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# DISCUSSANT

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# THE DISCUSSANT

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## ANGELS STILL TREAD HERE

*Aligarh has been a major centre of women education for more than a century*

**T**he 18th Century English poet Alexander Pope till date remains one of the most quoted litterateurs. He started with 'Essay on Criticism' and went onto become famous with 'Rape of the Lock' and 'The Dunciad'. One of his most famous lines - "fools rush in where the angels fear to tread" inspired another Englishman EM Forster to name his famous novel as 'Where the Angels Fear to Tread'. The novel was made into a film by yet another Englishman Charles Sturridge in 1991.

Lest the readers think that the purpose of this issue's editorial was to discuss English poetry, novels and film-making, that isn't the slightest idea. I just thought why were the 'fools rushing in' to report on 'nothing which happened' at Aligarh Muslim University. I firmly believe that AMU still is home to many an angel. I did not study at Aligarh, however, had the opportunity to visit the campus several times in course of, what they would say in martial vocabulary, call of duty.

About a decade-and-half back I was used to frequent Aligarh as the education correspondent of my erstwhile paper The Pioneer. The lure of the books stacked in Maulana Azad Library, now made famous by a silly piece of journalism, would keep me back on the campus beyond the call of duty. I would pester the public relation officer of the university to get a room in Old Guest House, and each time that I got an accommodation there I would be reminded that QurratulainHyder, the famous Urdu novelist, was born in that bungalow which was then occupied by her father SajjadHaidarYildrim, a pioneer of Urdu short story writing.

Her mother Nazar Zahra too was a novelist. AineeApa, as Hyder was known, had migrated to Pakistan in 1947 but came back to India in 1960, initially settling down working and writing in Mumbai and then finally shifting to Noida, where she died a few years ago. AineeApa truly represented the Aligarh Mindset. Though the campus was initially votary for formation of Pakistan, it later came to reject the concept as the new nation degraded into a degenerative fundamentalist anarchy.

Unfortunately a larger section of Indian English-reading intelligentsia has not yet been able to exonerate Aligarh of its intellectual complicity in the formation of Pakistan. They continue to look at the campus as centre of conservatism bordering to fundamentalism and issues needing no cognizance are blown out of proportion, as in the recent case of the Vice-Chancellor being flayed for possessing 'anti-women' mindset. God bless the grand matriarch of Indian television and self-professed guardian angel of feminism, little did she and her ilk realise that their opinion on 'space in library' was of little consequence on the campus.

# editorial

To put the record straight, Aligarh has been a major centre of women education for more than a century lest you thought that the campus was run by the Ulemah and Quran the only content of curriculum. The presence of women on the huge campus, which occupies 467 hectares, is pretty prominent. There are three halls on the campus where the women reside - Abdullah Hall, Sarojini Naidu Hall and the recent addition of Indira Gandhi Hall.

While Abdullah Hall is for undergraduates with an on campus college and library, Sarojini Naidu Hall is part of the main campus and all the women residents of SN Hall have access to Maulana Azad library despite the fact that they too have an on campus library. Secondly Azad library is famous for not just the collection of ordinary books but as custodian of several rare manuscripts, which are used by the researchers, both men and women. In fact Abdullah Hall's library for undergraduate women is older than Azad library.

Isn't this a case of flogging the wrong horse? It's a case of missing the woods for the trees. The vice-chancellor was sought to be flogged for making a statement without understanding its context. He was speaking at the installation ceremony of the newly-elected students union of the university, in which the women students too participated with equal enthusiasm. It's to the credit of the vice-chancellor and his team that the elections were conducted peacefully. Instead of getting a pat for a job well-done, he is getting flayed.

UNFORTUNATELY A LARGER SECTION OF INDIAN ENGLISH-READING INTELLIGENTSIA HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO EXONERATE ALIGARH OF ITS INTELLECTUAL COMPLICITY IN THE FORMATION OF PAKISTAN. THEY CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THE CAMPUS AS CENTRE OF CONSERVATISM BORDERING TO FUNDAMENTALISM AND ISSUES NEEDING NO COGNIZANCE ARE BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION, AS IN THE RECENT CASE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR BEING FLAYED FOR POSSESSING 'ANTI-WOMEN' MINDSET.

The reader may end-up asking if this editorial purports to be in the defence of the incumbent vice-chancellor. Let me make it clear I do not know the gentleman and have never had the opportunity of meeting him. However, I know the campus and the university community well. Whenever Aligarh makes an appearance in the headlines it draws my attention and every time I am pained to see a picture which is not the true image of either the campus or the community.

It was time that we from the English print and television media, both the grand editors and sprightly reporters, found time to visit the campus on days when AMU is not in news. It would help us build an opinion about an intellectual movement grounded in academic rigour, scholastic culture and pedagogic debate. For the big-bindi brandishing women activists for feminine rights it would be an education into how the campus has taken scholarship to the womenfolk who are ordinarily identified with the 'hijab' which covers their face.

Aligarh's cultural integration will happen only with the English reading intelligentsia allowing accommodation and accomplishments to the contribution made by the hoary university in spreading education, if not more certainly not less than any other campus in the country.

  
Sidharth Mishra

25 DECEMBER 2014

# secretary's desk

**T**he past quarter has continued to bring happy tidings for the members, office-bearers and contributors of the Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice (CRDJ). While the last issue of the journal received appreciation for a well-spread menu, we are happy to note that our endeavour to bring the research work of academicians from the larger mosaic has started to bear fruit.

We are happy to announce that during this period our very active contributor Dr Sangeet Kumar Ragi got selected as Professor at the Political Science department of Delhi University. Another active member Dr Manoj Sinha was selected as principal of newly-created Arya Bhat College of Delhi University. The Centre congratulates both the scholars on their achievement.

Our president continued with his academic pursuits and we are proud to announce that the National Book Trust in the intervening period between the two editions, published his book on journalism - *Processing News: A Career in Journalism*. The book would be helpful for the students of journalism and mass communication and also young professionals in the field of media.

In this edition, on the suggestion of some of the readers, we have tried to revive the book review section. We are sure this initiative would be well received.

With Warm Regards,

25 DECEMBER 2014

Dr Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari

# KASHMIR: NEHRU'S BABY, NURSED BY PATEL

**DR SANJEEV KUMAR TIWARI\***

*Kashmir was Jawaharlal's baby and to avoid clashes with Nehru over it, Patel adopted a bystander's attitude, but helped whenever the situation demanded it or he was called upon to do so. Patel was provided with limited space, nevertheless, his timely, swift, decisive action saved Kashmir from the perils of imminent danger and ruthless invaders.*

The dawn of independence came with an ordeal of division in India and Pakistan. The unity even of divided India was fraught with perilous prospect. About 565 princely States had been left to decide their own fate -to adhere to India, to accede to Pakistan or to remain independent, as they wished. The danger of unity was further accentuated by the ambition of the princes, different religious and internal composition of these States, and their allegiance to different leaders, their respective political parties and their area of influence. The enormity of the problem of integration of Indian States was such that even Stafford Cripps, the British statesman thought it would take at least ten to fifteen years to liquidate the Indian States and to merge them with the rest of India.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's main mission in life had been to build a strong and united India. He felt that the unity, integrity and development of the country was impossible unless the whole of India came under one centralized administration, Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka's dream had been rekindled in him. The lapse of paramountcy posed a challenge to his ingenuity, resourcefulness and his tact and firmness, as he spared no efforts to weld the States together with the rest of India. He coaxed the rulers, cajoled them and even threatened the reluctant with dire consequences. Sardar Patel warned the princes that they could not exist independently in the wake of the great changes taking place in the country.

\* The writer is author of an ICSSR-sponsored forthcoming book on Sardar Patel

## **SALVAGING KASHMIR**

Sardar Patel had successfully integrated most of the princely states through his power of persuasion but he faced acute difficulty in integrating-Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir. The case of Kashmir was different from other States as it had important international boundaries - to the East was Tibet, to the North-East lay the Sinkiang province of China and to the North-West was Afghanistan.

In Kashmir, the ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh was Hindu and the population was overwhelmingly Muslims, though otherwise, the State represented multi-religious and multi-cultural population. Jammu was Hindu-dominated, Srinagar valley and Gilgit area had a Muslim majority and Ladakh was Buddhist-dominated. Such a situation made it difficult for Maharaja Hari Singh to take a decision as it would evoke strong reactions from the affected regions. Further, Sheikh Abdullah's closeness to Nehru, caused apprehension in Maharaja's mind towards India's future Prime Minister and like other Indian Princes, he began to ponder -"whether to remain independent, or to accede to Pakistan under pressure or go with India, where the top leadership is hostile to him and he was toying with notion of an "Independent Jammu and Kashmir." Patel's role in clearing the atmosphere of distrust and indecision and bringing Maharaja Hari Singh closer to India was of far reaching importance.

Knowing the Pakistan's intention about Kashmir and changing situation, Patel took initiative, and series of steps were taken immediately. Planes were diverted to Delhi-Srinagar route, and wireless and telegraph equipment were dispatched to both ends of the Amritsar-Jammu link. Telephone and telegraph lines were laid between Pathankot and Jammu. Sardar Patel further undertook two strategic steps. First, he ensured termination of Prime Minister Kak's services and appointment of Mehr Chand Mahajan, as the new Prime Minister. The Second was appointment of Lt. Col. Kashmir Singh Katoch, an officer of Indian army as Commander-in-Chief of Kashmir forces. These strategic moves by Patel placed India in an advantageous position.

These developments and changes of crucial position earned Jinnah's wrath, as he saw in them the prospects of Kashmir slipping out of his hand, which he did not want at any cost. Jinnah started preparing for tribal invasion in large number. In the last week of September 1947, Nehru received reports which he passed on to Patel on 27 September that forces in Pakistan were making preparations to enter Kashmir in large number. Nehru had gathered that 'the Pakistan strategy is to infiltrate into Kashmir and to take some big action as soon as Kashmir is more or less isolated because of the coming winter.' The solution, as Nehru saw it was to bring about the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union as rapidly as possible with the co-operation of Sheikh Abdullah.

The Pakistan invasion of Kashmir began on 22 October, 1947. Some 5000 tribesmen from Pakistan entered Kashmir, carrying surplus arms and ammunition in nearly 300 lorries from Abbottabad in the NWFP along the Jhelum Valley Road. The same day they seized and burnt the town of Muzaffarabad. The raiders then marched towards Baramula, their next destination being Uri. Brigadier Rajinder Singh, the Chief of Staff of the State forces, gathered together approximately 150 men and moved towards Uri. He engaged the raiders there for two days and in the rearguard action destroyed the Uri bridge. The Brigadier and all his men were killed but precious time had been gained in delaying their arrival at Baramula.

The Kashmir regime was so ill-organised that it did not inform Delhi of the attack until the evening of 24 October, when the Government of India received a desperate appeal for help from the Maharajah. On the morning of 25 October, a meeting of the Defence Committee was held, which decided to send V.P. Menon immediately to Srinagar to take first hand information.

After collecting all the facts, Menon immediately reported the Kashmir situation to the Defence Committee and pointed out the necessity of saving Kashmir from the raiders. Sheikh and Mahajan, the Prime Minister also strongly urged that Indian troops be immediately sent to Srinagar. But Mountbatten emphasized that since Kashmir had not yet decided to accede to either country, it would be improper to send Indian troops into an independent country. Mountbatten who was presiding the committee meeting put two offers - firstly, Hari Singh's accession should be secured before the troops were dispatched and secondly in view of the composition of the population, accession should be conditional to plebiscite, once law and order had been restored. Patel found neither proposal appealing but even then, yielded to Nehru's advice.

After the committee meeting, Menon went to Jammu. He informed the Indian Government's decision to the Maharaja, who signed the Instrument of Accession that Menon had brought. Maharaja reiterated his request in writing for immediate military help, if the State was to be saved. Menon returned to Delhi in the evening of 26 October (with the instrument of accession and Maharaja's letter) and went straight to Defence Committee meeting. It was decided to fly an infantry battalion to Srinagar the next day. By the early hours of 27 October, over a hundred planes, civilian as well as military had been assembled. Weapons and supplies were airlifted and before the dusk, the first battalion arrived in Srinagar.

When Jinnah heard about the unexpected and prompt airlifting of Indian troops to Srinagar, he flew into a rage. Not prepared to lose the valley, he ordered General Gracey to move troops forthwith into Kashmir. Gracey did not carry out the orders; instead he sought approval of the Delhi based Supreme Commander, General Auchinleck who was in charge of all the British officers that remained on either side. Auchinleck refused to oblige Jinnah. But Jinnah did not give up his plan. He carried out the invasion of Kashmir through the Frontier tribesman.

The Indian battalion headed by Lt. Col. Ranjit Rai secured the airport and advanced towards Barnamulla. In repositioning near Pattan, Rai was killed. But in a couple of days, three more battalions of Indian Army had landed at Srinagar, bringing the number of Indian soldiers to about 2000 for defending the State's capital. The attackers were stopped.

Patel had realized immediately that the battle would be long. The only motorable road link available to India via Sialkot to Jammu and Srinagar had been snapped with Sialkot having gone to Pakistan after partition. There were great difficulties for Indian troops in moving through tough terrain and difficult passes from Jammu. Patel took upon himself the task of building the road link. In the last week of October 1947, after a Cabinet meeting, Minister for Works, N.V. Gadgil, recalled that Patel "took out a map and pointing to the Jammu-Pathankot area, said that 65 mile road between the two towns had to be made capable of carrying the heavy army traffic before July 1948 i.e. within eight months. Within fortnight necessary materials were assembled at worksite, around 10000 workers were brought in special trains from Rajasthan, entire workforce involved in round the clock job numbered over 40,000. The 65 miles were completed on time." Behind the success of the project lay Patel's resolute mind.

Vallabhbhai made his first visit along with Baldev Singh, the Defence Minister on 3rd November and discussed the political and military situation.

Even in the judgement of Sheikh Abdullah, "events took a decisive turn" after Vallabhbhai's Srinagar visit. "The Sardar did not lose even one minute. He studied the situation and said that the enemy must be driven back." It was, thereafter, decided to establish a new divisional headquarters in Kashmir (Jammu and Kashmir Division). Indian forces occupied Baramulla and captured Uri. Later, for more effective military operation, the Jammu and Kashmir force was split into two divisional commands-Srinagar Division and Jammu Division. Important areas such as Leh, Ladakh valley and Poonch were recaptured by the Indian army, but, a cease-fire was ordered by both army command from midnight of 1 January, 1949. Patel did not believe in carrying the Kashmir operations half way through. He would have preferred the Indian Army not to halt at Uri or at Poonch, but to go beyond-possibly upto Muzaffarabad. General S.P.P. Thorat confirms that "our forces might have succeeded in evicting the invaders, if the Prime Minister (Nehru) had not held them in check and later ordered the cease-fire..."

V.T. Krishnamachari in reply to Patel confirmed the thoughts of the public. "It is a blessing that inspite of initial handicaps, the situation in Kashmir has now much improved. Kashmir and all Indian States generally owe a deep gratitude to you and the government of India for the timely assistance which has preserved the integrity of Kashmir."

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEHRU AND PATEL ON KASHMIR**

It is true that over the issue of Jammu and Kashmir both Nehru and Patel had differences of opinion in the method and approach of tackling the problem. Patel had pragmatic and practical approach in dealing with Kashmir and preferred to take timely action whereas it seemed at times that Nehru had emotional attachment for Kashmir -the land of his ancestors and for

Sheikh Abdullah. It also appeared that Nehru hesitated in taking firm steps as he was weighed down by international opinion and personal friendship. Jawaharlal Nehru had taken away the Kashmir charge from Patel and decided to manage Kashmir himself as he thought that Abdullah was the key to Kashmir's future and believed that Patel would mishandle him. Further, Nehru's lack of frankness with Sardar Patel, regarding appointment of N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar as Minister without portfolio to assist him in handling Kashmir had, inter alia, also contributed to their differences over the issue of Kashmir. Jawaharlal's agreement, albeit on Mountbatten's persuasion, to make a broadcast offering an UN-controlled plebiscite in Kashmir was also opposed to Patel's strong view of timely action in Kashmir instead of bringing India's affairs into the vortex of international politics. Patel said, "We should never have gone to the UNO... at the UNO, not only has the dispute been prolonged but the merits of our case have been completely lost in the interaction of power politics."

Kashmir was Jawaharlal's baby and to avoid clashes with Nehru over it, Patel adopted a bystander's attitude, but helped whenever the situation demanded or he was called upon to do so. As far as Kashmir was concerned, Patel was provided with limited space, nevertheless, his timely, swift, decisive action saved Kashmir from the perils of imminent danger and ruthless invaders.

Sardar Patel's mindset about the Kashmir issue can be gauged by the following incident when he was acting as the Prime Minister in Nehru's absence. Patel sent for Air Marshal Thomas Elmhirst, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee with whom he wanted to discuss a point relating to the Kashmir war. Elmhirst writes: "He was not well, and the meeting was in the sitting room of his home, and we were alone. He said something to this effect-'If all the decision rested on me, I think that I would be in favour of extending this little affair in Kashmir to a full-scale war with Pakistan... let us get it over once and for all."

It is apt to mention here the findings of Jagmohan, ex-Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and close observer of Jammu and Kashmir polity, when he writes-"There are many 'ifs' of history. No one can say with certainty what would have happened if a particular 'ifs' had materialized. But hard evidence with regard to integration of 565 States indicates that Sardar Patel's approach would not have allowed the Kashmir problem to arise and even if any problem had arisen, it would have been nipped in the bud."

# PROMOTION OF READING HABIT IN INDIA: ROLE OF NATIONAL BOOK TRUST

DR MA SIKANDAR\*

## INTRODUCTION:

Publishing Industry in India is one of the fastest growing industries and as per the available statistics, India is the third largest in English language publication ranking next to US and UK. India is also the 7th largest publishing industry in the world. India produces over 100,000 books/publications annually. It has about 80,000 registered Newspapers, journals and magazines. The estimated export of Indian books and publications are around US \$ 1 billion. It has more than 19,000 publishers and majority are in private sector. India has 22 official languages as per the Constitution of India and all these 22 recognized Indian languages have their own script.

However the majority of publishing is done in English language, followed by Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi etc.<sup>1</sup> India is truly a multilingual country which has 780 languages spoken with 66 different scripts. About 122 languages<sup>2</sup> are spoken by more than 10,000 people in India out of which 22 are major scheduled languages. For instance the State of Arunachal Pradesh has as many as 90 languages, followed by Assam with 50 languages, Maharashtra with 39 languages, Gujarat with 48 languages and West Bengal with 38 languages.

## LEGAL FRAME WORK OF PUBLISHING

The legal framework of publishing in India is witnessed with multiplicity of authorities and regulations. The registration of books is governed by the 'Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (Amended upto 1983), which is the oldest piece of legislation that exists in India. The Act does not provide compulsory registration of books but to create a catalogue of books at State Government level.<sup>3</sup> This renders no centralized data about books published in India.

The Act is being regulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Indian Copyright

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\* Director, National Book Trust, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt of India

Law, 1957 (amended upto 2012) is being administrated by the Registrar of Copyrights, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. Similarly Export-Import policies are regulated by the Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India.

## **MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN BOOK PROMOTION AND PUBLISHING**

The major stakeholders in Book promotion and publishing in India are

- (i) **Ministry of Human Resource Development** — Responsible for Book Development & Copyright Laws Issue of ISBN Numbers to publishers and authors; National Book Trust, India - Book Publishing and Book Promotion; National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT) - brings out school text books.
- (ii) **Ministry of Culture** — Responsible for managing National Libraries, Public Libraries and policy formulation on Libraries. Recently a National Mission on Libraries has been constituted under the chairmanship of Prof. Deepak Pental, former Vice-Chancellor of University of Delhi.
- (iii) **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** — Responsible for Book Exports through its Book Division of Chemical & Allied Export Promotion Council of India (CAPEXIL).
- (iv) **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** — (a) Regulation of the Press and Books Registration. (b) Publication Division brings out Parliament Debates and Speeches

## **NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION**

The <sup>4</sup>National Policy on Book Promotion and Development is included in the National Policy on Education, 1986 (modified in 1992). The NPE emphasis on (a) availability of books at low-prices for peoples' education (b) To bring improvement in the quality of books (c) Special focus on quality of Children's Literature, text books (d) Promotion of reading habit and encouragement of creative writing (e) Protection of Authors' interests and (f) Support to translation of foreign books into India languages and vice-versa

## **FINDINGS OF NATIONAL YOUTH READERSHIP SURVEY 2009**

NBT as a part of nurturing reading habits and developing conducive environment for publishing conducts Surveys and Studies through National level Research organization from time to time. Considering fact that the India has a very young population, in the past it took an initiative to frame a National Action Plan for the Readership Development among the Youth and entrusted the job of undertaking the first ever National Youth Readership Survey from the perspective of book reading habit to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi.

The <sup>5</sup>Survey was completed in the year 2009. The findings of the study have been published by the NBT 'Indian Youth' Demographics and Readership - Results from the National Youth Readership Survey. The important revelations of the study are:

- The youth population (13-35 years of age group) in India constitutes 38 percent and is around 500 million and is expected to reach around 600 million by 2020.
- 62 percent of the literate youth lives in rural areas and the rest 38 percent lives in urban areas.
- 56 percent are male and remaining 44 percent of literates are female.
- Among the literate youths, only 25 percent constitute readers -- the one that prefers to read beyond their curriculum for knowledge enhancement, pleasure or relaxation.
- About 32 percent readers are in urban areas and 21 percent are in rural.
- Readership is directly linked to the level of education of the literate youth.
- About 42 percent readers show preference for fiction books, 23 percent preferred non-fiction books and 35 percent are

**PROMOTION OF READING HABIT IN INDIA:  
ROLE OF NATIONAL BOOK TRUST**

comfortable with both.

- Non Fiction preference: About 31 percent - religious books, 30 percent biographies/autobiographies, 12 percent current affairs, 9 percent philosophy, 9 percent self-help books and 4 percent liked travel books.
- About 47 percent of the readers gave 'knowledge enhancement' as the first reason for reading leisure books.
- Among youth readers, Hindi is the language of first preference for reading books and English is the second preferred language for reading books.
- About 40 percent of the youth readers have visited the book promotion events at least once. However only and only 15 percent visit book promotion events regularly.
- Three preferred factors for purchase of books by the youths are price (30 percent), subject (29 percent) and Authors profile(26 percent).
- About 75 percent literate youth believes that reading is more important than watching television or surfing internet.
- 40 percent feel that publishing houses have very important role to play in the society, while 28 percent feel the role was somewhat important.

Popularizing leisure reading in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India is a mammoth responsibility of the State and its stakeholders. The national objective of creating a secular, progressive, modern and self reliant society cannot be fulfilled if the minds of our young are not enriched with ideas that contribute to attain our goal.

Ultimately the culture of reading is broadly linked to the socio-culture and political commitment of the nation. While the national literacy mission has led to the historic adoption of the Right to Education as a Fundamental Right, it would be ideal to see matching commitment to instil the reading habits as a natural corollary. The National Youth Readership Survey 2009 has established that the section of the Indian youth which has had the privilege to pursue education at the higher levels is also the same that has acquired the reading habit. This empowers them to make economic, cultural and political intervention in society. Therefore, the role of the National Book Trust becomes crucial at this stage.

### **NATIONAL BOOK TRUST IN PROMOTING READING AND BOOKS IN INDIA**

Books are the expression of the human mind of creativity, wisdom and knowledge. Books have always played an important role in shaping the nation and the society. <sup>6</sup>The National Book Trust of India being the apex body established by the Government of India in the year 1957 shouldering the responsibility of producing good literature and promoting reading habits in India with the objective of creating the culture of reading habit among the masses.

The major activities of NBT includes publishing non-text books, organizing book fairs, book exhibitions, conducting literary events, seminars, children activities, training in publishing, participating in international book fairs to promote Indian literature, providing financial assistance to non-Government organizations, authors or publishers bodies to organize various book promotional activities to encourage promotion of books and reading.

NBT publishes general books which include work of fiction, books on social sciences, medical science and cutting edge technology for all segments of society and for all age groups. NBT also publishes a wide variety of books for children and post-literacy reading materials for neo-literates. Moderately priced, NBT brings out books under 21 different series in English and in all major Indian languages. <sup>7</sup>The NBT in its own way is making a powerful contribution to national integration by publishing books in all Indian languages recognized by the Constitution of India.

The NBT has played a vital role in providing quality books to all target audience including children in the last five decades of its existence particularly the marginalized society. It also participates in various international book fairs to promote Indian books abroad. The NBT perhaps the only publishing body publishes variety of books in more than 30 Indian languages for all segments of society and age groups with an affordable price. It is also engaged in organizing the

New Delhi World Book Fair, National and Regional Book Fair all over the country. The NBT is perhaps the only publishing body which publishes variety of books in more than 30 Indian languages for all segments of society and age groups with an affordable price tag.

The Government of India during the<sup>8</sup>12th Five Year Plan period 2012-17 has mandated the NBT to focus on digital contents.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PUBLISHING IN INDIA**

<sup>9</sup>The origin of modern Printing and publishing in India today can be traced back to 1557 when Jesuit Missionary arrived at India. <sup>10</sup>It is only in the 18th century that books on secular nature started making their appearance in Indian languages prominently in Bengali that too in today's Kolkata during the British Rule. This has changed the then prevailing 'listening' tradition to 'reading' tradition in India.

The development of publishing in India became much more marked with the attainment of the independent India in 1947. With its long history of indigenous publishing, India now has become one of the largest and most efficient publishing countries. Several multi-national publishing companies continued to operate after the independence of India. Government of India allows 100 percent FDI in publishing houses. Today demand for books is increasing in India because of its young population. The challenges are piracy and remainder imported books dumped by European publishers for English readers.

## **INDIAN PUBLISHING INDUSTRY - KEY ISSUES**

The publishing industry in India is registering a very high rate of growth and it is still growing. The unit sale of books in India is considered next to China. Yet the publishing industry has not been recognized as a prominent industry by the Government of India. Of late, a lot of young people are attracted towards book reading. The growing number of literary festival in many cities shows the popularity of reading habits in the country. Today the number of active printing presses in India is more than 130,000 with 1.3 million work force with a growth the of 12 percent per annum. India has emerged as one of the global hub for outsourcing in Publishing and contents. According to an estimate, Indian publishing outsourcing is pegged at \$ 1.2 billion for the year 2012-13. The<sup>11</sup>Neilson Bookscan Report for 2012 on publishing reveals that the book sales in India is growing by 38.2 percent as against (-) 9.3 percent in U.S and (-) 3.4 percent in U.K.

In India there is no compulsory registration of books under law. The publishers are only expected to send books to the designated State authorities under the existing Act whereas in the case of newspaper there is a compulsory registration. Moreover there are no coordinating efforts at Central level to collect data from each State/UT. At present I&B Ministry is responsible to administer the said Act. The role of Ministry of HRD is minimal with regard to the administering the Act. Even obtaining of ISBN code from the Book Promotion & Copy Rights Division of the Ministry of HRD is only optional. Here is a situation where the legislation related to maintenance of records of published book are to be dealt by Information & Broadcasting Ministry, ISBN Numbers are issued and maintained by M/o HRD and sending of published books to National Libraries are dealt by M/o Culture.

Similarly, book promotion is the subject matter of M/o HRD (Department of Higher Education) whereas Libraries are under the M/o Culture. However both the Ministries are running scheme of financial assistance for Book Fairs and literary activities. Because of the size of the country, the complexity of its linguistic scene and the varying level of education among the population, communication become paramount and pose some hindrance. Apart from writing and publishing, translation is another sphere of activity which assumes a crucial role. A need was felt for translation of books in English to Hindi and other Indian languages and vice-versa. Hindi becomes an important link language for cross translation in Indian languages.

## **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

The marketing of books is done in India in a conventional way through chain of book shops, distributors, agents, book fairs, book exhibitions. However recent sale figure of books is increasingly through e-stores. Two major stakeholders are 'Flipkart' and 'Amazon.com' which are changing the way of distribution network in India. These giants are offering an attractive discount for books which are now made available at the door steps of the customers and book lovers.

Several major chains of book shops are shutting down because of huge expenditure on real estate, maintenance cost and persistent demand from the customers for heavy discount. NBT is also taking the advantage of the new distribution network and market created by .com companies to reaching the books at the door steps of customers at an affordable cost. <sup>12A</sup> recently survey reveals that 62 percent opt to online shopping as against 30 percent who still prefer to go out to traditional markets and shops in Delhi.

It is true in some other major cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad etc. In India according to the recent survey, only 9.5 percent population has an access to the computers. Out of which about only 3 percent has internet access. Only one percent of rural population and 8 percent of urban household have computers with internet facilities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The National Book Trust functions under the tight control of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and is totally dependent on the Government funds to outreach its programme on book promotion, publishing and reading. Perhaps it is the only organization engaged in production and sale of books in India and abroad under a Department of Government. Being a Government run organization under the social sector, it has its own limitation in venturing into profit making. It has restricted its role to promoting books and reading. In the process of promoting books, NBT ended up organizing various Book Fairs including the New Delhi World Book Fair with a view to bring the general public closer to the books.

NBT in its endeavour has been bringing out good literature for all age groups at an affordable price for the last five decades. This has brought a true book culture not only in big cities but even small towns and rural areas through its various sustained programme. This has been recognised by various stake holders in India. However there is a further scope for NBT to expand its reach by taking the help of modern techniques and continuous improvement in its quality of books and method of delivery.

Most of the chains of book shops managed by private sector are unwilling to keep NBT publications because of its cheap rates as a very little margin is available to the seller. Now because of advent of new system of distribution network through e-commerce mode, there is a huge opportunity available to NBT to expand its reach of books to public at large.

On the other front, there is also a need to establish a separate Export Promotion Council for Books in India so far to help the Indian publishers to export books under the Ministry of Commerce on the lines of other commodities. There are other issues peculiar to Indian publishing industry where the main stake holders i.e. Publishers Association and Federations are not united. There is also a need to nurture such Institutions so that they are self served and over dependence on Government could be reduced in future.

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# THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

**V. RAMASWAMY\***

(In view of the Prime Minister's **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, here we present a case study of a similar work undertaken in the slums of the eastern metropolis. **Editor**)

*“A very creditable achievement, of which you can be justifiably proud.”*

**T**hus concluded Dr Yusuf Samiullah, Engineering Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK govt, in late-1997. He had just completed an inspection tour of environmental improvement works in slum clusters of Howrah, the historically neglected, and now-blighted industrial city across the river from Calcutta.

This work was done through a community-based pilot project. The objective of the project was to initiate and demonstrate community participation in taking up much-needed local environmental improvement tasks; and to derive lessons on the opportunities and difficulties confronting such efforts, so as to enable appropriate re-structuring of municipal infrastructure projects.

This pilot project was being taken up as the concluding part of the work of the Social Development group within the Calcutta Environmental Management Strategy & Action Plan (CEMSAP), a project of the state govt. of West Bengal, supported by the DFID. The role of the project's social development group had been to study the impact of environmental degradation in metropolitan Calcutta on the poor, low income and vulnerable sections; and to develop strategies and action plans to address their environmental needs and priorities within city environmental improvement programmes.

The group was instrumental in emphasising that lack of access to adequate supplies of drinking water, compounded by highly inadequate sanitation, was the key environmental problem confronting Calcutta. It was pointed out that the impact of

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\* Kolkata-based social worker

this fell disproportionately on the poor and low income sections. And that this was a result of the overall disempowered status of such communities. A Community Environmental Management Strategy & Programme was therefore developed, which called for the re-design of conventional civic infrastructure projects so as to integrate active participation of the affected communities and their grassroots organisations. The pilot project in Howrah slums was an important means towards taking such action to the ground. Three wards under the Howrah Municipal Corporation, with large slum populations, were assigned for conducting the project.

Several months before his inspection visit, Dr Samiullah had attended a meeting with councillors and officials from Howrah, and community representatives, to discuss plans and procedures for taking up the pilot project in slum neighbourhoods. Impressed with the enthusiasm and promised cooperation of the councillors and community representatives, Dr Samiullah gave his approval to the proposed project and increased its budget to Rs 1 million.

Over the next seven months, an intensive process of grassroots action was taken up. Community-level meetings were organised, with poor households, local youth and neighbourhood organisations. Local volunteers were deployed in a range of functions. And ultimately, a number of tubewells (hand-pumps) were installed, a tubewells maintenance squad was organised, broken drains were repaired, and several toilets were constructed. And with the toilets lies a tale.

## **SERVICE LATRINES**

A 'service latrine' is a toilet that has to be manually cleaned, by lowly sweepers. This is an arrangement that was widespread in old towns and cities across India. The image of a person carrying a basket of excreta on his / her head - had been the subject of a call to conscience by Mahatma Gandhi. But it was only in 1993 that the govt. of India finally enacted a law banning such 'manual scavenging'.

In 1993, the welfare ministry (which was responsible for enacting and implementing the Act) undertook a survey of the extent to which the law had been implemented in all the states of India. It was found that even the Chief Secretaries of many major states in the country were unaware of the existence of such a law.

The govt. also introduced a programme to be implemented through the urban local bodies to subsidize the conversion of these service latrines into sanitary toilets. This had been implemented for several years in Howrah. However, there were severe shortcomings in implementation. Service latrines continued to be in use on a massive scale in Howrah, with all the attendant adverse environmental health risks to the community and the conservancy workers (apart from the violation of the latter's human dignity).

The problem was that in many cases, there were a large number of people using the service latrine. In the slums of Howrah, a plot would typically house 15-20 households, and over 100 persons would be using the latrine, typically a hole in the floor of a small raised cubicle-shed. The govt. subsidy scheme was, however, designed keeping a single (5-7 member) household in view. Septic tanks either did not exist, or were non-functional. The slum plots were congested with the hutments, leaving no spare space. Hence service latrines simply continued to be used.

In some of the worst areas, the service latrines made the neighbourhood extremely foul and dangerous. These were the areas where the incidence of water-borne and gastro-intestinal diseases was high, with high infant mortality and morbidity.

Not surprisingly, it was emphasised by the slum communities and the councillors that proper toilets were the most vital need of the people.

## **BUILDING COOPERATION, BUILDING TOILETS**

To carry out the pilot project, a team was constituted under my charge. In my capacity as social development coordinator of the CEMSAP project. A field office was set up. Prodyut, a political activist and social worker from the project area, with strong local roots and contacts, was employed to supervise field activity. Two social development

professionals were recruited to handle the documentation and administrative aspects. And a couple of students were assigned field liaison tasks.

As coordinator of the pilot project, I was a possessed soul. After a tour through some of the slum localities, where one had to literally walk over a slush of excreta - I felt a flush of awakening. I felt my moment had arrived. While anybody would run far away from and shun such places - except if they had to live there - I decided to remain there, and address this problem of service latrines, come what may. I felt thrilled by the challenge. The apparent insolubility of the problem, its neglect, the foul environment, the revulsion of officials and authorities to engage with this, the unending rebuttals of habitual prejudice and conflict-oriented perceptions - one of my senior project colleagues had opined "Decent people don't go to Howrah" - all this only strengthened my resolve. I became completely alienated from the society and city I had been part of. Everything took on a mystic and mythic aura in my consciousness. The poor slumdweller living amidst excreta became my 'Daridra Narayan', God in the garb of the poor. I had found my God, in the shit. I had found the meaning and purpose of my life. And nothing was going to stop me. And Prodyut was there beside me, to help me in my work.

Problems, options and priorities were discussed with communities, their elected municipal representatives and Corporation officials. Assumptions and habitual perceptions - based on the existing corrupt and insincere institutional culture - were directed at me as coordinator. But I discerned and cut through all this, with my resolve, commitment and energy. The work was too serious to be left hostage to anybody. The project team was reorganized, and local community volunteers were taken on against a stipend.

The technical solution, under the circumstances, was a twin-pit latrine. This meant knocking down the existing toilet structure, cleaning up the spot, constructing two large, deep brick pits and erecting a multi-seat toilet shed block over the pits. The excreta would flow to one pit; the honey-combed brickwork would enable the liquid matter to be absorbed in the soil. After a year's use by the dwellers, the first pit would become full. The excreta would then flow to the second pit, while the first pit would remain unused, awaiting organic decomposition of the excreta. After another year, the matter in the first pit would become inert soil, which would be removed and the pit's re-use begun. The soil would be removed by the dwellers and used or sold as compost. And the second pit would then remain disused for a year; and so on. As the plot was very congested, space had to be created to accommodate the two large pits (needed because of the large number of users). Some huts would have to be shifted.

But it was found that it was clean toilets that the people wanted more than anything else. When it became clear to them that the project team did really intend to construct proper toilets - and had no other agenda besides this - they were prepared to do all they could to get this.

Meetings were held with all the households in each slum plot. Cost estimates were prepared for the proposed sanitary toilets. Households committed voluntary labour for the work and its monitoring. The landlord was asked to contribute Rs 5,000 towards the total cost of each unit. A memorandum of understanding was drawn up and signed by the landlord and head of each household, and counter-signed by the local ward councillor. Local contractors were selected through public tender to carry out the work.

The pilot project budget covered the entire cost of constructing the toilets. But the govt. subsidy, of Rs 5,000 per unit, was to be retained by the project team; and this amount together with the landlords' contributions was to be used to construct more toilets.

Over a period of less than 3 months, 10 toilet blocks were constructed, spread over slum pockets of two municipal wards of Howrah. The maximum cost of a unit - under the eagle eyes of the project staff and slum households - was about Rs 22,000.

The lives of hundreds of people had been positively transformed. And very foul spots, in the midst of the metropolis, were rehabilitated. These toilets are all still in existence, in good condition, kept clean by the proud slum households.

## **HOWRAH PILOT PROJECT**

But the story does not end there.

I had been commissioned to undertake research and write an article for a UK journal. As the subject of the article, I decided to focus on the existing degraded situation in a large Muslim slum within the pilot project area, and outline a vision for community-led redevelopment. I saw this as a good opportunity to root myself in a specific place, and devote myself to actually initiating long-term community action, instead of merely thinking about such matters, or researching or writing about it. I worked on this simultaneously with the pilot project, employing slum youth to assist in field surveys and to lay the ground for a long-term intervention.

The pilot project was over and the field office was wound up. All the engineering works were completed on time, using every penny of the allocated budget to do as much as possible.

Inspired and spurred on by the success of the project and the bonds of cooperation built up with the slum communities, Prodyut and I formed an independent organisation, Howrah Pilot Project (HPP). This would be based in Priya Manna Basti in Howrah, a century-old jute workers' settlement, that was now home to some 40,000 people, mainly from labouring, Urdu-speaking, Muslim households. From here we would work with the slum-dwellers, as concerned and capable citizens, to rebuild the city from the grassroots. HPP would be an organisation whose existence and work was sustained by civic and community consciousness and ownership.

The fee I received for my article provided the start-up fund for the newly-formed HPP to take up its work. I was also awarded a year's fellowship which enabled me to devote time to the HPP.

## **ELIMINATING SERVICE LATRINES**

This was August 1997, and the 50th anniversary of India's independence. I felt that the best way to commemorate the occasion and to pay homage to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, was to work to eliminate service latrines from the slums of Howrah. We had after all found and demonstrated the solution to this apparently insoluble problem. I felt like a scientist who has made an earth-shattering new discovery, expanding the frontiers of knowledge and transforming human life.

Through my close association and collaboration with specialists from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, who had also been part of the CEMSAP project, I was asked to join an international research study on environmental health and the urban poor, looking at Howrah slums. The research budget for this was provided to HPP and with this a full-fledged community empowerment programme, focussing on poor women and children, was initiated in PM Basti. The objective - to nurture and build grassroots capabilities and institutions to lead community upliftment and slum redevelopment.

A service latrine elimination programme was also developed by Howrah Pilot Project. Surveys were conducted in slum pockets. Plot-level meetings with households were organized. It was explained that though the pilot project was over, with the successful demonstration of the conversion of service latrines into sanitary toilets, it was now necessary to enable other similar slum households to also avail of this opportunity. The cost factor was explained. With the necessary cost likely to be about Rs 22-25,000 (in the maximum users case), and Rs 5,000 coming from the govt. subsidy and another Rs 5,000 from the landlord, the remaining Rs 12-15,000 would have to be contributed by the user households. It was suggested that this could be through a credit-financing arrangement with a housing finance company. Each household would begin paying something like Rs 50 per month immediately after the toilet was constructed, and repay for about 15 months.

After substantial effort, a leading housing finance company agreed to support this scheme. The loans would be in the name of Howrah Pilot Project, who would take responsibility for the whole venture. Through the CEMSAP project,

I had become acquainted with some of the senior officials of the metropolitan development authority. Hence approval of the metropolitan development authority - who would sanction the release of the govt subsidy - was also obtained. They agreed to make available the subsidy for ten toilet units at a time, in advance, provided the programme was approved by the Howrah Municipal Corporation.

The scheme was detailed and submitted to the Howrah Municipal Corporation. One ward was to be taken up for complete elimination of service latrines in slums. And that would enable an appropriate city-wide scaling-up subsequently. HPP would take up, using its own resources, the crucial community organizing role. A request was made to the Corporation for early release to HPP of the subsidy due for the 10 units constructed under the CEMSAP pilot project (as earlier authorized and agreed to), so that the work could be started.

### **A SAGA OF INACTION**

Nothing happened.

Despite repeated efforts, over many months, and letters and meetings with officials - the service latrine elimination programme was a non-starter.

Much later, it became clear that this had been sabotaged by people within the Corporation. There was a happy and neat arrangement between officials and contractors, to appropriate the subsidy. A bogus toilet would be built - which would be non-functional immediately after. The subsidy was then approved, released and pocketed.

The subsidy for the 10 toilets constructed under the CEMSAP pilot project - remains unpaid. For several years HPP retained the landlords' contributions, awaiting the Corporation's approval and payment. Finally this was spent on its other community activities.

After about a year's inaction, another attempt was launched. A proposal was submitted to the state environment department, in response to its public advertisement inviting proposals from NGOs for environmental projects. Based on the self-financing scheme developed earlier by HPP, this proposal requested modest support to HPP to organize the beneficiary communities, and more importantly, sought the environment department's influence upon Howrah Corporation to initiate the programme.

Nothing came of that either. Notwithstanding Dr Yusuf Samiullah's congratulatory feedback, with which this account began. Perhaps it had all been too easy then, happening merely because that was a govt. project and municipal involvement had been formally arranged.

Yet another effort was made a year later, with letters being sent to the 40-odd local bodies within metropolitan Calcutta, offering assistance in taking up service latrine elimination in their respective areas. There was no response, except from a small municipality. When we went there for a discussion, we were ultimately told: we are already doing all that's necessary, there's no poverty here, try elsewhere.

The story doesn't end there either. Much water has flowed under the Howrah bridge since then. In early 2000, after severe flooding in slum neighbourhoods because of the choking of a major high drain in south-central Howrah, HPP initiated a community-led programme to clean and maintain the high drain. Detailed surveys were undertaken, with invited professional specialists assisted by local people. The in-principle approval was obtained from officials in the govt. of India, as well as a UN agency, to support such a programme. However, the formal proposal for this support would have to be made by Howrah Corporation.

That too never happened. The high drain remained choked. When the situation became critical, some patchwork cleaning was done by the Corporation. A sanitary engineer invited by us who inspected the choked high drain told me: In any civilized society, if this kind of thing happens, it is sufficient basis for an arrest warrant to be issued against the mayor for criminal negligence leading to avoidable deaths and suffering. But here, such things are "normal".

## CONCLUSION

These are only a few examples from Howrah Pilot Project's experience of the long, unending experience of denial and disregard from institutions that poor slumdweller face.

But the work of HPP through its centre in Priya Manna Basti continues. Talimi Haq School, a creative learning centre for poor and working children, was started in 1998 and this continues. In 1999, it received a special award as a 'school that cares' under the aegis of a city newspaper. In 2003 and again in 2004, children from Talimi Haq School participated in an internet communication project on nature with children from schools in the UK .

A few slum youth, boys and girls, Hindu and Muslim, who I mentored, have gone through an intensive process of skill and leadership development, and grown and matured as human beings. They run Talimi Haq School today, and are role models for the children. Over a thousand poor children, mostly first generation learners, have been brought within the fold of education through the school. A number of volunteers from Calcutta have worked for varying periods and had a rich, transformative experience of self-development. A lot of goodwill has been created. The work has inspired similar grassroots efforts in other slum localities of Calcutta and Howrah. The whole programme is managed by trained community-based volunteers and its modest fund requirement are met through donations by the founders and other well-wishers.

The endeavour continues. The whole experience has been rich in learning for those involved. HPP is a live laboratory, to yield strategic, experience-based action knowledge on poverty and slum community development.

The CEMSAP pilot project had changed my - yet I had been reluctant to take it up, because after my unsuccessful experience of trying to work with others for social ends, I had implicitly slipped into a loner mode. Thus though I was constantly concerned about social questions, I didn't actually have any truck with anyone, except inside my heart. In the planning phase of the CEMSAP project, I was working closely with other colleagues, but this was like a partnership, and the work was of an intellectual nature. But now, in the absence of anyone else being available to work on the ground, I had to take up leadership and management of a concrete set of activities at the grassroots, and reach out to and relate in differing ways with diverse people. The crossing of the river, and going to Howrah - transformed my life, something I could never have even imagined just before that. Yet this was only something residing deep within me, the plaintive plea of my soul following the communal riots in the country in 1992-93, that the Almighty entrust a poor Muslim child to me, to love and nurture.

I made a commitment to devoting myself through HPP to Priya ManA Basti, come what may. Our early achievements through the pilot project looked on hindsight to have been deceptively easy. All the struggles during that short venture could not compare with the unending ordeal of institutional disregard that the HPP experience had been an apprenticeship and a harsh trial in. Working in a poor, degraded slum in Howrah, controlled by criminalized political cadre - patience, adaptation, and swallowing of pain is taught continuously.

An honest, selfless, idealistic, sincere social interventionist - is an aberration and a caricature in such an area of darkness. Poverty, conflict, social and environmental injustice - all degrade the human fibre, revealing man's ugliest face. But amidst poverty can also be found simplicity, trust, beautiful dreams and aspirations, and goodness, a fertile soil to plant and nurture a small sapling of conviction and responsibility. HPP is a small, quiet, cheerful island and beacon of hope in Priya ManA Basti.

## POSTSCRIPT

The right to defecate is perhaps the most basic human right. In an urban setting this requires toilets. And human dignity calls for a hygienic, sanitary toilet. As a woman explained, if one had no food to eat one could go out and beg for some food; but could one beg for a toilet? Not having a decent toilet - made life a never-ending nightmare. Most of all for women. But evidently this is not at all a concern for many. They can carry on, regardless. While human dignity is abused, and little children die.

# **MAKE OR BREAK: ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING SOCIAL AWARENESS**

**SAVITA MEHTA\***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Anything created on the web these days tends to become social. There is no escaping the intensely social nature of the Internet as a whole. The instant news and social media alerts on smartphones have thrown constraints of time and space into background. Thus the omnipresence of this media has galvanized its relevance and critical importance in today's world. With the influx of IT and smartphones in remote areas social media is no more an urban phenomenon, which Internet remained in the initial decades of its emergence. The omnipresent reach of social media overriding the technological constraints has brought in its wake a new era of social awareness, technology adoption and incredibly fast communication. Informal, open communication is often at the heart of these communication where we trust even complete strangers. Gone are the days of college canteens and city coffee houses as popular hangouts, the most sought after hangout, particularly among youngsters and even among not-so-young. It is the increasing quest for keeping update and reliance upon such updates that works in social media. Surprising it is taking place of time tested face to face communication with almost similar impact. On the supply side, organizations, institutions, businesses as well as social, cultural and even political entities are vying with each other to make best of their outreach efforts through social media.

## **WHAT STATISTICS SPEAK**

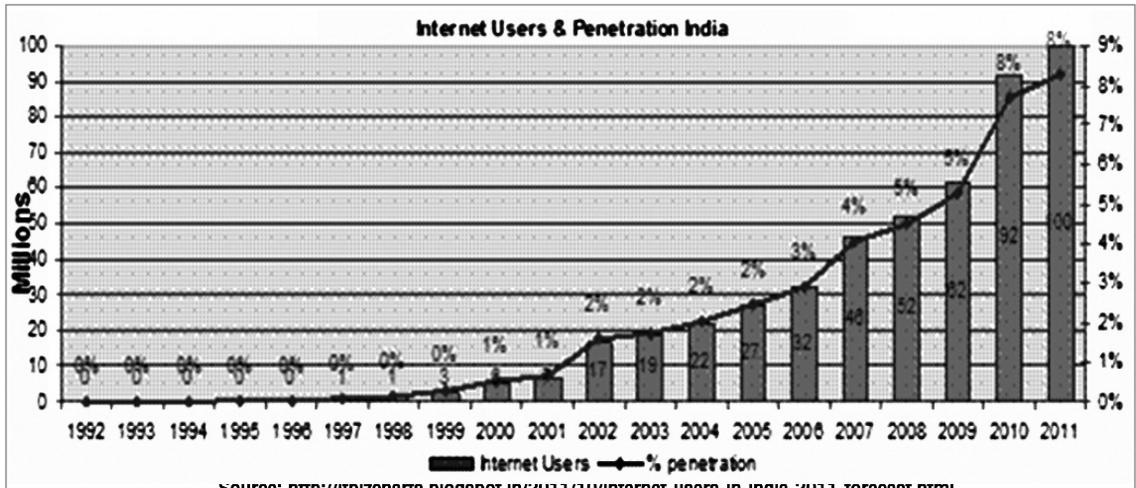
In the last two decades, internet has established itself as a tool that has not only changed the way people communicate, but also the way business is conducted. The internet has evolved as a true global communication medium where primary source of information is made available to billions of people. In the past five years, the number of internet

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**MAKE OR BREAK: ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA  
IN CREATING SOCIAL AWARENESS**

users has doubled worldwide and, for more than two billion people, it is an integral part of their lifestyle.



As is clearly evident from the above graph, there has been more than 10 per cent penetration of Internet users in India in the last 20 years from 1992-to 2011. Over the years, social networking among college students has become more and more popular. It is a way to make connections, not only on campus, but with friends outside of school/college. Social networking is a way that helps many people feel as though they belong to a community. Online Social networking is a type of virtual communication that allows people to connect with each other. It has infact changed the way we interact with each other, the way we receive our daily news, and the way we accept and react to some of facts and information.

- There are 243 Million internet users in India.
- Total users may increase to 500 Million by 2018
- India will become larger than the US in terms of number of Internet users by the end of 2014 - Rajan Anandan, MD, Google India

With over 500 million active users, it is easy to see that most people use social media to stay connected with others, share photos with their friends, and create their own digital story. It is no more a light hearted mode of interaction. Competing with the same aplomb is blogging and micro-blogging particularly hashtag communications, comments and reviews over the Twitter.

**Facebook Inc. shares follows information on its website:**

- 864 million daily active users on average for September 2014
- 703 million mobile daily active users on average for September 2014
- 1.35 billion monthly active users as of September 30, 2014
- 1.12 billion mobile monthly active users as of September 30, 2014
- Approximately 82.2% of our daily active users are outside the US and Canada

### **Official figures on Twitter Usage say**

- 284 million monthly active users
- 500 million Tweets are sent per day
- 80% of Twitter active users are on mobile
- 77% of accounts are outside the U.S.
- Twitter supports 35+ languages
- Vine: More than 40 million users

What follows below covers all the latest Social Media facts, figures, numbers and statistics of 2014. Some of the facts<sup>1</sup> are really startling:

- 75% of the engagement on a Facebook post happens in the first 5 hours.
- 53% of interaction between Google+ user and a brand is positive.
- 44% of users on Twitter have never sent a tweet!
- 84% of women and 50% of men stay active on Pinterest.
- More than 2 users sign-up for LinkedIn every second.
- 23% of teens consider Instagram as their favourite social network.
- Weekends are the most popular time to share Vines.
- Number of snaps sent per day on SnapChat is 400 Million.
- 40% of YouTube traffic comes from mobile

### **SOCIAL MEDIA- A DOUBLE EDGED SWORD: EVENTS UNFOLDED**

In the month of April 2014, as the day progressed in the office of the Media Head of the Symphony University, a phone call from the officials created an environment of gloom and tension in the Department. Ms. Mary Choga - a Student from the minority community studying in Symphony University had committed suicide inside her hostel room at around 1:00 pm.

The University officials, being shocked and taken aback, didn't know how to react initially. Frantic calls were being made to the Management for direction. In the meantime, the parents of Ms. Choga, who were in North East were informed of the tragic incident. Immediately the file of Ms. Choga was opened up and checked, it was found, that the deceased happened to come from an affluent political family and soon the Government machinery came into action. Print, Electronic and Social Media went berserk covering the suicide news of the student. The Communications Department of the University instantly sprung into action on the basis of whatever information they could take out from officials, fellow students and Journalists reporting the incident.

The local State Police was on its toes being constantly pressurized by the Government. After completing the formalities, the local Police took the body for Post Mortem and the hostel room was sealed with all evidences taken in Police custody. Since the mobile was taken away by Police, it was difficult to find out the reasons that could have triggered the suicide.

During internal enquiry, it was found out that the student had come late for the examination and hardly wrote anything in the answer sheet. She was caught using unfair means in examination by accessing Internet on her phone during her examination. As per the rules and regulations of the University, her answer sheet was taken away and she was asked to

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1. <http://blog.digitalinsights.in/social-media-users-2014-stats-numbers/05205287.html> (Accessed on 3 November 2014)

report to Examination Committee and present her case. She was advised to reappear in that particular subject exam in next semester, however she was allowed to appear in all other exams for the semester, as is done in all such cases. Further on checking her Facebook account, it was found that she had posted certain messages during her examination and was already disturbed since she had not slept properly a night before, as told by her hostel room mate.

April being the Examination time in University, the news spread like a wild fire and anguished students started gathering, shouting slogans and thus, disrupting the normal functioning of the University. The unrest and sporadic protests by students continued in the University. Within two days, what seemed to be a normal suicide case, changed into a discrimination case against the Minority Community by the Politicians and Media. A special Facebook Page was created "Justice for Mary Choga" in which students belonging to her community and other parts of the country kept posting messages showing solidarity and seeking justice for the departed soul. The Facebook page was administered by the family and friends of the deceased student, who appealed people to join the Justice movement. Within 5 days, 4463 likes were registered and information based on fueled perceptions was disseminated through Facebook Page. Many people influenced by this social media activism joined the movement. Candlelight Marches, Protests against the University authorities, raising slogans and blame game became viral on social media, projecting the incident as Discrimination case against Minority Community.

A similar incident happened just a few days back in the University. Three African Nationals studying in three different Universities were beaten up by a mob at the Metro Station while they were travelling by train. As per the students, they were sitting quietly in the train when few Indian boys started taking pictures of them through their camera phones. When the foreign students enquired and objected to taking pictures without permission Indian Boys started abusing, calling names and as the train stopped at the station, the foreign students stepped out from the train but the Indian boys fabricated a story of the students as of teasing a girl and started to beat them. This led to an agitation in the crowd that turned into a Mob thrashing the students badly.

Sensing danger, these foreign students rushed towards the Police Booth for help but no policemen were present inside. The students locked themselves inside the booth but the mob broke glasses and hit the students with fiber sticks, glass pieces, chairs, plastic bottles and any material they could lay their hands on. The entire incident lasted barely five minutes but there was another group of people who recorded the entire incident on their mobiles.

The incident was uploaded instantly on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook by the people who had recorded it. The story was picked up by Media highlighting the behavior and insensitivity of Indians towards Africans and twisting it to be an incident of Racial Discrimination and bias against dark skin. The media started to approach the University's Media Head regarding the views on racial discrimination and allegedly, foreign students involvement in eve teasing.

Media picked up the comments posted by people from all over the country and started with panel discussions, shows and continuous news reporting, which further added towards projecting the incident as that of discrimination..

Again the media head of the University deliberated upon the incident and called for an internal meeting of media experts to find solution to the situation and take measures to control the news.

## **UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE**

As per the sensitivity of the case, in the first case the University officials initially deliberated upon the idea of contacting the cyber cell authorities to block the page, but decided against it since there were too much of aggressiveness and resentment in people's voice against the University. Blocking the page would have further aggravated the situation.

The University then decided to conduct a press conference where the facts of the incident were shared with the media - Print, Electronic and Online, including a press release which was duly carried by all sections of media including all online

portals, which stated the disciplinary action taken against the student caught using unfair means during examination, as in the case of any other student. Student community, academic fraternity and other stake holders became aware of the exact situation and supported the University by posting and sharing actual facts of situation on their own Facebook pages as well as on the page "Justice for Mary".

In the second incident, since the matter was being investigated and handled by the Police and the respective Embassy to safeguard the interest of Foreign Students, University did not have much role to play. However, a Facebook Page "Humans for Symphony" was created by a student of same University where the interview and views of the student victim were posted which talked about the reality of the incident. Over 3 lakh users liked the page and shared their views on "to seek permission before taking pictures of unknown" and "that Indians should be more cross culturally aware of fellow beings" rather than reacting aggressively to any situation. Also, the University officials called an internal meeting to sensitize all foreign Nationals studying in the Campus and assured them of safety within the Campus. They shared the details of grievances redressal procedures to be followed by foreign students, appraised them to contact the Embassy in such incidences and refrain from talking to the Media

Eventually, such reactions were also picked up by media and raised concerns over the mob mentality. Usage of social media wisely can build the image of any organization and bring people together but if not used judiciously can damage the image of the organization at a very fast speed.

## **METHOD**

For the present, case data has been collected using qualitative methods, in particular **ethnography\***, with structured personal interviews and discussions with students, authorities, administrators and parents of students as well as some informed and socially active citizens. For the sake of confidentiality names, designations and specific identifications are being held back to maintain anonymity.

## **ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

- What role did Social Media play in spreading the news of various incidents?
- Based on your understanding of the Case, do you think the University handled the situation properly?
- Do you agree that Social Media can be a double edged sword?

## **TEACHING PURPOSE**

The purpose of the case is to highlight the role of Social Media in creating awareness. This case poses a dilemma: can any organization or institution afford to ignore the need for developing a meaningful social presence? The first and foremost purpose it can serve is to put the facts, figures and information on an authentic platform for the routine and situational information. It also could mean a multitude of other things, for instance, to build a presence on social media. People will come to these sites during an event and expect timely content.

Crisis need not strike an organization purely as a result of its own negligence. Often, a situation is created which cannot be blamed on the organization - but the organization realizes that a Crisis can any time snowball into a Disaster if it is slow in responding.

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*\*Ethnography is a qualitative design, which in general and in particular, refers to a systematic study of people and cultures where the researcher explains about shared learnt patterns of values, behaviour, beliefs and language . Ethnography involves analysis of very few cases, maybe just one case, in detail and often involves working with primarily unconstructed data.*

## **MAKE OR BREAK: ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING SOCIAL AWARENESS**

Today's communication scenario is completely changed. Now one doesn't have to get on a stage with a mike in one hand and have audience in attendance to air your views. One can be heard with the click of a button now. With such an exponential spread of news, faster than the lightning, it becomes important for any organization or university to react and choose the platforms of communication which are most effective, trust worthy with faster reachability.

### **TEACHING OBJECTIVES**

The case has been developed with the following objectives in mind

- To analyse the impact of Social Media in creating social awareness
- To highlight the dangers of using Social Media irresponsibly

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION**

This case study can be used as a teaching tool to the Business Management students with special interest in IT, Media and Communication areas. A facilitator can initiate the discussion by asking students about their frequency of usage of Social Media, their opinion about the incidents mentioned in the case and if they have faced similar situations.

### **ANALYSIS**

By and large, Social media is a fantastic and quick tool to introduce change and raise issues. However, it should not be used for individual gain. Therefore one has to be careful in what is being posted on social media by an individual or a group, specially when it involves an organization.

Social Media also plays an important role in stamping rumors as people can rectify information quickly. Social Media also has the risk of becoming a platform for people to vent out their feelings, emotions, sometimes anger in the form of venom, irrespective of, whether they are aware of the correct picture of the situation or not. Social Media is a tool that can be used and abused, and we need to be aware of that.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

1. It seems that Social media has now become "the voice for the voiceless". Therefore the impact and effectiveness of social media as a promotion and communication tool cannot be overlooked
2. But, the fact remains that social media is also used to spread negative sentiments and opinions that can threaten the existence of many individuals and organizations. This case study thus addresses the negative impact of social media activism
3. As on today, there is no policy governing the conduct of individuals on social media as compared to the print media and calls for a policy reform and change not only at the institutional level but also at individual level.
4. Case study also advocates that Social Media should be used very sensibly.

# ART OF ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: AN OUTLINE STUDY

POORNIMA TRIPATHI\*

Once upon a time humans and nature lived in harmony. Now however, the very last rainforest is in danger of being cut down. It takes a lot of effort from Crysta the fairy, her forest friends, and a little bit of magic to stop the destruction. Even Zac, a boy who worked for the logging company, realizes the importance of trees in the web of life and says at the end of the movie, “Guys, things have got to change.”<sup>1</sup>

This film does a fairly good job of teaching the audience about the circle of life and the dangers of pollution and deforestation. The machine which cuts down tree is portrayed as a dark scary monster and destroys everything in its path, while the untouched rainforest is magical and full of life. On the other hand, most of what I remembered from watching the movie as a kid was the tree spirits and the rapping bat. It was an important lesson to learn, and that I remember it proves that.

So when you ask what do art, science, and the environment have to do with one another, I am glad that you asked.

The answer to it consists in a series of questions. While the art of environment and climate change communication is clearly an essential piece of the riddle, might there not be an ‘art’ to it too? What are the things that make you laugh, inspire you, or fill your conversations with fun? For most of us, the answer will involve culture, not cognition.

## INTRODUCTION

The communication of environment stories started in 1970s, when newspapers, news magazines, and television stations worldwide carried the Three Mile Island (Pennsylvania) nuclear plant accident as a week-long front-page story. (Three Mile Island may have been the first environmental news story to attract global attention and it probably played a role in sparking environmental consciousness as far away as Africa.) Why was this story of such interest around the world? Three Mile Island was an impending disaster story. Something bad had already happened and something much, much worse might happen. The

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drama lasted for days and the media kept the story on the front page until it was clear that the danger was over.

The Three Mile Island and Love Canal stories in the 1970s and the Bhopal and Chernobyl stories in the 1980s seemed to set off environmental news cycles. Earlier, it was Santa Barbara oil spill and the Cuyahoga River fire in the 1960s which was covered extensively. At the time, the television networks ran with the big environmental stories and local media followed with local angles.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of climate change communication.

However, over the past decade, interest in the 'science' of communicating climate change has flourished. Psychologists, social activists and campaigners all alike have been united in the quest for systematic, reliable evidence to communicate climate change to influence people and promote their sustainable behaviour.

However, for individuals and organisations communicating climate change, it is easy to forget that most people don't live their lives in a series of dislocated behaviours that can be nudged in the sustainable direction in a friendlier manner. They tend to overlook that playful provocations stick to minds rather than ubiquitous profound scientific explorations.

It follows that mobilising our cultural and creative resources might be as important for public engagement with climate change as technological or political changes. Art provides a vehicle for bringing dry political sentiment to life is certainly not a new observation. However, climate change theatre and films are thin on the ground. The situation is hardly any different in the world of literature and storytelling. It does not seem to have fired the imagination of authors.

However, in the recent past while the potential to make abstract concept of climate change tangible has so far evaded novelists and culturalists, climate change communication projects are exploring the territory now. Awareness of climate change and other environmental concerns has increased in the last few decades, thanks to documentaries like "An Inconvenient Truth".

## **PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION**

How people perceive the role and responsibilities of others in determining the challenges of climate change is of great importance for policy making, adaptation and mitigation practices which is critical in present circumstances. Still, for many people, climate change is a remote problem and not their personal concern. In fact, climate change is an abstract issue with long time commitment and global horizon. This makes it more difficult to relate with.

On international level, the talks on Arctic ice or discourses on Polar Bear have become a powerful discursive symbol in the fight against climate change. However, these symbols have created a perception of climate change impacts as geographically distant, whereas the climate change needs to be framed as an issue 'closer to home'. Lack of political commitment to change the situation makes it further confusing.

There is a solution. This 'uncertain' 'indefinite' and 'remote' problem can be effectively dealt with meaningful depiction of the dilemma through art, cinema and social media. Meaningful visualization and depiction of climate change stories could bridge the gap between what is perceived as an abstract idea into an everyday experience.

Typically, the challenge of climate change communication is thought to require systematic evidence about public attitudes, sophisticated models of behaviour change and the rigorous application of social scientific research. All of this is true, but it is human story, not carbon targets, that capture people's attention.

## **HISTORY OF MASS MEDIA COVERAGE**

Mass-media campaigns are among the policy tools most commonly used to attempt to influence public opinion of particular issues. Even though, the influence of the mass media on public opinion has been shown to be quite short-lived because media coverage jumps from issue to issue, often from day to day, and over the longer term, media attention of particular issues has been shown to vary considerably, often in predictable cycles.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, many public opinion surveys in countries like India have shown that television and daily newspapers are continuously being used as primary sources of information.

## TOOLS FOR CHANGE

### Image revolution

We are undergoing a 'visualization of image' revolution. Proliferation of visual media and easy access of computer simulated stories have made a definite impact on our mind. This can be very well leveraged for generating people's interest for environment stories. Other advantages of imagery include its capacity to convey strong message and its critical storage making them easy to remember, condense complex information and communicate new thoughts.

Given that a great deal of our understanding of the environment - its habitats and peoples - is derived from new and traditional media, it is imperative that any notion of sustainability literacy is connected with ongoing work on media literacy. Individuals, governments and virtually every organization have websites, and the growth of user generated content, social networking, online games, online distance learning and 3-D virtual worlds suggests our relationship with the physical world is increasingly mediated. It passes for the natural environment also. Numerous sustainability scenarios are envisaged and communicated by governments, corporations, think tanks and NGOs which offer a powerful visual and aural persuasiveness. In this context, sustainability literacy requires sensitivity to virtual realism, to media ecology, and to those ongoing processes through which we shape and are shaped by increasingly ever-present technologies.<sup>4</sup>

Initiating a programme in this field is a challenge, as it opens a broad spectrum of discussions on complex issues which need to be communicated to a wide range of stakeholders, including the cultural sector. Reducing the complexity of environment communication into short and simple messages, and most importantly, in a language politicians can fathom and apply, proved to be especially difficult for artists, cultural practitioners and media. However, it is not a magical formula of recommendations and waiting for governments to do things, but a combination, with a series of big and small actions which can make big changes. But we all know that the impact of these initiatives is slow and that awareness building on climate change and sustainability is a matter of continuous practice. The challenge is to get artists and cultural practitioners to use bigger cross-sectoral platforms to make their voice heard through the language of art.<sup>5</sup>

## ENVIRONMENT ART

For the past five years there has been a tremendous increase in stories with "green" themes be it with art, media, government agencies or by NGOs. These projects are often more easily recognizable and generally take a far more descriptive and illustrative approach to environmental issues.

Among these, painting and drawing whether on paper or on digital platform, continue to be powerful as people work with natural pigments with ecological themes. Similarly, photography and video are also very strong on their own and they are convenient ways to showcase projects or issues anywhere, since such projects and exhibitions can be copied, projected, or reprinted digitally to eliminate shipping costs. Much of this work can be related to the visual display of conceptual Land Art, Art in Nature, and Ecological Art. It ranges from documentary to abstract to poetic to digitally manipulated visualizations of data.<sup>6</sup>

The impacts of climate change will be numerous and varied, ranging from changes in ecosystems to difficulties in insuring against losses caused by climate change. These impacts will affect everyone to some extent. However, engaging the public to take action is proving difficult.

New research investigated the influence of visual and iconic representations of climate change on people's engagement with the subject, in terms of their thinking, feelings and behaviour. The researchers discussed a range of images and icons with participants in surveys, focus groups and interviews. The results indicated that the public have a large number of images that they strongly, and easily, associate with climate change. These tend to be images of large and extreme impacts such as melting ice sheets, visions of rising sea levels and intense heat and droughts. However, these images also tend to enhance the sense that climate change happens somewhere else, to somebody else. Some individuals react to such images with a fatalistic

attitude, feeling they are unable to do anything to help. Others deny climate change, rather than experience the discomfort of its reality. While the dramatic images were judged to be the most personally important, they were also considered the most disempowering. Enabling imagery, such as an image of a tram, were seen as least personally important, yet made people feel more able to do something about climate change.

Further discussions in focus groups indicated that although dramatic images catch people's interest, they tend to be forgotten after the initial impact. Participants felt other images were needed to communicate with local relevance and the possibility of action. However, participants also agreed that global images were still necessary to highlight the importance of climate change. Further discussions in focus groups indicated that although dramatic images catch people's interest, they tend to be forgotten after the initial impact.<sup>7</sup>

It further emphasises the need of climate change communication with local relevance.

## **WAYS TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

Documentaries like "An Inconvenient Truth" and the popularity of Earth Day have made environment and climate change popular discussion; however, there is still a lot of work to be done to increase public awareness, particularly in developing and underdeveloped countries. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has outlined several key ways to communicate and increase awareness of environmental issues worldwide.

### **1. Targeted Efforts**

According to UNEP, environmental awareness campaigns are most successful when targeted to specific groups or populations. Many people don't pay much attention to environmental problems because they don't understand how the problem would affect them or their lifestyle. The reason that hybrid cars, energy-saving appliances, and solar panels have become so popular in the past few years is because of targeted awareness. The communication art is to show people how much money they could save by purchasing a hybrid or installing a solar panel has helped to "convert" people who normally wouldn't have paid much attention to environmental problems.

### **2. Local Outreach**

Environmental education is just as important however, reaching out to the people in those countries can be very difficult. Language barriers, illiteracy, and cultural differences can prevent them from learning about environmental issues, particularly in rural or tribal areas. Reaching out to tribal, religious, and community leaders through local art can often help a government organization or non-governmental organization (NGOs) to educate the people on environmental issues. Community leaders can help ease communication problems and bridge the cultural divide that often stands in the way of outreach efforts.

### **3. The Media**

In developed countries and urban areas, the use of print, broadcast, and Internet media can be a great way to increase education and awareness. By working with the media, government agencies and nonprofit organizations can help spread their message, either by holding press briefings, issuing printed press releases, or even setting up online databases that can be used as information centers. Information centers can be useful tools to educate both the public and journalists about environmental concerns. Many media outlets may want to increase their coverage of environmental issues, but don't know where to find accurate information. Having a central information clearinghouse that is accessible to journalists and the public can be extremely useful.

### **4. Classroom Education**

Thirty percent of the world's population is under the age of eighteen, according to UNEP, which is why educating children

and young adults about environmental problems is crucial to long-term success. This will help them foster a sense of responsibility and “proactive citizenship,” so that when they become adults they will make choices that help the environment rather than harm it. Many schools, however, do not currently teach their students about environmental issues. Integrating environmental education into current science classes or teaching environmental science as a separate discipline is one of the best ways to educate children and teens about environmental problems, particularly if the classes involve some sort of “hands-on” learning, like starting a garden or caring for an animal.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the issues like pollution to climate change, the media has been playing a vital role in creating awareness and raise issues to the pertaining topic of environment. If we talk in Indian context, the media has been pivotal in covering the entire country of India in raising environment issues like drought in Gujarat, Air pollution in Delhi, Ground water level depletion in Chennai and pollution from coal mines in Jharia, west Bengal.

Undoubtedly, the role of mass media is one of the most important factors underlying the knowledge of environmental problems. However, this can only be true on the conditions that first, mass media is accessible to large proportions of the population, second, are spending some time on environmental issues and third, people are interested in information on ecological issues provided by the media so that they view or listen to the corresponding programs as well as read newspaper articles or other written publications dealing with environmental issues.

Achieving significant reductions in CO2 emissions requires effort and a change of mind-set by government, business and community. While the environmental lobby targets and criticizes governments and vested interests, the arts and cultural sector can work with the people and start, bottom up, from the community. The cultural sector is a natural change agent, instigator and provocateur in paradigm shift and mind set changes.

The science of climate change communication is essential to engage people’s minds, but the art of engaging people’s imaginations may be just as important.<sup>8</sup>

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# **“SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS” IS NOT A PANACEA FOR ALL ILLS**

**DR. SUBODH KUMAR\***

In the popular imagination of media, economist, columnist and technocrats turned politicians, Bihar has recorded an extraordinary economic performance in the last nine years. But a careful analysis shows that Bihar has done no better than before. The growth indicators portray Bihar as India's poorest state. Bihar's agriculture not industry has done better; even on the parameters of social development Bihar is lagging behind. Democratic investment through social movements and success of democratic constitution has led to a change in the realm of social and political dominance. But socio-political investment has not translated into expansion of freedom which required removal of poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social-deprivation [Sen: 1990:1]. In Bihar, democratization has not been able to emancipate the masses thereby leading to an inegalitarian social structure. This is primarily because political processes like political institutions, government performance, political culture, administrative capacity, government stability, political parties and market are not better placed. These institutions should work like a seamless web to maximise the opportunity created by free market economy. Bihar could not benefit from the implementation of Reagan-Thatcher model because the state lacked pre-requisite for investment. The successive governments in Bihar could not galvanize the potential to expand and improve infrastructure. The organizational weaknesses of political party, failure of land reforms, poor management, bad governance, and institutional breakdown led to political apathy in Bihar. The problems of unemployment got accentuated hence law and order further deteriorated. Frustration amongst the twice-born castes increased as the alienated sections of the society challenged their dominance on several fronts.

At the national level the aim of planning commission to plan and develop India evenly could not be achieved. Moreover, the historical circumstances along with step motherly treatment of Bihar have led to stagnate at the bottom of Human Development Index. Bihar is one of the poorest state with approximately 9 per cent of the national population but Bihar is the

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only state in India where per capita income stubbornly remained at the bottom. This laboratory like setting has disturbed the thought process as of Bihar politicians on the issues of development. Hence, they resort to tokenism and "demand for special status" without analysing the limitations of special status states.

## **HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The underdevelopment of Bihar is the consequence of the policies pursued by the British Raj. During the British period, Bihar was a supplier of raw materials, jute and indigo to the expanding European and North American markets. The commercial classes in Bihar shifted their interest from trade and commerce to land, partly as a consequence of Lord Cornwallis Policy of 1793 to impose permanent settlement [Frankel and Rao; 1989: 1]. The British government was able to rule on terms acceptable to the Rajas and Zamindars. These Zamindars were recognized as social, economic and political leaders [Jha, 1977: 30]. The recruitments of police were made by zamindars, hence, they were more the "functionaries" of the landholders. These landholders spent less on education, health, and infrastructure than any other province of British India [Henningsham, 1982: 2]. The 1857-59 mutiny enlarged the legal powers of the zamindars, they paid no attention to government order requiring the appointment of patwaris or accountants at the village to record revenue transactions. On the whole, the zamindari system established production relation which allowed Zamindars to extract the surplus from agriculture, without having any need to invest in the cultivation practices.

## **POST INDEPENDENCE**

Bihar started its march to economic development in Independent India with a low base. Its per capita state domestic product (SDP) was only 62.44 per cent of the all-India average. This has been a major factor for the economy not registering a significant growth in post Independence. The intra-disparity within the state is also the stumbling block in the path of economic development. The geographical division reinforced regional differences, in terms of regional distribution of population, urbanization, literacy and industrial employment. These regional variations are the product of policies pursued under the British Raj. Moreover, to overcome the problems of social tension, food-grain shortage crisis and to achieve economic development, the ruling elite introduced Green Revolution which was financed by the United States to increase the forms of production without altering the skewed distribution of the means of production and exploitative production relations. They also wanted to change the balance of class forces in society and wanted to create a section of middle peasantry [Karna, 1975: Vol.3]. The strategy demonstrated its success in increasing agricultural production which created an economic base for new forms of social tension and violent manifestation of the caste-class contradictions emerged in Bihar. Along with unsuccessful land reform and green revolution, North Bihar and South Bihar suffer from frequent occurrence of flood and drought which hamper agricultural development and restoration of permanent infrastructure. The Bihar government effort is constrained by the fact that the catchments of most rivers and their tributaries which flood the Bihar plains are located outside Bihar. Therefore, a consistent growth path demands heavy investment by the Government of India to overcome these liabilities before the assets could deliver the potential benefits.

The other variables which are important for growth are development of infrastructure like roads, power, education, health care, water, bank and market. In these aspects also, Bihar performed very badly. Besides, infrastructural inputs, the individual inputs and governmental efforts particularly with regard to increased agricultural credit through co-operative and subsidies on modern technique have never been a priorities in Bihar. The use of the New Agrarian Technology (NAT) comprising applications of modern inputs such as water, High Yield Variety Seeds (HYVS), and transgenic crops, etc. has not been a priorities for Bihar agriculture. Hence, rural economy is working on traditional techniques. Similarly, the co-operative movement, known as people's movement aims to fight the menace of rural indebtedness, so that peaceful transition to egalitarianism could be achieved have failed as a rural credit movement in Bihar.

Moreover, the state government's low credibility in execution of other World Bank projects have forced the international organisation not to execute any of its projects in Bihar. Thus agriculture in Bihar is a drag on the economy, it has not met the food requirements of the state nor the raw materials requirements of the industry. Agricultural and industrial developments are closely linked, because industries depends on agricultural raw materials and labourers. Thus development of industrialization was conditioned due to disjunction between agricultural and industrial development. The amenities of modern life such as education, hospitals, railways, road and electrification were concentrated in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Hence, they experienced greater urban, industrial growth, higher educational expansion, per capital income and net domestic product at the time of Independence and they continue to rank high even today.

### **BIHAR AFTER 1991**

Moreover, in 1991, the balance of payment crisis compelled the government to adopt the new economic policies. The role of the government changed substantially. Market forces became the guiding factor in investment decisions. The states that were more infrastructurally developed were in a better position to attract investment. Since Bihar lacked basic infrastructure facilities, it lagged behind the other states in attracting investment. There was no change of its position in the infrastructure and development index both in the pre-reforms and the post-reforms period. Bihar is pre-dominantly an agricultural state, where 81 per cent of the population earns its livelihood from agriculture. The backwardness of Bihar agriculture gives an idea as to why Bihar is poor and backward. A break-through in the productivity of agriculture must occur so as to become the fulcrum for the upliftment of industry and economy as a whole.

Further in 2000, the demands of Jharkhand movement were partially aimed at creating a separate state of Jharkhand, comprising of 9 districts of Bihar, 4 districts of West Bengal, 3 districts of Madhya Pradesh and 2 districts Orissa. However, this demand was met in the form of Jharkhand state comprising 18 districts of Bihar. This was a socio-economic and political unjust arrangement and its repercussion is visible even today. A major chunk of mineral resource went to Jharkhand. Bihar total loan multiplied from 23 thousand crore to 42 thousand crore. Though central government assured to give a special package to Bihar so as to compensate for the loss but only first instalment has reached Bihar. Undivided Bihar had already fallen way behind most other Indian states in terms of almost all relevant indicators of economic development and social progress. The separation of Jharkhand meant a loss of a major sources of minerals, industries and technical institutions as shown in the tables below:

#### **Resources of Bihar**

	<b>Ownership/ group</b>	<b>Industries</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Estimate sales Rs. In crore</b>
Indian Oil Corporation	Central government	Petroleum products	Begusarai	3,580
ITC	ITC(F) Group	Cigarettes	Mungar	564
Bata India	Private (Foreign)	Footwear	Patna	225
McDowell & Co.	UB Group	Portable alcohol	Patna	164
MSL Industries	Private (Indian)	HR Coils	Patna	55
Kalyanpur Cements	Jenson & Nicolson	Cement	Rohtas	73

**Resources of Jharkhand**

	<b>Ownership/ Group</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Est. Sales Rs. in Crore</b>
Steel Authority of India	Central government Tata Group	Saleable steel	Giridih	4482
Tata Iron & Steel Co.	Tata Group	Saleable steel	Pashchimi, Singhbhum, Purbi, Singhbhum	4446
TELCO	Tata Group	Commercial vehicles	Purbi, Singhbhum	2700
Eastern Coalfields	Central government	Coal	Dhanbad, Dumka	1492
Central Coalfields	Central government	Coal	Dhanbad	1480
Bharat coking coal	Central government	Coal	Dhanbad	1379
Usha Martin Inds.	Usha Martun Group	Steel	Pashchimi, Singhbhum, Ranchi	256
Heavy Engineering Corpn.	Central government	Metallurgical Mach.	Ranchi	253
Hindustan Copper	Central government	Copper	Purbi, Singhbhum	225
Usha Beltron	Usha Margin Group	Jelly filled cables	Ranchi	223
Associated Cement Cos.	IACC Group	Grey Cement	Dhanbad, Pashchiumi Singhbhum	196
Tinplate Co. of India	Tata Group	Metal containers	Purbi Singhbhum	187
Menally Bharat Engg. Co.	Williamson Magor	Material handling eq.	Dhanbad	152
ICI India	ICI (F) Group	Explosives	Giridih	132
TRF	Tata Group	Inds. Machinery	Purbi, Singhbhum	100
Tata Timken	Tata Group	Roller bearings	Purbi, Singhbhum	95
Bihar Sponge Iron	Modi Umesh Kumar	Sponge Iron	Purbi, Singhbhum	93
Indian Aluminum Co.	Private (Foreing)	Hydrate & aluminum	Ranchi	89
Bihar Caustic & Chemicals	Birla Aditya Group	Caustic Soda	Palamu	76
Hyderabad Industries	Birla CK Group	Asbestos cement prod.	Dumka	72
Tata-Yodagawa	Tata Group	Steel	Pashchimi, Singhbhum	67
Indo-Asahi Glass Co.	Private (Foreign)	Glass	Hazaribagh	65
Fertilizers Corpn. Of India	Central government	Fertilizers	Dhanbad	57
Indian Steel 7 Wire Prod.	Private (Indian)	Steel bars and rods	Purbi, Singhbhum	51

### Technical Institutions and Natural Resources in Jharkhand

Technical Institution	Natural Resources
BIT, Sindri	Coal
BIT, Mesra	Iron ore
Patliputra Medical College	Mica
Rajendra Medical College	Zinc
Jamshedpur Medical College	Copper
Birs Agricultural Industry	Manganese
Indian School of Mines	
Fuel Research Institute	
Mining Research Institute	
National Silk Institute	
ICAR Horticulture Research Institute	
Forest Research Institute	

Thus, almost 86 per cent of heavy industries were located in South Bihar and were assisted by the Central Government went to Jharkhand. As a result, Bihar has been left with only one heavy industry.

### STEP MOTHER TREATMENT

Moreover, Bihar backwardness is also the product of step motherly treatment from the central government. This is evident, if we compare the last 60 years of plan allocation of the planning commission with other states. One can understand that the share in central taxation is determined by the formula of the Finance Commission that takes into account the contribution of an individual state to the exchequer. But it is hard to understand why this glaring inequality extends to grants, special assistance and even to plan allocation. Bihar's politicians were involved in personal achievement rather than using the technique of Bargaining federation for upliftment of Bihar like Chandrababu Naidu. While Andhra Pradesh received Rs.3,507.60 crores West Bengal 2342.0, Uttar Pradesh 2594.2 crores (1998 to 2000) as additional central assistance for externally aided projects in state plans whereas Bihar just received Rs.306.90 crores. Further in terms of grants from the central government (2000 to 2003), Bihar received Rs.4,047.30 while Andhra Pradesh received Rs.9,790.00 crores. Bihar has also been neglected as far as net loans from the centre are concerned. It received just Rs.2,849.60 against Rs.6,902.20 received by Andhra Pradesh from 2000-2002. This gross neglect by the central government is also reflected in the low per capita central assistance (additional assistance, grants and net loans from the center) received by Bihar in 2001. While Andhra Pradesh received Rs.625.60 per capita, Bihar got a paltry Rs.276.70.

Thus, the result of the economic stagnation of Bihar can also be seen in the abysmally low investment in the state government's four major development areas. Bihar's per capita spending on roads is Rs.44.60, which is just 38 per cent of national average, which is Rs.117.80. Similarly, for irrigation and flood control, Bihar spends just Rs.104.40 on per capita basis while the national average is Rs.199.20. In terms of per capita expenditure on medical and public health is concerned, Bihar spends Rs.86.20 against the national average of Rs.157.20. On education, its per capita spending is Rs.484.10 while the national average is Rs.586.80. Thus, the politics behind allocation of resources explain that the states with aggressive regional sentiments like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat or Karnataka have done better at attracting the central government concerns. Hence, winning a larger share of resources whereas politicians of Bihar seem distracted by the politics of caste and clan loyalties [Guruswamy, 2004: 12]. Since there are inevitable political competitions due to over population and heterogeneous societies the economic costs are enormous in Bihar. This has resulted into the increased level of poverty and illiteracy, in Bihar whereas poverty and illiteracy has declined in other states.

## **SPECIAL STATUS IS A POLITICAL SLOGAN**

Nitish Kumar's demand for special category status for Bihar brought closer to the grand old party of India. Congress accepted the view to review the case for Special Category Status for Bihar. His 'Adhikar' rally in Delhi was a demonstration of his strength and masterstroke to reap the benefit from the demand for special status in the 16<sup>th</sup> national election (2014) and 16th Bihar assembly election (2015). Nitish Kumar has failed to play his card because special status demand is like a strokeless wonder, who cannot score runs for his team. Moreover, Bihar Chief Minister, Jitan Ram Manjhi has also fallen in the same trap and is ready to support prime minister, Narendra Modi, if he grants special category status to the state. The demand reflects wrong priorities of the government. Nitish Kumar is trying to cover his promises that he had made in the 14th Bihar Assembly Election (2005). He is playing Special Category Card for his state to project it as one of his major achievement. Since 2005 government of Bihar has signed memorandum of understanding of over Rs.1 lakh crore, and not even 5 thousand crore has flowed into the state in the shape of concrete investment. By demanding special category status for Bihar Nitish Kumar may score some political runs but Bihar's economy will remain where it is.

## **STROKELESS WONDER THAT IS SPECIAL STATUS**

The new state of Bihar inherited major fiscal problems such as fiscal deficits, imbalance in expenditure allocation and institutional shortcomings in expenditure management and budget implementation. The culmination of missed opportunity created by economic liberalization and globalization along with maximum transfer of natural resources has uprooted the developmental approach of Bihar leaders. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar demanded a special category status to fulfil his political aspirations rather than economic upliftment. 'Special Category Status' is not a panacea for all ills primarily because large proportion of transfers from the centre to the states is in the form of central and centrally-sponsored schemes, according to Gadgil-Mukherjee formula. Besides the higher assistance, there is a tax breaks for excise duty and income tax exemptions for setting up industries. When we analyse 2011-12 financial year we find that centre had directly transferred Rs.10,309 crore for implementing agencies to execute centrally sponsored schemes. This itself is far more than grants Bihar would receive as a special category state. Moreover, during 2010-11 and 2011-12 Bihar received total plan grants of Rs.7,774 crore and Rs.7,320 crore respectively. As a special category state, there cannot be much substantial increase to such plan grants to Bihar because under Special Category States only 30 per cent of total central assistance for state plans is distributed to the Special Category States. Tax breaks would not get many industries because agriculture is underdeveloped. Moreover, due to absence of infrastructure there is no lust for investment in Bihar. Thus, there is hardly any new industries that may come. Hence, there is no benefit to Bihar due to income tax exemption.

Moreover, Bihar is not able to spend the given amounts. As per the Appropriation Accounts of the Government of Bihar prepared by the Accountant-General (Audit), Bihar for 2010-11, the government could not spend approximately Rs.14,748 crore. The major departments that could not spend the funds were Panchayati Raj (Rs.591 crore), human resources (Rs.12,229 crore), disaster management (Rs.1,355 crore), urban development and housing (Rs.1,532 crore), social welfare (Rs.608 crore), water resources (Rs.1,723 crore) and finance (Rs.1,174 crore). Since 2005 to 2012 Nitish government has signed memorandum of understanding (MoUs) of approximately Rs.one lakh twenty thousand crore, and not even 5 per cent of this amount has been invested. Bihar must look towards building institutional capacity, infrastructure, research institutes, entrepreneurial skills, industrial climate and market mechanism [EPW; Vol. XLVIII No. 18, May 4, 2013].

Bihar must bargain for heavy industries rather than "Special Category State". Since Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) and Third Five Year Plan (1961-66), Central Government has not invested in Bihar. Coming of heavy industries will solve the problems of literate workers and technical literate students. This will directly improve the industrial climate and enhance social indicators. Moreover, Bihar must lobby for exemption of its loan which have multiplied due to bifurcation of state and subsidy in electricity purchase along with multi-dimensional approach rather than political slogan like "Special Category States".

## **CONCLUSION**

Since 1991, number of reform measures have been undertaken under the policy of economic liberalization and globalization to transform the economy. But there are vast areas where full potential of change has not been realized due to the persistence of the limiting factor. These impediments must be removed if Bihar wants to come closer to national development parameters. Bihar needs multidimensional approach to bring itself out of medievalism so that modern society could be built on rule of law through science and technology. Drastic steps should be taken in the field of agricultural and industrial development. There should be central directed investment to build infrastructure and tackle the problems of natural calamities, centre must support human resource development through improved quality and access to social services, particularly for the poor and socially disadvantaged communities. The passage of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, have great impact on the values of equality and liberty. Various schemes for poverty alleviation, education, health, water supply and other basic services to the people have to be implemented through Panchayat Raj Institutions. Bihar should give special emphasis to PRIs so that reconstruction can be achieved. Moreover, in the era of free economy, the salvation of Bihar can come through market. Market and alienated section of society can both help each other, both are in a win-win situation. Market need consumer but alienated section are not consumer to market. Hence, market can empower them through opening institutions and giving training so that these people can get accommodated in the market. As a whole, market can empower these groups; market is not an enemy, but a great friend for alienated sections. Once empowered these groups will become the consumer. This way both can help each other. Time has come to reassess its part, take stock of its political, social circumstances. So that Bihar can develop fast. The decay of Bihar is a manifestation of apathy, wrong priorities. To make a beginning, proper planning should be done so that 21st century belongs to Bihar.

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# **JAPANESE ECONOMY -- DEPRESSED DUE TO LACK OF POPULATION**

**DR. ANJU GUPTA\***

## **ABSTRACT**

Japan, the third largest economy in the world, is suffering from an economic condition that economists predict will plague all developed countries eventually: a constantly decreasing population, deflation and recession. The paper analysed various macroeconomic parameters of Japan to determine the deflationary & recessionary trends in the economy in addition to the abysmally high government debt. The paper examined how since the asset price bubble in 1990s, there has been a vicious cycle of savings, lack of investment and falling prices with the root of all problems being Japan's demographics.

The Keynesian prescription for pulling an economy out of recession was discussed, leading up to how Shinzo Abe's answer- monetary easing from the central bank, combined with fiscal stimulus from the government and structural changes which is aimed at delivering a big boost to the economy, resulting in a virtuous cycle of investment and increasing prices has been successful to a certain extent. The paper also did a theoretical analysis and pointed out the issues neglected by the government and suggested various measures that the government can take to hasten economic recovery. While the steps taken by the Japanese government have been criticised as 'too little, too slow' by some, there is no doubt that they have been able to limit the economy's further degradation. The government and the Bank of Japan has a tough task ahead if they are to put the Japanese once-dynamic-now-moribund economy back on track after 15 long years of 'macroeconomic mess'.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Japan, the third largest economy in the world<sup>1</sup>, is suffering from an economic condition that economists predict will plague all developed countries eventually: a constantly decreasing population, deflation and recession. Post the asset price bubble burst in 1990s<sup>2</sup>, Japanese banks ended up piles of bad debt. The government ramped up the spending on public works in order to

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stave off deflation but this spending added alarmingly to Japan's public debt; just as its tax revenues began to shrink due to a decreasing population.<sup>3</sup> Japan thus experienced a 'lost decade'; *years of falling prices, insolvent banks, corruption, disrespect and ingratitude abroad*<sup>4,5</sup> 15 years later, prices are still falling, unemployment and recession setting in, its public debt also being highest in the world.<sup>6</sup>

While most of its macroeconomic characters seem depressed, the 7th Prime Minister in 6 years, Mr. Shinzo Abe seems determined to turn the economic situation around.<sup>7</sup>

The researcher first analyses various parameters such as GDP, Inflation, Employment, Fiscal Deficit, Balance of Payments, Foreign Exchange Rate and Population Growth Rate to determine the macroeconomic trends in Japan.

In the succeeding chapter, the researcher elucidates the Keynesian explanation and solution to Japan's problem, supplemented by Monetarist and Austrian analysis. Next, the measures implemented or proposed by the government and the Bank of Japan have been discussed. This is followed by a theoretical critique and the economy's macroeconomic reaction to these measures. Finally, the researcher has suggested further measures that are needed for economic recovery.

## **ANALYZING MACROECONOMIC TRENDS**

Japan was one of the most affected countries by the economic crisis in 2008 due to its strong dependence on exports and entered into recession.<sup>8</sup> The economy started looking up in 2010 with greater exports but was soon struck by a natural disaster.<sup>9</sup>

The Great East Japan earthquake in 2011<sup>10</sup> was the costliest disaster in Japan's post war history with 3.5% GDP in property damage. This disaster caused a major contraction in Japanese economy<sup>11</sup> that also spilled over to the world due to disruption in supply chains.<sup>12, 13</sup> The swing to trade account deficit towards the end of 2011<sup>14</sup> reflects the decline in exports and increase in imports. A sharp increase in liquidified natural gas imports was needed to meet the increasing demand from thermal power plants which substituted nuclear power lost by the accident.<sup>15</sup>

In October 2011, investments in Japanese assets amid the European sovereign debt crisis drove the yen to a post-war high of 75.35 per dollar.<sup>16, 17</sup> The long term appreciation of the yen (relative to the dollar) also limited the ability of various policy measures that could have cleared Japan's economic mess.<sup>18</sup>

The decline in GDP in the second and third quarters of 2012<sup>19</sup> was due to weak demand overseas. Exports suffered all the more due to a strong yen. The deteriorating global demand influenced domestic demand which had been spurred by reconstruction activity post 2011. Falling confidence, especially amongst small firms deterred investment. Thus after two major shocks: the global financial crisis in 2008 and the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, Japan has fallen into recession for the third time in 5 years<sup>20</sup> as a subdued domestic demand was unable to offset the boost to key markets like China and Europe.<sup>21</sup>

Money hoarded, instead of spent, has been the major contributor to Japan's 'stop-start' growth and deflation persisting for the past 15 years.<sup>22</sup> Japanese households don't borrow as they are still deleveraging from earlier savings, apart from the fact that the age profile and size of the consuming population is steadily shrinking. At the same time, corporates are also hoarding cash because investing for expansion without prospects for growth in demand make no economic sense. Moreover, they suffer from the 'debt trauma'<sup>23</sup>. As supply exceeds demand, Japan has been in a deflationary condition for the past 15 years.<sup>24</sup>

Falling prices in themselves are not such a bad thing; in fact it means that low income level consumers live quite a satisfied life.<sup>25</sup> Falling prices become a problem when they lead people to postpone their consumption, in anticipation of a further fall in demand.<sup>26</sup> Such postponement becomes self-perpetuating in the sense that it actually leads prices to continuously fall (a 'self fulfilling prophecy'<sup>27</sup>) due to the combined force of constant supply and falling demand. While the prices fall, the national debt doesn't. In fact, government debt is steadily rising, now around 240% of the GDP.<sup>28, 29</sup>

Japan, like America and most of Europe is now in a liquidity trap.<sup>30</sup> The debt overhang from the 80's bubble initiated this process, but Japan's problems also have strong demographic roots<sup>31</sup> "as a declining working-age population depresses the demand for investment".<sup>32</sup>

According to the World Population Data Sheet<sup>33</sup>, Japan's population growth rate which peaked during 1945-50 at 15.3% has now dipped into the negative<sup>34</sup> and is declining at the highest rate in the world.<sup>35</sup> Due to a declining population, people aged above 65 now account for a record high of 24.1% outnumbering children below age 14<sup>36</sup> while the figure was 12% in 1990.<sup>37</sup>

The working age population is estimated to fall by about 40% by 2050.<sup>38</sup> Due to decrease in working age population, labour force and thus marginal productivity of labour is also declining. As a consequence, macroeconomic growth is bound to be impeded.<sup>39</sup>

In fact when we see the real GDP per working-age adult, we realise that if demographically adjusted, the Japanese stagnation tale is a myth.<sup>40</sup> This low population growth is attributed to factors such as high costs of raising children, country's reluctance to accept immigrants, low fertility and women choosing to work rather than give birth.<sup>41</sup>

Population aging can affect investment in two ways: first, if a decrease in labour force is substituted with capital, domestic investment would increase. Second, a declining population would cause decline in demand which would reduce domestic investment. However, since population aging shifts consumption to the service industry (such as medical and nursing services) where it's difficult to substitute labour by capital, the second effect will dominate.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, as working age population declines, there may be a permanent excess of supply over demand. As aggregate demand shifts downwards due to decrease in population, it intersects the constant aggregate supply curve at a lower price and lower quantity, which means both deflation and recession.<sup>43</sup>

This decreasing population growth rate is a headache for Japan also due to "*shrinking pool of taxable citizens and ballooning social welfare costs to care for an increasing number of elderly*".<sup>44</sup> Over the 2000s decade, the population growth rate and inflation were found to correlate positively in 24 advanced countries.<sup>45</sup> This reflects how real income generation is undermined by population aging.

Moreover, due to technical advancement there is stagnant market and sluggish exports.<sup>46</sup> With lower demand, companies stagnate; if its sales aren't growing, its profits can't grow unless it cuts costs which is what Japanese businesses have done. Few have taken the alternative route to raising prices, as it makes no sense to risk losing market share when the market isn't growing.<sup>47</sup> However, lower costs mean lower wages or even laying off.<sup>48</sup> The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate expectedly dipped by 4.1% in the month of March,<sup>49</sup> the lowest since November, 2008. The jobs to applicants ratio was 0.86, as per the Labour Ministry.<sup>50</sup>

Hence, the Japanese don't consume or invest first (leading to the *paradox of thrift*), because they won't borrow as the asset price bubble has caused a major psychological barrier against debt. Secondly because an aging population reduces consumption expenditure, addition to the wages being on a decline. Finally, the Japanese also expect prices to continuously fall which has turned into a *self fulfilling prophecy*<sup>51</sup> and sent the economy spiralling into recession.

## **STEPS TAKEN BY THE BANK OF JAPAN<sup>51</sup> AND THE GOVERNMENT.**

The BOJ and the government have taken various Keynesian policy measures in the past five years to improve Japan's economic condition.

To expand money supply, the BOJ gradually cut the interest rates to virtually zero (0 to 0.1%) by October 2010. It introduced a 'funds supplying operation' in 2009 which lends money to banks against collaterals for three months at policy interest rates. It launched an 'asset purchase programme' in 2010 that primarily focused on government securities but also included private assets (like corporate bonds). In 2012, the target size of purchases by the end of 2013 was increased to 101 trillion yen. It also announced introduction of Stimulating Bank Lending Facility to provide unlimited long-term funds at interest rate 0.1% to financial institutions. In January 2013 BOJ replaced its 1% price stability goal with a 2% target.<sup>51</sup>

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has now introduced a three pronged approach, combining aggressive monetary easing, fiscal

stimulus and structural changes to shake off Japan's deflationary lethargy and push it on a path of growth, creating around 600,000 jobs.<sup>51</sup>

**First**, monetary market operations will be conducted by BOJ that will increase monetary base at the rate of 5 trillion yen a month.<sup>51</sup> The planned doubling of monetary base, to be achieved through purchases of government bonds with longer maturities and private assets, is aimed at weakening the yen and reaching a 2% inflation target.<sup>51</sup>

**Second**, the government will give a strong fiscal stimulus of 10.3 trillion yen to encourage economic growth. This money will be spent on disaster prevention and reconstruction, stimulating private investment and other measures. It will also create about 600,000 jobs.<sup>51</sup>

However, it will be impossible for Japan to solve its debt situation without improving revenues.<sup>51</sup> In 2012, Japan passed a legislation to hike the consumption tax in two stages: 5% to 8% in April 2014 and to 10% in October 2015 in order to contain its public debt. This is essential for achieving its target of halving the primary fiscal deficit by 2015. The doubling of tax will generate revenue of about 13.5 trillion yen, of which about 20% will be used to improve social security systems. The rest will be used to finance the deficit. In order to offset the blow of this tax hike, Mr. Abe is considering a \$50 billion economic stimulus.

Third, extensive growth enhancing structural reforms will be implemented to untangle the web of regulations and trade restrictions that hinder growth and innovation.

## **THEORETICAL CRITIQUE AND THE ECONOMY'S RESPONSE**

Economists believe that Keynesian policies have been unable to revive Japan's economy. *"Keynesian spending programs have not only failed to pull Japan out of its recession but they have also placed the government in a weak fiscal position and distorted the economy further."* During the 1990's the government in Japan implemented 10 fiscal stimulus packages that totalled more than 100 trillion yen in order to cure the post-asset price bubble burst recession. Though the objective failed, this government spending caused the public debt to be more than 200% of the GDP today.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, *"Japan has simply reached the limits of Keynesian policy"*<sup>51</sup> and challenged the basic Keynesian prescriptions to push an economy out of recession.<sup>51</sup>

However, the measures taken by Kuroda and Abe have to a certain extent reversed the strong-yen trend that had dampened Japan's corporate revenues and entrenched deflationary pressures, as the yen is headed towards an eight-straight month loss against the dollar.<sup>51</sup>

In May 2013, the yen weakened beyond 100 per dollar for the first time in over four years, plunging by 14% and heading for its *longest streak of monthly losses in almost two decades*, which competitors like South Korea are seeing as a threat to their economy.

Stock prices of the biggest Japanese companies have escalated by about 60%,<sup>51</sup> increasing the 'urge to splurge' in Japanese consumers. There is confidence now that exports and industrial output will eventually start a climb due to the weaker yen. As regards the increasing cost of imports, finance chiefs and central bankers have endorsed these measures, purporting that Japan's focus on encouraging domestic demand is strong enough to offset the side effects on their own economy of a plunging yen.<sup>51</sup>

Central to Abenomics is the idea that the economy can be kick-started by generating inflation expectations. This will boost consumer consumption and encourage capital consumption, leading to a *virtuous cycle* of greater investment, higher wages and thus higher prices. In this respect, the 5.2% increase in household spending observed in March this year is crucial to achieve the 2% inflation target by the end of two years.<sup>51</sup>

Data also shows that prices did not fall for the first time in about five years. Even the core CPI<sup>51</sup> did not fall, indicating that prices other than that of food and energy are also looking up. This economic recovery is likely to help by improving the demand-

supply balance and pushing up prices further, especially for durable goods.<sup>51</sup>

In any case, deflation can't be a never ending phenomenon as every economy has a self-correcting mechanism.<sup>51</sup> It might prompt consumers to delay expenditures for a few years, but eventually the useful lives of both consumer and durable goods will expire. Also, a majority of Japan's consumer expenditure is on service which cannot be put off for long.<sup>51</sup>

Data has showed that Japanese consumer confidence rose this year to the highest level in almost six years, which is an important indication of the success of 'Abenomics' which relies heavily on expectations for prices and future growth.<sup>51</sup> The BOJ said that the economy was now looking up, "*partly on the back of improvements in household sentiment and the elderly's large appetite for spending*".<sup>51</sup>

Though the corporate sector is currently lagging behind<sup>51</sup> and other signals from the economy are more mixed, the positive changes in other macroeconomic factors suggest that on the whole Abenomics and Keynesianism has positively impacted the economy.

### **WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE**

The foremost important task at hand in Japan's aging economy is to encourage population growth and increase the labour force. Japan therefore needs to relax immigration laws and improve female participation in the labour force.<sup>51</sup>

In order to improve demand, the government should make it more expensive to hold on to money by ensuring that expectations of inflation start to take hold, but not just in financial markets where the yen has fallen sharply and where the Japanese stocks have completed their best year yet.<sup>51</sup> In this case, the effective real interest rate will become negative. Thus, the borrowers will be repaying less in real terms than what they had borrowed.<sup>51</sup> As a result, their willingness to spend more will increase, which is exactly what the Japanese economy needs. The government can also give tax benefits to firms that increase pay or expand hiring as rising prices must be accompanied by rising wages to ensure healthy economic growth<sup>51</sup> It is also important

Supply side should induce a cost push inflation as the currency falls and imports become costlier. The government should give investment tax incentives to encourage investment and break the 'debt trauma' resulting from the asset price bubble.

Moreover, as per the Keynesian policy of realigning production to meet demand patterns, Supply can also be adjusted with a greater focus on medical and nursing services for Japan's aging population. Due to fragile domestic demand, the Japanese businesses should diversify<sup>51</sup> and invest in developing overseas economies which could result in surplus in income balance.<sup>51</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

The paper analysed various macroeconomic parameters of Japan to determine the deflationary & recessionary trends in the economy in addition to the abysmally high government debt. The researcher examined how since the asset price bubble in 1990s, there has been a vicious cycle of savings, lack of investment and falling prices with the root of all problems being Japan's demographics.

The Keynesian prescription for pulling an economy out of recession was discussed, leading up to how Shinzo Abe's answer- monetary easing from the central bank, combined with fiscal stimulus from the government and structural changes which is aimed at delivering a big boost to the economy, resulting in a virtuous cycle of investment and increasing prices has been successful to a certain extent. The researcher also did a theoretical analysis and pointed towards the issues neglected by the government and suggested various measures that the government can take to hasten economic recovery.

However, the paper has not analysed Japan's macroeconomic trends relative to other developed economies. To that extent, it's problems may not be as exceptional and magnificent as they seem in isolation.

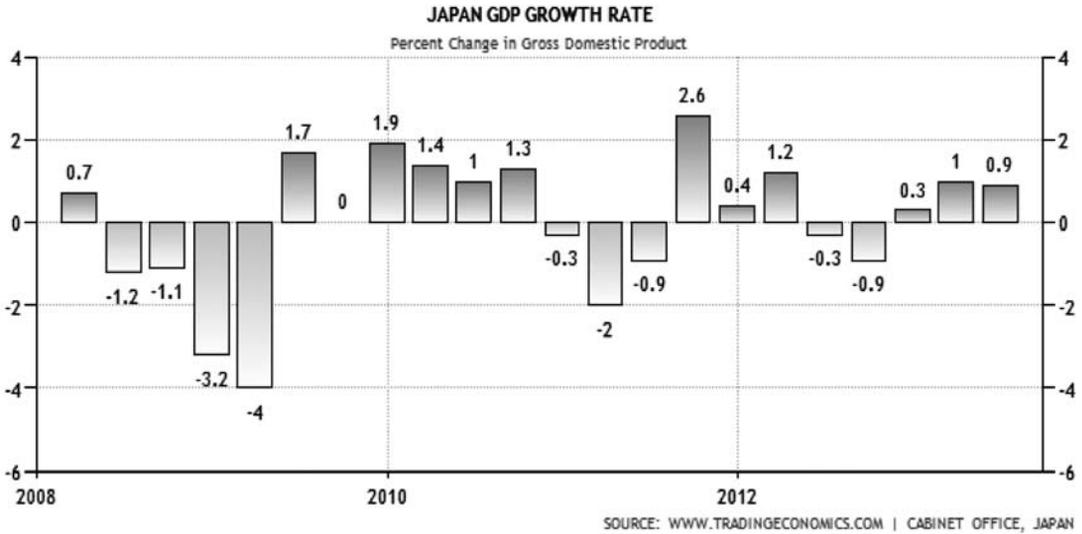
While the steps taken by the Japanese government have been criticised as 'too little, too slow' by some, there is no doubt that they have been able to limit the economy's further degradation. The government and the BOJ has a

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tough task ahead if they are to put the Japanese once-dynamic-now-moribund economy back on track after 15 long years of 'macroeconomic mess'.

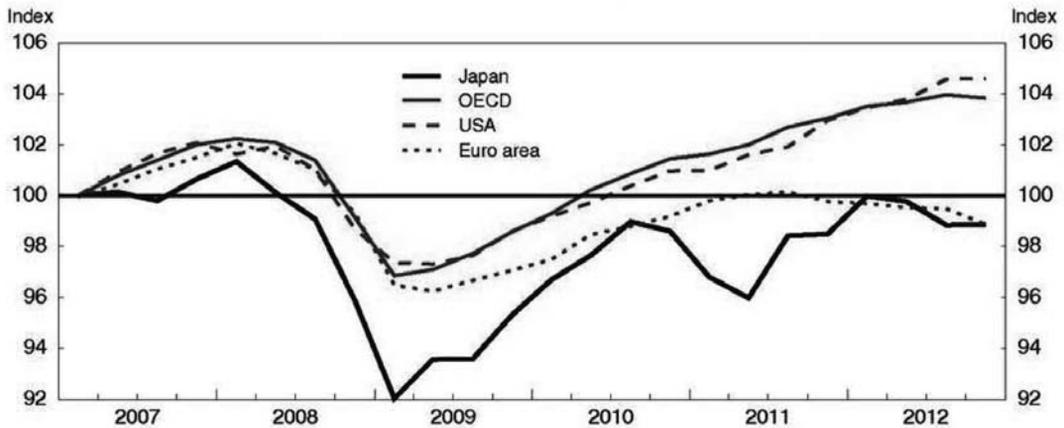
**ANNEXURE: GRAPHS**

**1. GDP growth rate<sup>51</sup>**



**2. GDP <sup>51</sup>**

**Figure 1. Japan has faced two major shocks since 2008**  
Real GDP levels in an index with the first quarter of 2007 set at 100

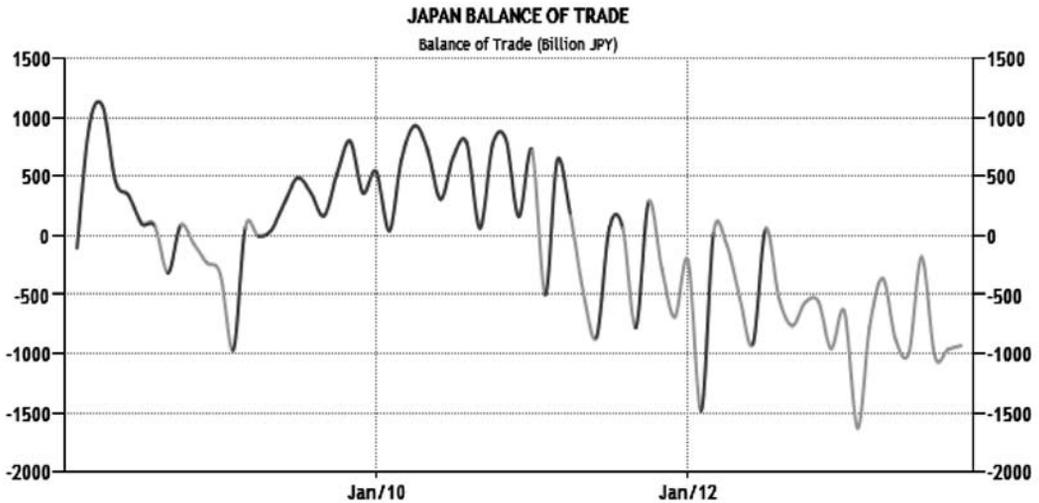


source: OECD Economic Outlook Database.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932797461>

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**3. BALANCE OF TRADE <sup>51</sup>**

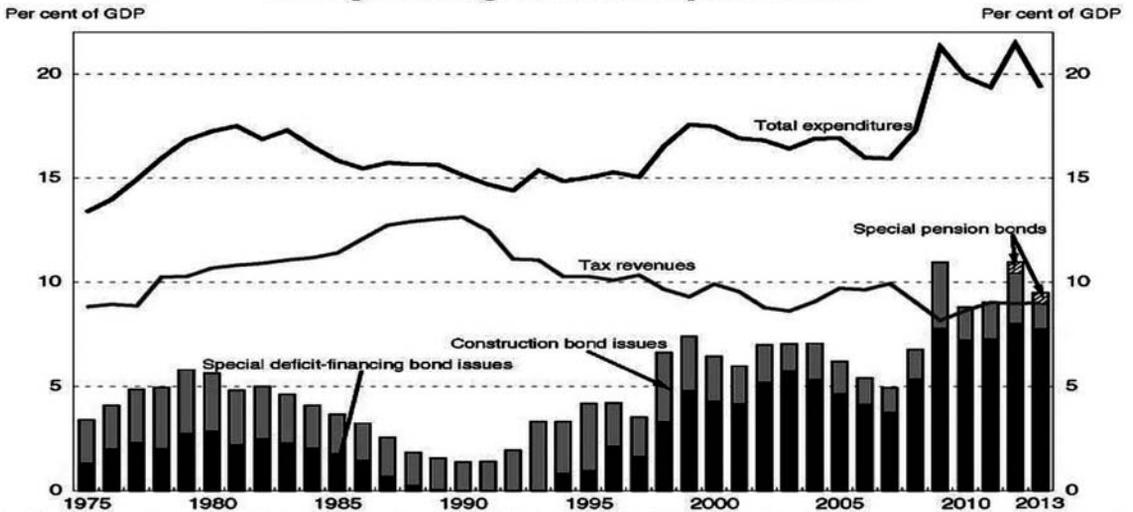


SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | MINISTRY OF FINANCE JAPAN

**4. FISCAL..DEFICIT <sup>51</sup>**

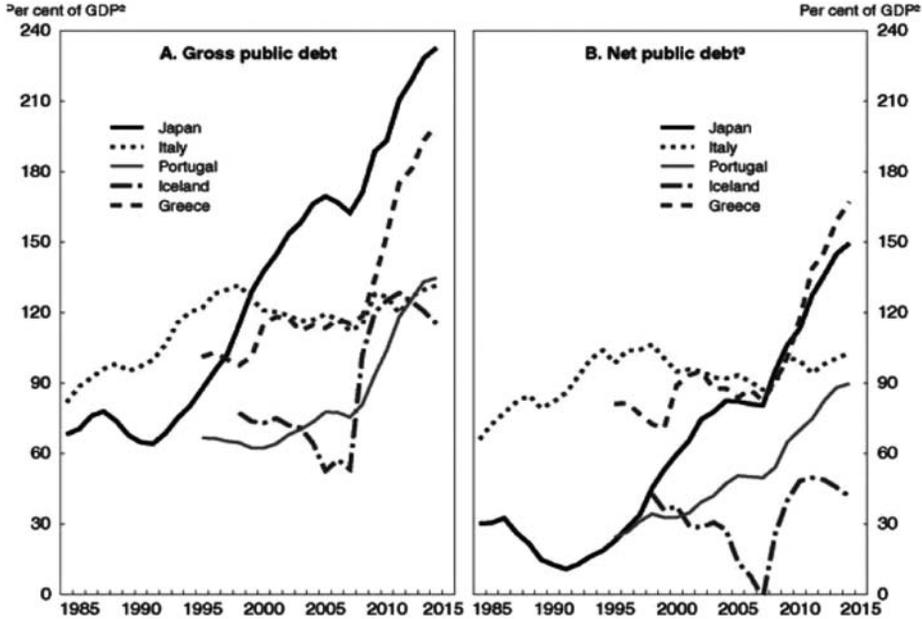
**Figure 16. The gap between central government expenditure and tax revenue is widening**

Central government general account as per cent of GDP<sup>1</sup>



5. PUBLIC DEBT <sup>51</sup>

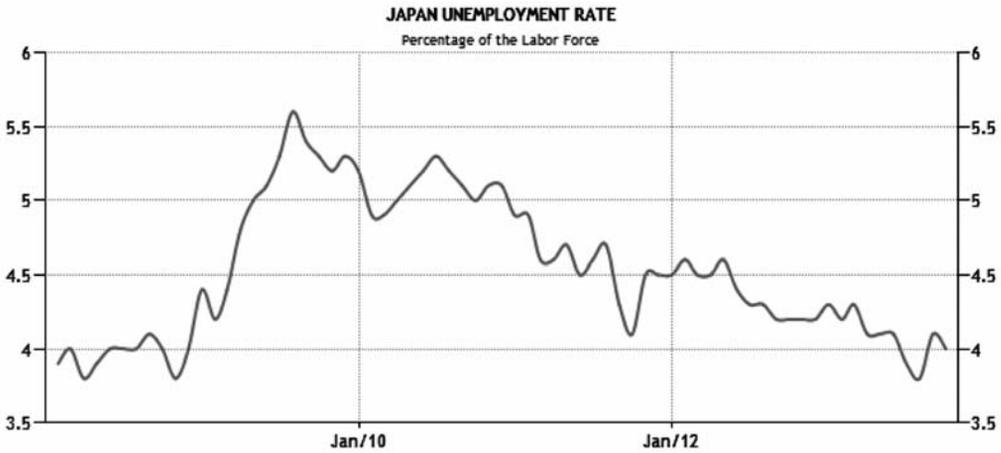
Figure 17. Public debt in selected OECD countries<sup>1</sup>



· The five countries with the highest gross debt ratios (gross liabilities divided by GDP) in the OECD area in 2010.  
 · OECD estimates for 2012 and projections for 2013-14.  
 · Net debt is gross debt less financial assets held by the government.  
 Source: OECD Economic Outlook, No. 92 and revised OECD estimates and projections for Japan for 2012-14.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932797746>

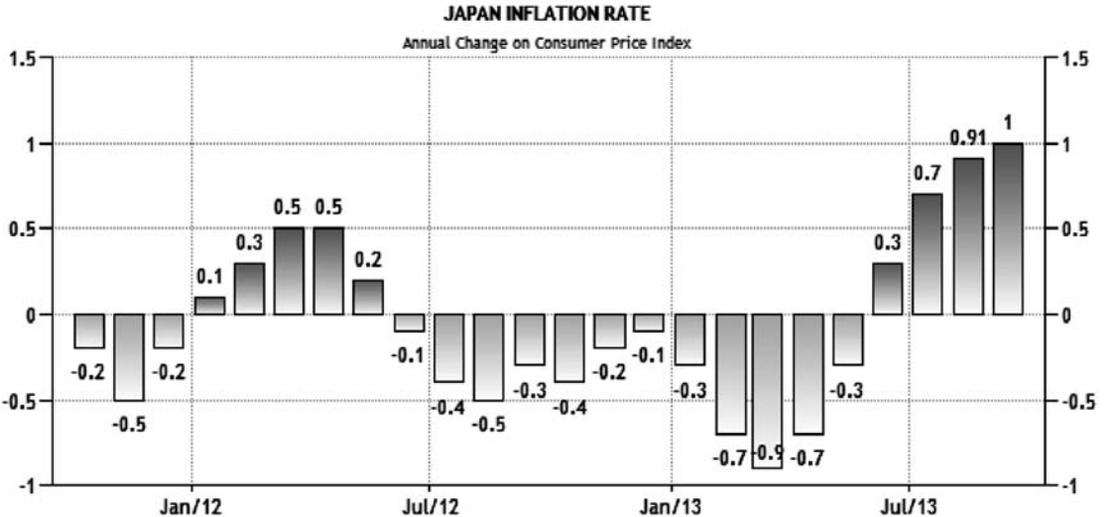
6. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE <sup>51</sup>



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

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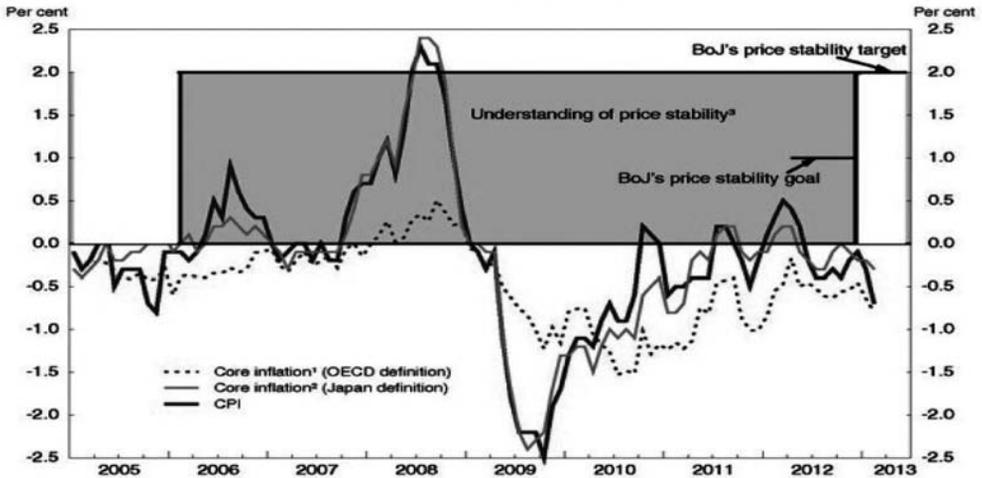
**7. INFLATION.** <sup>51</sup>



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

**8. DEFLATION RATE** <sup>51</sup>

**Figure 4. Deflation continues**  
Year-on-year percentage change

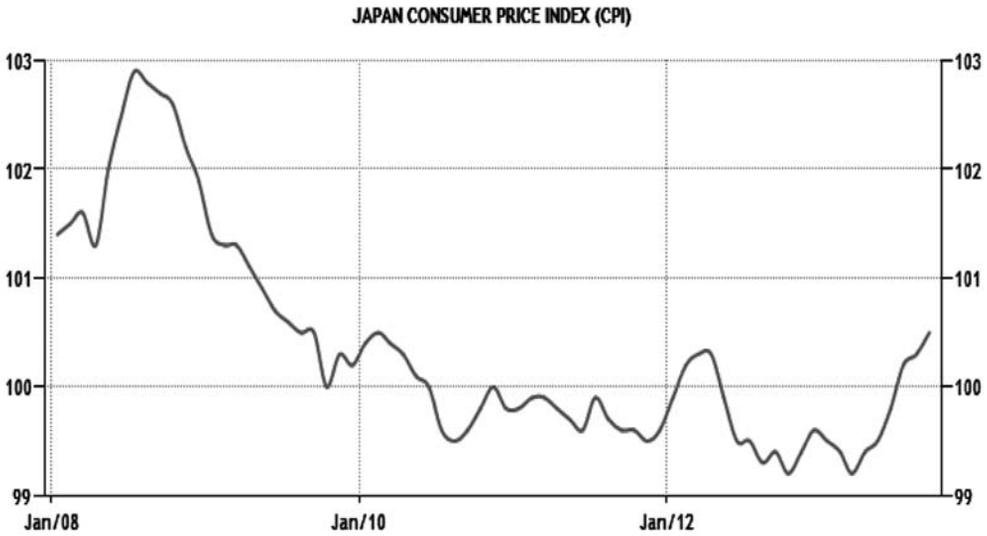


1. Excludes food and energy.  
2. Excludes only fresh food.  
3. Of the Bank of Japan's Policy Board members.  
Source: Bank of Japan and OECD Economic Outlook Database.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932797518>

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**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX<sup>51</sup> (base year 2010)**



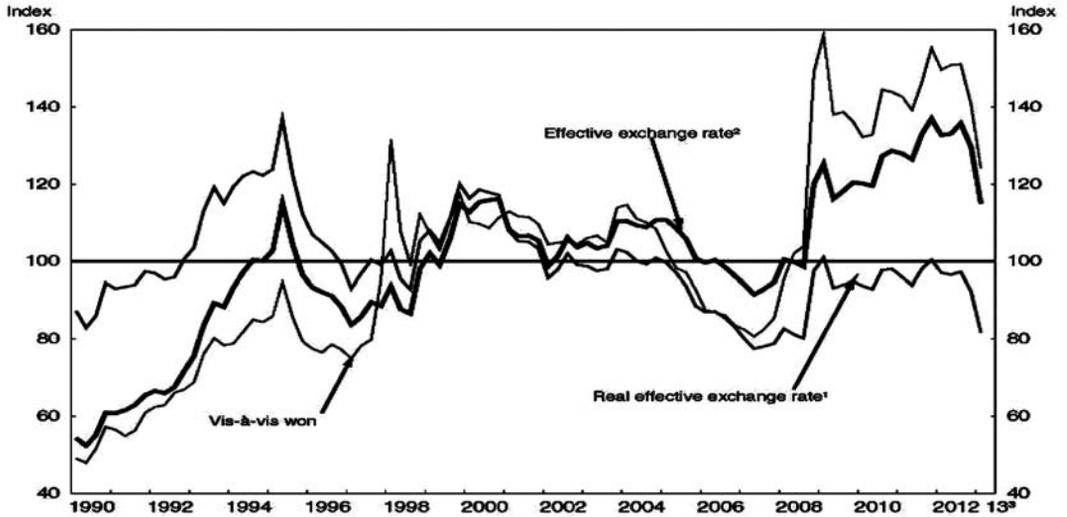
SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | STATISTICS BUREAU, JAPAN

**10. YEN EXCHANGE RATE<sup>51</sup> (yen per dollar)**



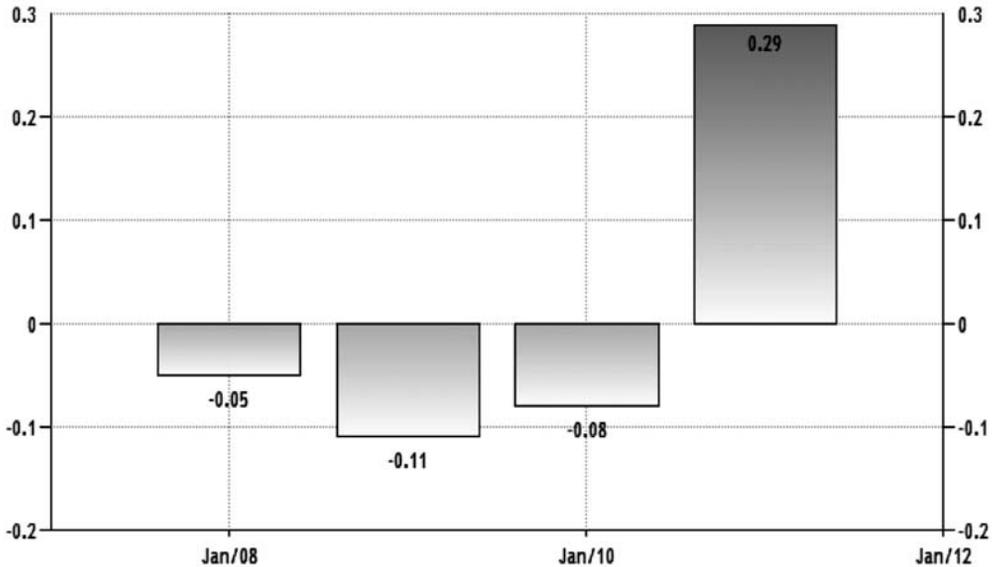
11. YEN EXCHANGE RATE <sup>51</sup>

**Figure 3. The yen remains well above its average since 1990 in nominal, but not real, terms**  
Average of 1990-2012=100



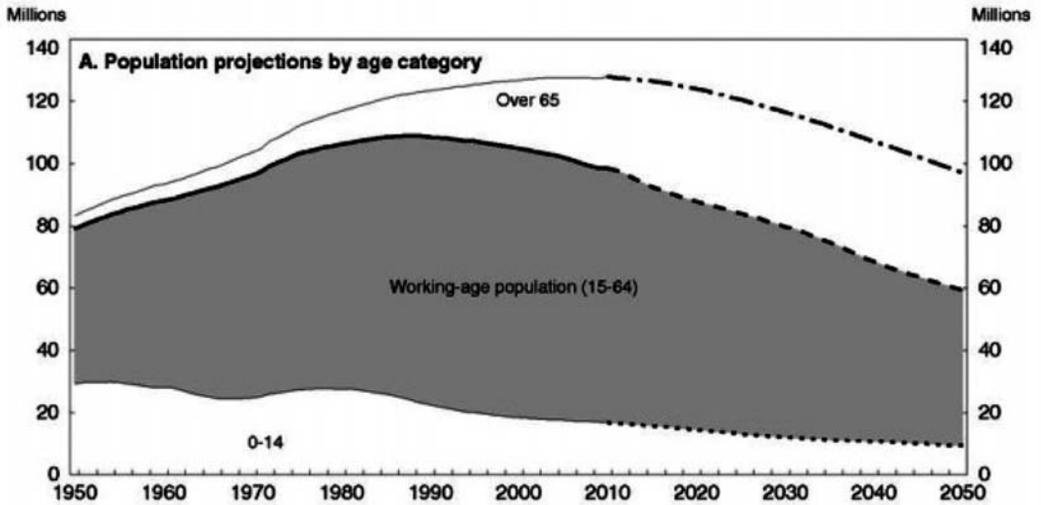
1. Deflated based on consumer price indices.  
2. Trade-weighted, vis-à-vis 49 trading partners.  
3. The rate shown for the first quarter of 2013 is the average of January and February.  
Source: OECD Economic Outlook Database and Bank of Japan.

12. POPULATION GROWTH RATE <sup>51</sup>



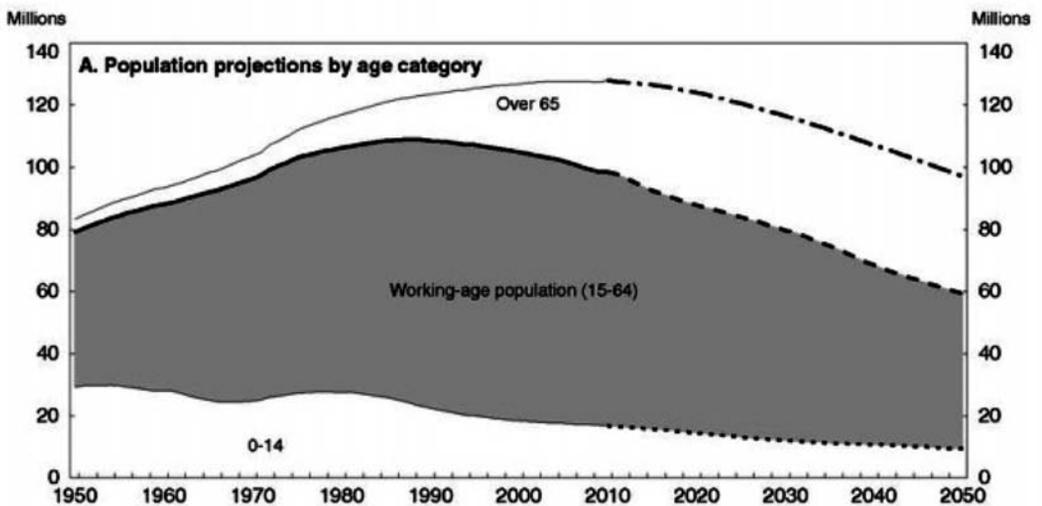
13. POPULATION PROJECTION <sup>51</sup>

Figure 14. Japan's population, already the oldest in the OECD, is ageing rapidly



14. SHIFT IN DEMAND DUE TO DECREASE IN WORKING AGE POPULATION

Figure 14. Japan's population, already the oldest in the OECD, is ageing rapidly



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3. The problem was further magnified by an ineffective and incapable political leadership. Moreover, structural impediments like non transparency and weak accountability persisted.  
The Man who remade Japan, THE ECONOMIST, (September 14, 2006), available at <http://www.economist.com/node/7916942>, (last visited on November 21, 2013).
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7. Id.
8. This was caused mainly by the decline in US, Europe and Asia's economic activity which accounted for majority of Japan's exports.
9. International Trade in Japan, available at <http://www.globaltrade.net/international-trade-import-exports/m/c/Japan.html>, (last visited on November 21, 2013).
10. The fifth strongest in recorded world history, was largely concentrated in the Tohoku region.
11. See graphs 1 and 2.
12. Japan's initial recovery from the 2011 earthquake and tsunami caused immense physical damage and killed around 20,000 people. It highlighted the importance of enhancing Japan's growth prospects through structural policies, especially the reconstruction of farming regions of Tohoku devastated by the tsunami. The Fukushima accident underlined the need to reduce reliance on nuclear power and develop renewable energy sources.  
Exports were affected as many countries decided to introduce checks on imports from Japan as they are believed to be contaminated by radiation, while others suspended imports, especially agricultural products.
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19. See graph 1.
20. See graphs 1 and 2.
21. Supra note 6.
22. Id.
23. "Japan's corporate sector remains a net saver, despite world's lowest interest rates due to a 'debt trauma' resulting from the asset price bubble that acts as a psychological impediment to borrowing.. Over the last twenty years, companies that had taken loans to buy overvalued assets in the 'bubble era' had no option but to increase savings despite low interest rates in order to pay off debt".
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See Fred M. Gottheil, EMPLOYMENT, INFLATION AND FISCAL POLICY, 178, (3rdedn., 2002).
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Paul Krugman, Monetary Policy in a Liquidity Trap, (April 11, 2013), The Conscience of a Liberal, available at [http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/11/monetary-policy-in-a-liquidity-trap/?\\_r=0](http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/11/monetary-policy-in-a-liquidity-trap/?_r=0), (last visited on November 21, 2013).
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38. Supra note 13.
39. Supra note 15.

40. Supra note 35.
41. Id.
42. Supra note 15.
43. See graph 14.
44. As a result, the gap between the government expenditure and tax revenue is widening. See graph 4.
45. But another study, including developing countries did not detect any positive correlation in periods before 2000. Supra note 15.
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# MAKING OF A POLITICAL PARTY: A STUDY OF AAP

SANJAY MISHRA\*

## INTRODUCTION

Elections form the lynchpin, the quintessence of representative democracies. India's democratic credentials in the world are not only because of the regularity of elections held in accordance with the provisions of the constitution but also because of the largely free and fair manner in which they are held. Since the first elections in 1952, post the birth of this great Republic, this 'dance of democracy' has enabled the electorate, whose size and political maturity have been increasing since then and indeed have outpaced the rate of growth of formal literacy, to exercise their franchise 16 times for the highest 'temple of democracy' - the Parliament. Elections to the Assemblies of the now 32 states have been more numerous.

The right of franchise is a formidable power in the hands of the Indians, above 18 years of age, irrespective of caste, colour of the skin, religion and gender, to change governments. And they have more than justified the faith reposed in them by the framers of the constitution: by using this power judiciously in throwing the governments out for non-performance and voting them in twice and sometimes thrice in a row for exceptional performance. The results of the just concluded 16th LoK Sabha have been astounding in many respects. For the first time a non - congress political party has got majority on its own while the Congress, the grand old party, with 44 seats, has been reduced to its lowest ever tally. But the results of the elections have ushered in a particularly bad tidings for the regional parties in the Hindi heartland like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) in UP and the Janata Dal (JD (U)) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar.

## THE CASE OF AAM AADMI PARTY

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) owes its genesis to "India against corruption" (IAC). When the political establishments cuttled IAC's sincere struggle to get the Jan Lokpal Bill passed by the Parliament and even taunted and goaded it to join

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politics, IAC leader Arvind Kejriwal and his ilk, much against the dissuasion of his mentor Anna Hazare, took the bull by the horn and formed the party. Naturally, the party became a symbol of the anger and disillusionment of the people against the venality of the corrupt politics and crony capitalism. The middle class, the lower class and particularly the youth looked up to AAP's promise of "alternative politics" with great hope. Delhi, home to the upwardly mobile migrants and youth, least tied by considerations of caste and community in their voting behavior vis-a-vis the people of other states, proved to be the perfect launching pad for this new kid on the block, giving it 28 seats in the 70-member Assembly in the assembly elections held in December 2013. Even the Congress with 8 seats was forced, in a sense, to lend support to the AAP in forming the government apparently in deference to the mandate of the people but really perhaps to preclude the possibility of its arch-rival Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the largest party in the Assembly with 32 seats from coming to power.

While the sudden power that came AAP's way found its way into its head, the transition of a movement, a protest movement at that, into a party of governance and responsibility got stuck in its intrinsic *modus operandi* as evident in the vigilantism of its Law Minister Somnath Bharti and the dharna by its Chief Minister (CM) Kejriwal. And the party looked upon what the critics called the 'goof-ups' and 'antics' of its stint in the government as a novel accretion to, and not a detraction from, governance. Indeed, proceeding from its power-induced blinkers, AAP rubbished the criticism the media leveled against it for its mistakes and gimmickry—the late night raid by its Law minister Bharti and his men on the premises of African Women to bust an alleged sex and drug racket, the dharna by the CM at the Rail Bhavan, and its stubborn stance on the introduction of Jan Lok Pal Bill, not to mention the flip-flops on the 'VIP culture', including official bungalows and official vehicles for the ministers and the botched up Janata Durbar initiative— as an instance of jaundiced journalism and an offshoot of an unholy nexus between capitalists, media houses and corrupt political system. Living in a fool's paradise, AAP believed that its popularity, notwithstanding its controversial track record at the helm of Delhi government, across the country was intact and could be exploited for its Lok Sabha venture.

### **MISTAKE OF RESIGNATION, LESSON OF REAL POLITIC**

But after its ambitious Lok Sabha venture boomeranged spectacularly, with the party bagging just 4 seats and 2% of the national vote share in the 16th Lok Sabha elections, the party was forced to do a soul-searching and draw some lessons from its lapses. It appears that the first lesson that AAP has drawn from the defeat of the Lok Sabha elections is to realize that today's voters are far more sensible, mature and informed than they are generally given credence for. It is in this context that the party has now openly accepted the mistake of resignation from the Delhi government after realizing that the electorate, as evident in the negative verdict for the party, had not been quite convinced by its justification for quitting the government, howsoever expressed in high-sounding moral shibboleths and jargons. Even though the tag of "quitter" was writ large on the party in its Lok Sabha trail, it had refused to gracefully apologize for quitting and, on the contrary, sought to hoodwink the people by saying that the party was forced to resign because of the conspiracy of the Congress and the BJP, that its resignation was in conformity with its principle of not sticking to power just for power sake. The party's acceptance of the mistake, even though it has been forced by the Lok Sabha election results and in view of the impending Delhi Assembly elections, nevertheless shows that the party has somewhat overcome the hump of its self-righteous ego and bowed to the superior wisdom of the electorate. However, there are some unsettled questions.

It is clear that AAP resigned not because the Congress Party withdrew support or threatened to do so but because it was prevented from tabling its pet Jan Lokpal Bill in the Assembly on the ground that a Home ministry directive required all bills having financial implications to be first approved by the central Government. The national convener of the party Kejriwal has also promised not to resign again. Anticipating the best case scenario in which AAP gets full majority in the forthcoming Delhi Assembly elections, how would the party go about getting its Jan Lokpal Bill passed? After all, Jan Lokpal Bill, being the very *raison d'être* for the birth of AAP, is integral to its philosophy and ideology, a sheet-anchor of

its fight against corruption. Will it again try to bulldoze the Bill in the Assembly -and this time on the strength of its brute majority and a priori pliant speaker, presuming that it gets one - and then take it to the central government? What happens to the statutory requirement of bills having financial implications to be first vetted by the central government and then introduced in the Delhi Assembly, which Kejriwal had earlier dubbed as unconstitutional and illegal? Does AAP have a hidden agenda of shelving the Bill which, in a way, proved to be its undoing in its first stint? This suspicion arises because the party, while raising all sorts of issues agitating the people like price rise, power tariff hike, sanitation, etc., in the election campaign for the Delhi Assembly, has not been quite gung-ho, if not fully reticent, on getting the Jan Lokpal Bill passed in its second stint. Does it mean that AAP has learnt the lesson of real politic?

### **OVERWEENING AMBITION, 'CLASH OF TITANS' AND THE NEGATIVE FALL-OUT**

Second, from its comprehensive rout in the parliamentary elections AAP has also realized that its decision to contest the Lok Sabha elections on 434 seats was a blunder. It appears that AAP has realized that it was foolhardy on its part to have scaled up its electoral ambition in the Lok Sabha elections so early in its career. For one thing, the party entered the Lok Sabha elections with most of its goodwill squandered by its reckless resignation and goof ups in governance. Secondly, the party had failed to understand that with its meager resources, an effete organization and the mercurial leadership of Kejriwal it was no match to BJP with its coffers awash with funds, a well-oiled organization ably supported by the cadres of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and above all a focused and decisive leadership of Narendra Modi and his governance record in Gujarat. It is in this context that AAP, drawing lessons from its mistake of overweening ambition in the Lok Sabha elections, has decided to concentrate on the Delhi Assembly elections, its bastion, and to resist the temptation of contesting Assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir. While material conditions have changed very little since the parliamentary elections in these states to indicate a swing in favour of AAP, the party is yet to recover from the demoralization that electoral defeat engendered in it. In Delhi, however, AAP was able to increase its vote-share from 29.4% in the last Assembly elections to 32.9% in the parliamentary elections. For BJP, of course the increase was higher but because of the inability of the BJP government at the centre to usher in 'achhe din' for the common people in the form of lower food prices, notwithstanding a higher economic growth in the first quarter of the current financial year, AAP may have gained an edge over the BJP. The less than satisfactory performance of the BJP in the just concluded by-elections in Bihar, Karnataka and Uttarakhand would have surely come as a shot in the arm of the AAP in Delhi where Congress has already ceded significant ground to it. The BJP, aware that its support base has undergone some erosion, make unsuccessful efforts to cobble a coalition with the help of rebels from either the Congress or from the AAP so as to avoid fresh elections. The fact is that howsoever detached and neutral from power political parties may pose, they tend to wilt and disintegrate in a situation of prolonged 'powerlessness' because power is an oxygen for political parties. If Delhi remains out of bound for the AAP for a considerable length of time, it may be faced with a forlorn hope.

The other big mistake was Kejriwal's decision to take on Narendra Modi on the crucial seat of Varanasi. The plea was that Narendra Modi was like a general of an army and by defeating him the entire army would be demoralized and dismantled. By the same logic, Kumar Vishwas, another prominent leader of the party was made to contest against Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi in the Gandhi's pocket-borough Amethi. Comparing political parties and their leaders respectively in a vibrant democracy to marauding armies and their Generals of the medieval period smacked of not just sadistic perversity but also naivety on the part of Mr. Kejriwal. One is not sure to what extent the so called 'clash of titans' enthused and energized the cadres of AAP, as it was touted to achieve, across the country. But the point is that at the end of the day the strategy proved counterproductive because it did not fetch any single seat for the party in the Lok Sabha, barring the 4 seats that it won in Punjab because of local factors. The whole business of contesting elections is

about winning- of course not at any cost, but by proper electoral strategy. Committing political hara-kiri for some abstract moral principle is politics removed from realism.

Kejriwal's fight against Narendra Modi had another negative fall-out on the party. Given the stature and popularity that Narendra Modi had come to acquire in the run-up to the last Lok Sabha elections, AAP had to deploy lion's share of its resources in Varanasi, leaving its other candidates in the lurch. According to an official data, AAP spent Rs.50 lakh on electioneering in Varanasi compared to Rs.37.62 spent by BJP on Modi. Congress of course spent the most-Rs.54.45 lakh for its candidate Ajai Rai. For a party with limited funds based on contributions mostly from small tax payers, was this level of expenditure justifiable in one constituency, howsoever high-profile? One hopes that AAP has drawn suitable lessons and factors in all inputs before pitting its candidates against political heavy weight opponents because it is a gambit which can go either way.

### **PERILS OF VIGILANTISM AND DISRUPTIVE PROTEST**

The AAP, particularly Kejriwal, will also have to own up the mistake of supporting Somnath Bharti's participation in the mid-night raid in the Khirki area of Malviya Nagar where, upon refusal by the police to raid in the absence of proper warrant, the then Law Minister Somnath Bharti had unleashed his mob of supporters on the premises of African women to bust an alleged drug and prostitution racket. There was widespread condemnation of the minister's action on the ground that it "reflected the worst kind of vigilantism with scant regard for the due process of law ...and...smacked of racism, xenophobia, sexism and illegality." The party had then defended the minister and "exonerated the minister of the three charges-of misusing his position, of misbehaving and abusing women and of making racist remarks." The party, led by CM Kejriwal, had undertaken a dharna in support of Bharti, and for the suspension of concerned Police officials. The dharna was called off when the Lieutenant Governor (LG) appointed a judicial probe into the Bharti episode. The AAP had promised action against Bharti if indicted by the judicial panel. The AAP is yet to own up the mistake, let alone take action against Somnath Bharti as it had promised in the event of indictment by the judicial panel, even though the judicial probe has absolved the police officials and indicted Bharti on several counts. Its another matter that High Court has given some relief to Bharti.

Fortunately for AAP and Kejriwal, the Supreme court decided to drop a PIL(Public Interest Litigation), which it had earlier admitted, in which several issues relating to the legality of dharna by CM Kejriwal were raised. AAP may not have openly admitted the perils of vigilantism and disruptive protest, it would nevertheless appear that it has apparently drawn some lessons from them given the fact that it has "revamped its internal organization and shifted its focus from a disruptive protest mode of politics to a more people-centric form of campaigning through its mohalla sabhas." The results have also taught AAP a lesson of being wary in following disruptive politics. It knows the criticality of imminent Delhi Assembly elections for its future and indeed for its survival. And yet, overcoming its past pet penchant of sitting on a dharna at the drop of a hat, it has resisted the temptation of undertaking street politics and disruptive mode of politics. It did not sit on a dharna at Ram Lila Ground or Jantar Mantar to put pressure on the LG for the dissolution of, and fresh elections for, the Assembly. It assiduously followed the constitutional and political method. It petitioned the Supreme Court, met the LG several times and even met the president for its avowed goal of getting the House dissolved for fresh elections.

### **STREAKS OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE POLITICS OF SHOOT AND SCOOT**

AAP also needs to put in place proper structures so that party leaders and spokespersons of the party do not appear to be speaking in different voices. We have seen how in the past these things have put AAP in avoidable controversies. Moreover, AAP's mascot and supreme leader Kejriwal needs to do a bit of soul-searching with regard to his style of

functioning characterized by streaks of authoritarianism. This criticism has come not just from the political opponents of AAP but also from some present and some ex-members of AAP. Many prominent members of AAP have said that the decision of resignation from the Delhi government was taken without due deliberations in party forums; it was taken by a crony close to Kejriwal, if not by Kejriwal himself. In the letter, exchanged with party leader Manish Sishodia, another prominent leader Yogendra Yadav alleged that there was 'difference between a supremo and a leader' and that the 'party leadership was falling prey to personality cult.' Some of the members who had earlier left the party had also alleged that Kejriwal ran the Party like a 'one man show' and a 'private limited company.' Shahzia Ilmi, while leaving the party alleged that a 'crony clique' was running AAP, reminiscent, ironically, of AAP's tirade against crony capitalism! Captain Gopinath blamed Kejriwal's 'shoot and scoot' politics for his decision to leave the Party. It was only after Yadav's letter that Kejriwal realized the gravity of the issue and assured consultative approach in decision- making and building a bottoms-up model of party structure. That did not fully silence the voices of dissent as evident in the recent public outburst against the leadership of Kejriwal by another founder- member Shanti Bhushan, who had in fact donated a whopping Rs. one crore for the establishment of the party.

Kejriwal needs to understand the fact that the leitmotif of his politics- the politics of 'Shoot and Scoot', negative as it is, becomes electorally counterproductive beyond a point, particularly when wild allegations are leveled without a shred of evidence. It could also become legally entangling and deflect one from the main purpose. Kejriwal pursued this penchant of his to a perverse point when during the election campaign in Amethi he said that those who vote for BJP and the Congress are treacherous. While one could understand the politics of leveling charges against political opponents; one could even have sympathy for the critics of rich business class after all India is one of the most in egalitarian societies in the world with the prevalence of rampant crony capitalism and a huge hiatus between the rich and the poor. Calling voters treacherous was the worst affront and defamation for the voters that could be imagined.

The politics of 'Shoot and Scoot' did help AAP to endear itself in its initial phase given the sorry state of affairs of politics in our country with a corrupt nexus between politics and business on the one hand, and politics and criminals on the other. However, when the charges were repeated ad nauseam and without credible, let alone clinching, evidence, AAP's motives and intentions came under scrutiny. Indian voters, for all their illiteracy have been credited with a hard common sense and political understanding. In Politics, there is a limit to the pursuit of the policy of 'holier than though', because, whether one likes it or not strategizing for elections is at best an amoral activity, if not an immoral activity. Indeed, politics is all about quest for, and acquisition of, power. Even in Governance, whether one likes or not, compromises are made and there is no escaping a certain degree of wheeling and dealing, of nepotism, of increasing one's turf, of looking for holes in the opposition and blowing them out of proportion. Absolute morality is an abstraction, an elusive mirage in politics which AAP is learning with its increasing involvement in politics.

## **ENDNOTES**

- AAP contested in 434 seats in the 16th LoK Sabha elections, more than that of the BJP and the Congress.
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- Sanjay Mishra, Somnath Bharti as an embarrassment for the Aam Aadmi Party, The Mainstream, New Delhi, April 25-May 1, 2014.
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- AAP in poll mode wants House dissolved, The Times of India, New Delhi, July 20, 2014.
- Himanshi Dhawan, The Times Of India, June 1, 2014

## **A CRISP TALE OF ARYAVARTA'S FIRST KING**

**DR NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH\***

**T**he first thing that hits you as you read this book -- *The Seal of Surya Review* -- is the amount of research put into it. There are bits of trivia, allusions and hints that any lover of history would find rewarding. The author weaves his novel into a world well aware of its position in time, and sets it alongside contemporaries such as King Enmerkar of Uruk -- a known figure of ancient history.

The protagonist, Ikshvaku, is a much revered but largely unknown figure in Indian mythology, but the book does not approach these stories as myths. The primary question, it seems, is that if these myths were based on truth, what would the truth have looked like? Mythology tells us that Ikshvaku was the first King of Aryavarta, son of Vaivasvat Manu, and founder of the Suryavansha dynasty. It tells us nothing about his life, his quests and his motivations. The novel fills these gaps with imagination and a due regard for historicity.

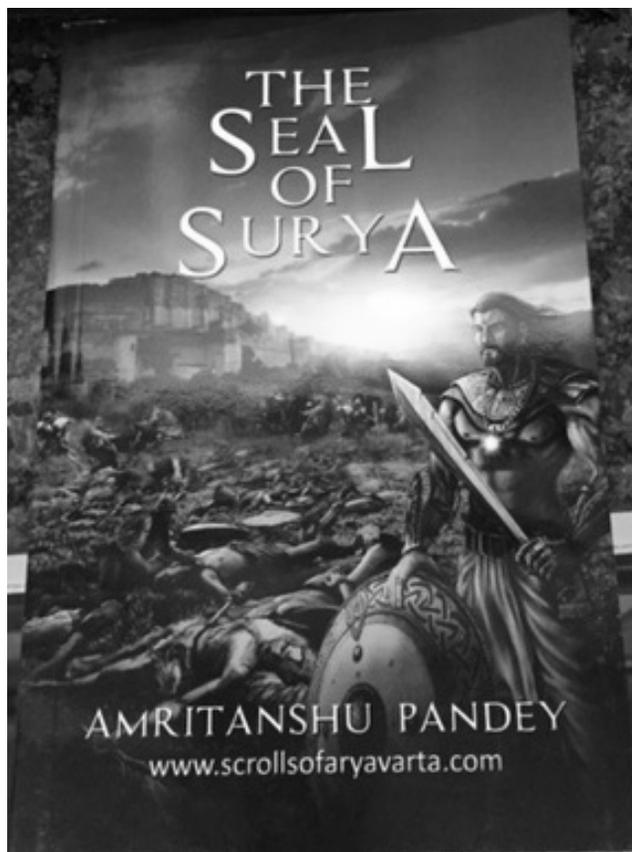
The novel begins with Ikshvaku as a young boy, proposing to his father Vaivasvat that their divided Suryavanshi clans need a leader to yoke them together and fight against the growing strength of Anarya tribes -- Rakshasas, Gandharvas and Yakshas. The story jumps quickly from here on, and some readers may be put off by its quick transitions. Ikshvaku becomes King in the fourth chapter itself, and halfway through the book the story has moved past more than a decade.

Much of this journey is devoted to his search for the seal of Surya, a mysterious relic that once belonged to his ancestors and casts undisputable legitimacy on its owner. But even the seal is found well before the end, and we begin to realise that the novel is essentially Ikshvaku's biography. It chronicles his endless battles against Yakshas, Rakshasas and even rebels in his own tribe alongside his attempts to be a good son, brother, father and to a much lesser extent, husband.

In the final analysis this novel is more about the history of Aryavarta than about any particular character. The author reiterates it by setting Ikshvaku's story as being narrated a thousand years later to Sudasa, a young prince of

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\* The reviewer is associate professor of history, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi



**Title: The Seal Of Surya (fiction)**  
**Author: Amritanshu Pandey**  
**Publisher: Pirates ([www.pirates.ind.in](http://www.pirates.ind.in))**  
**Price: Rs 175**

the Bharata tribe, by King Bhagiratha of the Suryavanshi. Along this journey he poses some intriguing questions, such as how and when did the Suryavanshi migrate from the Sindhu to the Ganga, and who founded Ayodhya? How did Aryavarta go from being the land of Suryavansha and Somavansha to a nation ruled almost entirely by the Bharatas? Luckily, this novel is only the first of many stories set in this universe, as the author informs us.

A question may arise how is 'Seal of Surya' different from Amish Tripathi's much popular Meluhatriology? Tripathi started with a bang with TheImmortals of Meluha, was able to maintain interest with TheSecret of the Nagas but lost the plot in the third volume, the most voluminous of them all, The Oath of the Vayuputra. In case of the volume under review, author Amritanshu Pandey has done well to wrap his story through a very crisp narrative in 222 pages.

And the author makes no bones about it. In the epilogue to the novel he writes, "I see this novel as only one story in the vast world that encompasses all of ancient India's history. This history to me, ends where the Ramayana and Mahabharata begin. Indeed, Sudasa's time is some 500 years before the reign of Rama of the Suryavansha. But there is only so much I would be able to capture through the novels, and I fear I cannot dedicate my life to this like Ashok Banker has to his Epic India series."

However, Pandey, who works for a multi-national, promises that like Ikshvaku, he has a few more stories of similar heroes of largely unknown era lined-up. I could look forward to it.

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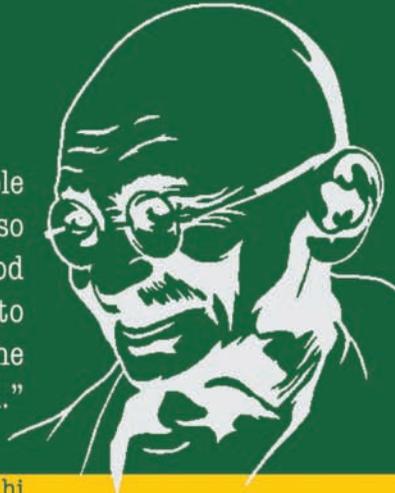
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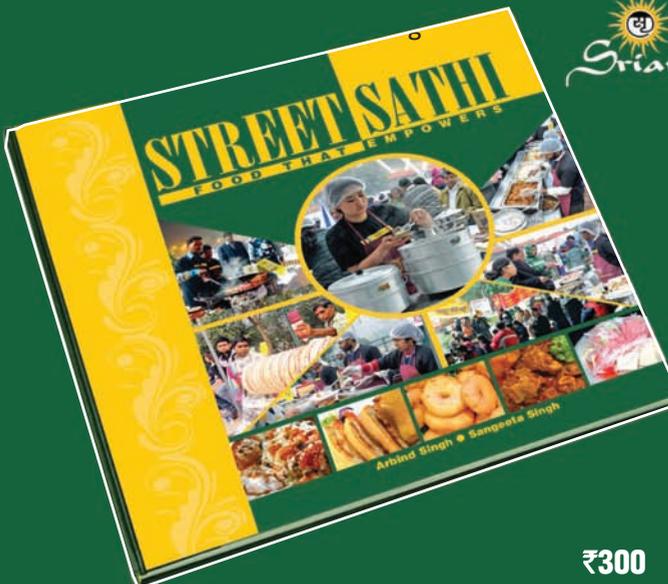
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