of roads[11]. This paper will focus on the principles of leasing as applicable to roads and bridges, although the broad principles and approach can also be applied to any other transport infrastructure.

TABLE 1
PUBLIC PROJECT AGAINST PRIVATE PROJECT

	Public Project	Private Project
Nature of Project	Social welfare project not necessarily with high ROI	Low risk, high ROI
Objective	Maximization of public welfare and development of community	Maximization of profits to the company
Planning and execution	Government agency	Private company
Standard of project and management control	Rigid, less effective control	Flexible, more effective control
Construction practices	Conventional methods adopted	Innovations in design and construction employed
Source of finance	Government funds	Capital markets and Private capital
Cost of capital	Low Interest rates	High rates of interest
Sensitivity	Insensitive to delays and market changes	Highly sensitive to delays and market forces

BASIC LEASING MODELS

Among the many leasing models found in the technical literature, the two basic models applicable to Indian conditions are: (a) Turnkey Contract Model, and (b) Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Model. These models are inherently similar, but differ in the basic relationship between the government and the private sector in each model. Due to their capital intensive nature, leasing projects are less likely to be carried out by a single company. In many cases around the world, such projects are executed by a consortium of private companies, who pool in their resources in different proportions, and accordingly share the risks and profits of the venture. The two models are described below.

Turnkey Contract Model

The Turnkey Contract model is similar to conventional contracting of government projects to private companies. The government provides the design and finance completely, and the private company is responsible to construct the facility at a maximum agreed price, and operate the facility for a predetermined period of time. The private company guarantees a regular periodic payment to the government which is a kind of franchise fee to operate and earn revenue from the facility by way of tolls collected from the users. A price cap is generally imposed on the tolls to be charged as the government is the sole financier of the project. In this model, the government retains the ownership, and engages the company to construct the facility and operate the same as an agent of the government. Although fixed returns are assured, the model may not be suitable to alleviate the 'infrastructure crisis' as the government has to bear the construction cost of the facility in full before the start of revenue from the project, and thus does not relieve the government from its resource constraints.

The Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Model

The Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) model has gained popularity in many countries. In a BOT model, a joint venture

revenue available to repay the construction debt, thereby encroaching on the expected profit of the operator. Hence, care should be taken to keep this cost to minimum by avoiding wastages and overstaffing, and by introducing an efficient method of toll collection.

Protection from Competition

The lease agreement should contain assurances from the government that permission will not be granted to other agencies for a specified period for creation of any other facility tolled or untolled in the vicinity of a BOT project, which may affect the traffic volume in the BOT corridor, which in turn will have adverse effects on the economics of the project. A classic example in this connection is the contract for Channel Tunnel, which provides protection from competition for a period of 33 years[6]. The protection period can in general be about two-thirds of the concession period.

Land Acquisition

Land acquisition is a big hurdle in BOT projects. A private entrepreneur cannot acquire the land for the project on his own. Government should necessarily undertake to acquire the land and allow the concessionaire to operate on it free of cost. In any case, the government should ensure that the entire land required has been acquired and made available to the operator before the commencement of the project to avoid delays due to litigation and court proceedings.

Risks

In a BOT project, both the government and the concessionaire have to face many kinds of risk. The risks for the government include: possible failure of the concessionaire prior to completion of the project; inadequate cost recovery from tolls, resulting in benefits to the community falling short of the projections; and delays in land acquisition for the project due to litigation.

The concessionaire faces serious risks, including termination risk, regulation risk, construction risk and information risk[14]. Termination risk involves negotiating the residual value when the project is handed over to the government on expiry of the contract, or if the lease period is modified for some reason. Regulation risk involves considerations of possible changes in rules which affect price control and mode of operation, thereby affecting the revenue potential of the project. Construction risk would include cost overruns due to errors in estimation of the project cost, spurt in prices of materials, increase in labour costs, etc. Information risk concerns the reliability of forecasts of traffic data, uncertain elasticity of demand to tolls and other assumptions regarding commercial development of adjacent areas.

Consideration of political risks and currency devaluation risks may be relevant for developing countries. Change in government may lead to change in policies. This may adversely affect BOT projects as it may result in undesirable delays, interruption and even termination of the project. With huge sunk costs, the private operator may be at a great loss. Keeping this in view, Chen[4] suggested that privatization project is best applicable in well developed economies with stable political and economic situations, and sophisticated capital markets. Currency devaluation risk is pronounced when BOT projects are financed and/or operated by foreign companies. A devaluation in the local currency may result in insufficiency of serving foreign debt.

The discussion of risks may tend to discourage many an entrepreneur. However, the potential benefits seem to outweigh the calculated risks involved[15]. Still, the government should try to minimise the risks, and, in case of genuine difficulties, the government should be willing to arrange for impartial arbitration to ensure reasonable eompensation to the entrepreneur.

APPLICABILITY OF BOT PROJECTS TO INDIAN CONDITIONS

BOT projects are not yet popular in India. In view of the potential advantages of BOT projects and with the present political and economic climate favouring privatization, it is the best time for the government to encourage and patronize BOT schemes. BOT concept would be applied to projects involving construction of expressways, major bridges or tunnels, formation of bypasses and substantial upgradation of existing roads to four lanes. While levying of tolls to new expressways and major bridges may be acceptable to users, levying tolls for bypasses and in case of upgradation of existing roads do not seem to be practical at this time. The required legislative changes are to be implemented. At the initial stage, joint ventures could be undertaken with the major part of equity coming in from the private sector. Since bridges are more toll viable than roads, possibly as a first step towards privatization, major bridges could be built and operated on BOT principles. This would not only instil confidence in the private sector, but also motivate them to come forward and take up bigger projects.

Another feature unique to the Indian road scene is mixed traffic, comprising vehicles of different speeds and sizes. The earlier studies on toll viabilities have not considered the slow moving vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians among the users of tolled bridges and tolled roads. Unless they are specifically prohibited from use of the tolled facility, their presence will have significant impact on the operation and profitability of the facility as the slow moving traffic reduce the average speeds of other motorised traffic, thereby increasing the journey times in the corridor. The prevalence of mixed traffic would also preempt the use of automatic electronic toll collection on roads in this country. The management of mixed traffic in the context of toll road operation needs further study.

The current liberalization process and the opening of Indian economy to foreign markets may attract foreign investors and operators to invest in Indian road projects. As the BOT concept is nascent in India, the Indian entrepreneurs are not adequately confident of the potentialities of BOT schemes. Hence, the government should take special efforts to popularise such schemes.

As reported by Gupta[9], India has made a beginning in BOT projects with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of a bypass at Panvel on the National Highway No 4 in Maharashtra with Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Limited, Bombay. The other proposals which are in the pipeline are: a bypass at Hapur on National Highway No 24 in Uttar Pradesh, the Faridabad-Noida-Ghaziabad Expressway and Yamuna Bridge near Delhi.

There have been apprehensions expressed by senior engineers and planners of the country about the whole process[13]. Privatization cannot constitute the solution to all the problems of infrastructure development in the country. Government can at best encourage the private sector to supplement the efforts of the public sector in creating infrastructure to facilitate overall development of the economy. The author would like to endorse the views of many senior engineers that privatization projects should be engineered with a lot of caution, judgement and foresight.

CONCLUSION

Infrastructure development is essential for the country's economic progress and prosperity. As governments find it difficult to mobilize adequate financial resources to fund essential public projects, the need for private sector involvement in creation of public assets is being felt in countries round the world. The principle of infrastructure leasing, especially the Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) model, is found applicable to transport projects. Large capital investment, high interest rates, long period of capital recovery from tolls, uncertainties and varied risks may act as deterrents for the private companies to take up BOT projects. The government can make the projects attractive by playing a positive and supportive role in the process of privatization. With the adoption of innovative and creative financing techniques, privatization projects, particularly BOT projects, promise a good opportunity for both the government and the private sector to obtain mutual benefits while simultaneously ensuring maximization of social benefits. Privatization is not a panacea for the prevalent 'infrastructure crisis' in the country, but it is a right step towards alleviation of the problem. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate interest among planners and engineers in this country in the application of the BOT model which is a novel method of financing transport projects.

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Maj Gen S P Misra (Retd)

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Correlation of ECG and Electrical Axes of the Heart

Prof C Raja Rao, *Fellow*
R Seshadri, *Non-member*

The electrocardiogram (ECG) represents the electrical activity associated with the heart. The bioelectric signal produced by the heart as a generator can be described by means of a simple electric dipole, which generates a field vector, changing nearly periodically in time and space and its effects are measured on the surface of the human body. This paper highlights the technique of locating the electrical axis of the heart by mere measurement of electrocardiographic potentials appearing between limb electrodes.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the electrical activity of the cardiac muscle, an electric field is established in the conducting region of the body surrounding the heart. The potentials that arise at the surface of the body, resulting from cardiac activity, are known as the electrocardiogram (ECG). In this study both the elementary and basic relations between the heart activity and the related surface potentials have been concerned.

Normally, ECG genesis is considered in two parts. The first consists in specifying, in some way, the current sources in the heart. For example, this could be accomplished by giving the space-time distribution of J, the dipole moment per unit volume. Since the sources are distributed, simplifications have been sought to make the mathematical analysis easier. A crude approximation is to simply find the vector summation of all dipole elements $J\ dV$. That is, the vector $p = \int J_i\ dv$ is formed, and let this single dipole represent the heart electrically. For the present study, it has been assumed that the electrical activity of the heart can be represented by rotation of an electric dipole. Interestingly, this rather crude approximation turns out to be amazingly good. Almost all clinical electrocardiography and vectorcardiography are based on the notion that the heart may be represented by a single dipole, the equivalent vector.

The second portion of the ECG problem is to obtain surface potentials due to the effective dipole (heart) source. In this analysis, the body is normally assumed to be linear, homogeneous, uniform and isotropic. These are not particularly good assumptions, but, again, satisfactory results are normally obtained.

In healthy individuals, the ECG remains reasonably constant, even though the heart rate changes with the demands of the body. It should be noted that the position of the heart within the thoracic region of the body, as well as the position of the body itself (whether erect or recumbent) influences the 'electrical axis' of the heart. The electrical axis is defined as the ficticious line on the heart along which the greatest electromotive force is developed at a given instant during the cardiac cycle. The electrical axis shifts continually through a repeatable pattern during every cardiac cycle.

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THEORY

In electrocardiography, Einthoven developed a system of lead (electrode) placement at the extremities of the body on the assumption that this would enhance the validity of the dipole heart model. A consideration of this system of leads, which are called the standard or limb leads, has been made. Despite the proved inadequacies of this system from a theoretical point of view, this constitutes the most common clinical system today and adopted by cardiographers.

The 'standard' leads E_{I}, E_{II}, E_{III}, (Fig 1) are defined as

$$E_{\mathrm{I}} = E_{ab} \quad \text{(lead 1)}$$

$$E_{\mathrm{II}} = E_{cb} \quad \text{(lead 2)}$$

$$E_{\mathrm{III}} = E_{ca} \quad \text{(lead 3)}$$

where a corresponds to the wrist of the left arm (LA), b to the wrist of the right arm (RA), and c to the lower portion of the left leg (LL). From Kirchhoff's Voltage Law,

$$E_{ca} + E_{ab} = E_{cb} \qquad (1)$$

hence

$$E_{\mathrm{I}} + E_{\mathrm{III}} = E_{\mathrm{II}} \qquad (2)$$

Equation (2) can be represented by the 'vector' relations in the 'Einthoven equilateral triangle' as illustrated in Fig 2. The origin is at the centre of the triangle, while the origin for each lead is the projection on the corresponding side. Positive directions are taken as shown in the figure and correspond to a reversal of the double-subscript notation (by convention). If the lead voltages are plotted along the sides of the triangle, each from its respective origin, then the projections of their termini define the unique vector E as illustrated in Fig 2. It can be shown that all three projections must meet at a common point. To do this, the existence of the resultant vector E has been assumed. As a consequence, the scalar leads must be

$$\text{Lead I} = E\cos\alpha$$

$$\text{Lead II} = E\sin(\alpha + 30^\circ)$$

$$\text{Lead III} = E\sin(\alpha - 30^\circ)$$

It has been seen that

$$\mathrm{I} + \mathrm{III} = \mathrm{II};$$

$$E\cos\alpha + E\sin(\alpha - 30^\circ) = E\sin(\alpha + 30^\circ);$$

$$E(\cos\alpha + \sin\alpha\cos 30^\circ - \cos\alpha\sin 30^\circ) = E(\sin\alpha\cos 30^\circ + \cos\alpha\sin 30^\circ); \text{ and}$$

$$E/2\,[\sqrt{3}\sin\alpha + \cos\alpha] = E/2\,[\sqrt{3}\sin\alpha + \cos\alpha].$$

PROOF
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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR HEALTH

INPUT	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	EFFICIENCY	PRODUCTIVITY	EXPLANATORY
• Minimum Infrastructure Standard General Ward Labor Ward Operation Theatre (OT) Minor Operation Theatre Toilets Condition of toilet Bathrooms: -- Availability of hot water -- Availability of sewage system. Laboratory Waiting Area Patient Attendant Space Outpatient Area Availability of drinking water Linen Service Generator set Store Room Ambulance Service Quarters for Doctors and Drivers Telephone Service Privacy of examination area Fumigation • Minimum Equipment Standard. Availability of required Equipment in all rooms. • Drugs Availability of minimum essential drugs. Availability of emergency drugs.	• Number of deliveries Normal Caesarean and Assisted • Number of family welfare procedures. • Number of high risk pregnancies detected during labor / antenatal care • Number of immunizations against measles. • Number of admissions. • Number of admission slips. • Number of patients registered for postnatal care. • Number of patients registered for antenatal care. • Number of Medically Terminated Pregnancies (MTP).	• Number of maternal deaths. • Number of neo natal deaths. • Number of stillbirths. • Number of infant deaths. • Number of perinatal deaths. • Number of measles cases. • Number of deaths due to measles • Number of admission to number of admission slips. • Complaint redressal system. • Patient feedback forms. • Percentage of patients coming in for 3 postnatal check ups. • Number of patients registered for antenatal care prior to 12 weeks. • Number of days with stock outs of essential drugs.	• Downtime of key equipment. Autoclave. Laproscope. Refrigerator. Generator. Ambulance BP Apparatus Instrument Sterilisers Weighing Machine – Adult and Infant Incubators Boyle's Apparatus Pulse Oxinator Hysteroscopes • Time taken to fill up vacancies to sanctioned strength. • Nurse patient ratio. • Doctor patient ratio. • Full time employees per occupied bed. • Waiting time for patient. • Cost of drugs per patient (inpatient / outpatient). • Cost per inpatient day. • Cost per outpatient day.		• Staffing patterns. • Number of patients below the poverty line. • Inventory / Store management maintenance mechanism.

• Furniture. • Stationery for correspondences. • Staff (Sanctions, Vacancies and Absentees) Doctors Staff Nurses Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) Lab Technicians Peons Ayahs Sweepers Drivers Dhobhi's (Contracted) • Capacity Building Type of training programme. Periodicity of training. Number of people trained. • Financial Salaries budget Maintenance budget - Equipment Maintenance budget –Building Drugs budget. Equipment budget. Training Budget. Fuel and vehicle maintenance budget User fees Laundry budget Contractual Services budget Miscellaneous expenditure budget	• Number of complaints. • Number of outpatients per day. • Number of referrals. • Number of prescription slips issued • Number of visits by the health officer/ supervisor • Use of equipments	• Display board of available drugs. • Amount of user fees collected. • Bed occupancy rate. • Number of deaths due to sterlisation	• Utilisation of user fees. • Percentage of high risk cases among deliveries • Number of complaints received to number of complaints redressed		

DEV-6.

01

The Invention of UNDERdevelopment

'Development has become an amoeba-like concept', says Wolfgang Sachs, 'shapeless and ineradicable. It spreads everywhere because it connotes the best of intentions. The term is hailed by the IMF and the Vatican alike, by revolutionaries carrying their guns, as well as by field experts carrying their Samsonites. The concept allows any intervention to be sanctified in the name of a higher goal. Therefore even enemies feel united under the same banner. The term creates a common ground, a ground on which right and left, elites and grassroots fight their battles'.

The notion of development was highly contested at one stage. Marxists saw it as the process of developing into a classless society, through class struggle, whereas the liberals looked for growth or enlarging the cake rather than re-distributing it. There is also the trickle down effect! Among NGOs, several constructs have been considered synonymous with development: people's participation and empowerment are but two of them.

Today, 'development' by whatever name, seems to boil down to one thing: the market - produce, organise, sell, save, speculate ... anything. So long as it gives you that extra rupee, it is 'development'! Even leftist governments the world over seem to have resigned themselves to this fate.

It is in this context - and given recent events, with a sense of déjà vu, that we re-read the Development Dictionary, where the authors start with how Truman, in 1949, labelled the large parts of the world as 'underdeveloped', thereby setting the US and the Western capitalist model as the ideal or aim of 'development'.

The Development Dictionary–A Guide to Knowledge as Power *by Wolfgang Sachs (Editor).* Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1997. 408 pages [B.Q12.S66]

The Development Dictionary

Wolfgang Sachs and Gustavo Esteva

Development's hidden agenda was nothing else than the Westernization of the world.

At the end of World War II, the United States was a formidable and incessant productive machine, unprecedented in history. All institutions created in those years recognized that fact; even the United Nations Charter echoed the United States' Constitution.

The Americans wanted to consolidate that hegemony and make it permanent and explicit. For this purpose, they conceived a political campaign on a global scale, and an appropriate emblem to identify the campaign.

And they launched both on January 20, 1949, the day President Truman took office. On that day a new era was opened for the world! The era of development! In his speech, Truman described a large part of the world as underdeveloped.

Thus on that day, two billion people became so. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity. They were turned into an inverted mirror of someone else's reality; a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue; a mirror that defines their identity in the terms of a homogenizing and narrow minority, when in reality they are a heterogeneous and diverse majority.

Since then, development has connoted at least one thing: to escape from the undignified condition called underdevelopment. Consequently, catching up was declared to be the historical task.

"Development has become a shapeless amoeba-like word. It cannot express anything because its outlines are blurred. But it remains ineradicable because it appears so benign. They who pronounce the word denote nothing but claim the best of intentions" SACHS (1997).

In order for someone to conceive the possibility of escaping from a particular condition, it is necessary first to feel that one has fallen into that condition. For those who make up two-thirds of the world's population today to think of development of any kind, requires first the perception of themselves as underdeveloped, with the whole burden of connotations that this carries.

Today, for these two-thirds of the peoples of the world, underdevelopment is a threat that has already been carried out - a life experience of subordination and of being led astray, of discrimination and subjugation. Given that precondition, the simple fact of associating with development tends to annul one's own intention, contradict it, and enslave oneself.

It impedes thinking of one's own objectives; it undermines confidence in oneself and one's own culture; it clamours for management from the top down; it converts participation into a manipulative trick to involve people in struggles for getting what the powerful want to impose on them.

The development discourse is made up of a web of key concepts. It is impossible to talk about development without referring to concepts such as poverty, production, the notion of the state, or equality. These concepts first rose to prominence during modern Western history and only then have they been projected on the rest of the world. Each of them crystallizes a set of tacit assumptions which reinforce the Occidental worldview. Development has to pervasively spread these assumptions so that people everywhere are caught up in a Western perception of reality.

The metaphor of development gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life, the word development accumulating in it a whole variety of connotations. This overload of meanings ended up dissolving its precise significance.

Development has become outdated. The hopes and desires which made the idea fly, are now exhausted; development has grown obsolete.

Knowledge wields power by directing people's attention; it carves out and highlights a certain reality, casting into oblivion other ways of relating to the world around us. At a time when development has evidently failed as a socio-economic endeavour, it has become of paramount importance to liberate ourselves from its dominion over our minds.

The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work.

Nevertheless, the ruin stands there and still dominates the scenery like a landmark. Though doubts are mounting and uneasiness is widely felt, development talk still pervades not only official declarations but even the language of grassroots movements. It is time to dismantle this mental structure.

The authors consciously bid farewell to the defunct idea in order to clear our minds for fresh discoveries. This book - and the Digest - is an invitation to review the developmental model of reality and to recognize that we **all** wear not merely tinted, but tainted glasses if we take part in the prevailing development discourse.

Awesome Development ?

I am pleased to report that German technology remains the most awesome in the world.

At a petrol pump on an autobahn, I stare in disbelief at the toilet seat I've just vacated. It has whirred into a slow 360-degree rotation. A small round brush scrubs, soaps, lathers and buffs it, retracting into the wall when done. Automatically, the seat is clean and back into position.

Padma Rao-Sunderji, Outlook, July 21, 2003

DEV - 6.

01

An Architect of Localisation

Joginder Singh outlines the facets of the work of Laurie Baker, an architect who settled down in Kerala, and identified himself with the locals through his work – building homes for people.

There is many a lesson to be learnt from Laurie Baker, not only for the architect and the mason, the student and the researcher, the ordinary citizen and the intellectual activist, but for all those who are committed to a value-based involvement in the political, cultural, economic, social, and ecological systems of life.

Laurie Baker himself may only look at these conceptions and critiques in guileless wonder.

If one asked Laurie Baker whether his work was a statement of his politics, he would look at you quizzically – neither in disbelief, nor with cynicism, but in just plain wonder. Is not everything political? Is life that is worth living, lived to the full, away from politics?

Laurie Baker of course does not say – nor does he imply – these things. He does not dabble in the ponderous rhetoric of appropriate technology, 'low-cost housing', or 'architecture for the people'. This is what we read into him and his work. He simply goes about doing his work. Why? It is his passion, being in the company of people – his 'clients' who do not see in his passion anything other than simple common sense that appeals to them, makes them comfortable in the homes that he has built and at the work places that he has created.

Architecture for the People : Interview with Laurie Baker *by Joginder Singh.* Frontline. Volume 20 - Issue 05, March 1-14, 2003
http://www.flonnet.com/fl2005/stories/20030314000906400.htm
[C.ELDOC1071143]

Architecture for the People

Joginder Singh Interviews Laurie Baker

After five decades of a very active and varied architectural practice, what has the term architecture come to mean for you?

Broadly speaking, it's just the design of buildings and what they look like - different buildings and of course different designs for different functions. The thing that has meant the most to me, living in India for the past fifty years, is that the architecture reflects the lives of the people who live in the buildings they build and the materials with which they build - materials which are underneath them and around them, the way they deal with the climate and so on. In a country the size of India, every 100 km or even less very often, the architecture has changed, so it tells you a lot about the people, it tells you a lot about the climate and it tells you a lot about the materials available and how man has made them usable for his own purposes.

The (modern) buildings I see and the few buildings I go into, to me they have nothing to do with the normal life of the Kerala individual or with the climate or with the materials available and they are a big curse in many ways. For one, they take absolutely no interest in protecting the people who are using them from our climatic conditions - they are bad for rain, they are very bad for the heat and then, in turn, that means introducing all those 'modern' devices like air-conditioning and big glass windows. The one contradicts the other - the big glass window lets in more heat as well as the light it does, but the heat is more. And then, of course, they have to have their curtains and air-conditioners and all the very expensive things, and use a continual amount of public energy, which isn't getting to the ordinary millions of people at all - so to me it's just bad! I don't see anything particularly beautiful about it. Sometimes they are quite interesting as patterns of squares and big holes but they don't convey anything to me in the way that the local architecture does, even the recent local architecture that still uses local materials and deals with local conditions.

You have been known for the incorporation of local craft and tradition in your buildings. Do you feel that modern architecture has anything to do with art and craft? Traditional crafts in the country have almost died - how can architecture be used as a medium to revive them?

Depends on what people mean when they use the word 'craft' - I imagine the dictionary probably explains it as the things that people make. Well, for one thing immediately, in modern architecture, hardly anything is done by local people, except those hired by the contractors and so on. They do not use local materials and they are wasting an enormous amount of the country's energy and therefore money. The economy of the country is very poor at the moment, and all because you have your fans on all the time, you have your lights on all the time, you have your air-conditioners on all the time, you import things like oil from the Gulf countries to burn limestone into cement. To me, for a country that is still struggling to cope with millions of homeless people and with slums and villages that don't have electricity and water, it seems silly to go on from the traditional to the modern, which is almost wholesale imported and not a good thing when it gets here.

As an example, I'm told that in Ernakulam there are a lot of these new modern flats, six to ten storeys high - 'modern' to look at. But I was told that more than half of them had been full but are now empty. For the reasons that I have mentioned already, people get tired of living up at the top and having to walk all the way up and down the stairs because the electricity isn't there, the power isn't there, the water can be a problem, and all that sort of thing. So to me, gradually, we will be taught a lesson and have no option but to learn from what we see.

Whatever individual houses you have done, you've always managed to strike a very personal rapport with your clients. Would you comment on your approach to designing residences?

My clients are very often families, or in the case of schools or hospitals, it's the people in charge or those who have caused it to happen. I prefer to go to the client to see how he performs, he or she, how they live, what they do, what they want, what sort of a family or an organisation it is. And then I want to see the site that they have, why did they have it, do they really think it is worth having or doing, or what a lovely site - don't spoil it, what do you want to do with it and so on.

I think the client comes to me because he has similar feelings and they know that no two buildings I have built have ever been the same and everybody gets the building that they want or hope for. It doesn't always work out. It's mostly getting to know them and asking about their family life and what they'll do when the children grow up and things like that, and very quickly

they either have to throw me out for being too inquisitive or become friends. And many of our friends are people that I have built for 30-50 years ago. One of the most satisfying things from my point of view is that 99.9 per cent of the people I build for remain our friends over these many years.

You have always worked as a one-man army - designing, building, supervising, almost like the earlier traditions of a master builder. In the initial years of your architectural practice you did take on apprentices but later refrained from doing that. Did you feel that your architecture was getting diluted in some way?

There is that, that dilution. One or two people were with me for a time and then went off on their own They did get the ideas or some of the ideas and it is inevitable that one or two or three have made use of the name, which was beginning to get known because of the bigger projects. They have done many of the things that I don't like - putting bits of fancy chajjas (sunshades) or plaster all over the thing and using brickwork only as a decorative feature somewhere, things like that. I feel a bit peeved sometimes, but anyway there are people who want that.

I still think that the main thing that is not taught and is still missing is the personal rapport that must be developed between the client and the architect so that the client will get what he wants. And also there is the other side to it: if you come across a client, I mean one who wants everything that you don't believe in, then you can say that, really, you've come to the wrong person and I don't want to do it

When you see all the old buildings, usually most of this that I am aiming at, as though it's something new, is already there. In the Himalayas where there is very little 'technology' available, they build together as a family. There will be one long building but every now and then there will be a personal touch.

I don't know whether you can say what is the Laurie Baker legacy. As I have already said, there is a revolt against everybody being in an identical flat ten storeys high, for very many reasons. So it is a very good thing that the revolt has come now. The thing is, will the people who build high storeys do anything about it?