

**PART I**  
**W H AT WE ARE**



## 3

## Our Cowardice

## 3.1 Our history

Our country has always been known as a *golden peacock* as we had enormous riches in gold and precious stones, diamond, pearl, ruby and other gems. But they were all plundered<sup>1</sup> by the time we got independence. This and our rich art and culture should have induced in us the courage, the strength and the ability to protect our riches from the onslaughts of invaders and plunderers. But this was not to be and what remains is a weak and a tragic past of our country. The earlier invaders (other than British) came, killed and looted only a particular area. While their loots were enormous, their operations were localised. The British did the same but they were spread all over the country and therefore slowly and gradually they looted the most – and for nearly 200 years. Their plundering must be the worst. But the country still possessed enough to become prosperous once again. It had wealth of rich art and culture, natural and primary resources, massive manpower and strategic geographical location as discussed later. Unfortunately, during post-independence era too, the country has been ransacked

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1. Some major plunderers of our riches in the last one thousand years,
    - a. Mahmood Ghazni — from Afghanistan - (CE 1000)
    - b. Mohammad Ghori — from Afganistan (he ruled us through his slave Qutab-din Aibek) — (CE 1192)
    - c. Changez Khan (non-muslim) — from Mongolia (CE 1220) Halaqu (his son) embraced Islam.
    - d. Timur Lane — from Turkey (1398)
    - e. Nadir Shah — from Persia (Iran) (1739)
    - f. Ahmed Shah Abdali — from Afghanistan (1748-1767)
    - g. East India Company
    - h. British Imperialism
    - i. *Guardians of Independent India* — (1947-till date)
- } biggest plunderers because it was at  
} macro level (1601-1947)

and plundered. This time by our own guardians and custodians. They have been ransacking us now for the past 60 years.

It must be interesting to investigate, why were we so averse to only British who were educated, more organised, resourceful, constructive and were ruling most parts of the world at that time and would have proved better rulers than the previous ones in view of their progressive outlook (see Section 8.3), while we had accepted all alien rulers in the earlier 800 years. One conspicuous reason why Indians didn't like British and struggled for freedom appears to be their fair skin and language. Until then all aliens who ruled us could easily mix up with us, because of their skin and language that was not much different from ours. It was natural adaptability for those who came from Afghanistan, Mongolia, Turkey or Iran. But to understand English language was a hard nut to crack. Its dialect was totally different from Hindi, Urdu or Persian spoken by other rulers. For us to learn English has never been easy not even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when due to globalisation it is imperative for all to know this language. Moreover their overwhelming personality and aristocratic style of living was absolutely averse to Indians who were accustomed to simple living and traditional attires.

The Englishmen thus looked more foreigners than others. For a ruler whose personality was so towering that belittled us before them, a language so foreign and a lifestyle so rich and aristocratic, that a feeling of dislike and contempt for them was natural. They were not wanted, because they were not like us. Another aspect of our aversion to British may be that they never settled in India unlike other rulers and ruled us only from afar. Had they also been from Iran, Mongolia, Turkey or Afghanistan or had they also settled in India, it was quite likely that we had accepted them too and continued under their rule, like we did in the earlier 800 years.

### **3.2 Reasons of our cowardice**

For long we have been searching for a logical answer to the deep-rooted cowardice of our masses who perpetually bear all brunts of life as wish of God but never revolt. From the behaviour and attitude of our populace, most of them illiterate and timid, we have inferred the following,

- There have been infightings amongst the rulers in the ancient and the medieval periods. It was like their pastime, resulting possibly from a feeling of insecurity and lack of communication with the

neighbouring rulers. It led to suspicion and this kind of attitude. These infights proved fatal and rendered our country vulnerable and weak, besides exposing it to the external world.

- We have been suppressed for many centuries. From the tenth century particularly, our country was a centre of continuous invasions, lootings and killings and rules by the aliens.
- Everybody in the world realised that we were an enormously wealthy country but highly vulnerable, weak and meek and therefore an easy prey. That is how came the Portuguese, the East India Co. and then the British who plundered and ruled us. The populace of this country remained timid and never retaliated. All these events induced in our people a mindset of fragility and timidity. We thus internalised our subservience and developed a slavish mentality.
- There was a profound separation between communities due to casteism. The scheduled castes and backward classes particularly (constituting the bulk of population), were never a part of the mainstream. They were not supposed to study or participate in wars, but stay ghettoised and stick to activities assigned to them by convention. Victory of one king over the other did not matter them. They remained slaves no matter who was the king. It led them to submissiveness, and cowardice. They were unable to see far and had lost all initiatives and self-being.
- Those in the mainstream also suffered, for they were the warriors and made up the fighting force or did other respectable jobs. Barring a few they too remained subjugated. Most of their children grew up as orphans as their fathers would die in wars leaving behind their families. These families too grew weak, fragile and destitutes.

**Old habits die hard, and we are a weak and meek race even today and suffer silently the sorrows of life and excesses by others as the wish of God.** We are incapable of raising our voice or revolt. We are habitual of getting kicked and be ruled by others. Deprived and subjugated for centuries we are left with no courage to fight against the excesses. Today also we suffer indignities day in and day out, but do not raise our voice or revolt. The political system has taken full advantage of this situation and has made us grossly over-dependent on them by alluring us with false promises or by doling out incongruous concessions. Despite these crumbs their (community) illiteracy and ignorance remains as before. The political class has surely succeeded in its sinister intrigues and cunning designs. Different communities would support different

leaders and/or parties who they consider would care for them. Hence, began the competition between communities of the same society and resulted into a feeling of hatred and contempt for each other. Every community became a follower of some leader or party. Our guardians have played with us the same shameful and sinister game as did the British when they ruled us 'by divide and rule' for 200 years. The utterly non-performing and highly destructive system of our governance thus reigned over us without any deterrence or fear. With time it became callous and insensitive to the sufferings of the same people who voted them to power and for whom our freedom fighters had shed their blood.

Our society has now fragmented into umpteen sections. To earn a livelihood somehow has become the basic task of most people. The common man does not try to learn the significance of society, neighbourhood or the nation. His basic aim is to arrange for his livelihood. The day-to-day problems are so insurmountable that these leave little strength in our people to think of anything else. It has led them to timidity and rendered them fragile. They accept sufferings as the wish of God. Reliefs, subsidies, gratis and reservations please them more than anything else. It is enough for them if they are getting reliefs. Most people do not bother to know who caused them these sufferings. They have grown accustomed to these for centuries. In many ways they still live a life they lived in the medieval past.

It is sad that people of our country are incapable to raise their voice. We hear some noises in the cities for some demands by the employees and labour of government or private business houses and industries or by the people of some locality shouting for water, electricity or other civic services, and that is the end of our courage. We have hardly heard the voice of our rural populace. They live almost in hibernation and suffer the miseries of life silently, except for attending ridiculous rallies organised by political parties such as *Dhikkar* rally, *Thu thu* rally, Black day rally, *Pada Yatras* and *Rath yatras* etc. to name a few. We are accustomed to be misruled and can bear all brunts of life because we lack the courage to revolt against our own system. It is indeed easy to rule us without caring for us. The sole cause of this timidity is our illiteracy, ignorance and lack of self-respect and pride. It is a pity that we are unable to realise the fact that it is our own guardians who keep us illiterate and weak for their own interest and partly because of their incapability to educate us!

### 3.3 Our illiteracy and backwardness

There were hardly any rulers during the medieval period (from about CE 1000 till about CE 1800) who voiced for education or put up any effort in this direction. We do have a mention of great universities of Nalanda (ruins in Patliputra now Patna) and Takshshila in Sind (now in Paskistan) but that was in about seventh century that basically preached Buddhism. Except for this not much seems to have been done to educate the populace, until at least the British rule. British dwelt on education and opened colleges and universities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (This good act of theirs, however, later proved fatal for their own survival as our educated class began the struggle for freedom and compelled the British to leave us free by 1947.) Even this was too little and only the affluent could reap the benefits of their education system. Nevertheless, it was during this period that education spread and the educated class grew in numbers.

#### **Note**

The British system of education produced a class that was Indian by blood but English by culture and lifestyle. Surely they imparted education for their own good. Nevertheless they founded the education system that our country lacked.

Ironically, our post-independence rulers have not been assertive in providing education to the masses in real sense because of their selfish motives, although there has been enough noise by them in this regard. **Education, grooming and inculcating habits of good citizenship in the people should have been the first and foremost task of our guardians. But they have failed grossly to perform this basic duty.** No concerted effort was ever made to provide quality education to the masses, and make them worthy citizens of the nation except for lip service and false propaganda. Instead they were provided alms, gratis, reservations and some kinds of subsidies. Rather than making them capable citizens to earn their livelihood themselves in a dignified manner they are made to remain illiterate, backward, poor and timid and dependent on handouts. This is the story of our country after independence and reasons of our cowardice and backwardness.