

PA RTII

WHY WE ARE

To judge the level of progress of our country one must look at the extent of poverty and deprivation of its masses in the rural and urban areas rather than the affluence of a few in large cities.

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Our Callous System of Governance

8.1 Beginning of an era

- Gandhiji emerged on the Indian political scene in 1915. With him began a rejuvenated era of struggle for freedom, charged with enthusiasm and renunciation, and on 15th August 1947 we accomplished our long cherished freedom with a blemish. Pakistan, dismembered from our soul and body, was a big pain. As a consequence the situation was highly volatile and people were charged with anger and anguish. Our leaders, however, played ecstatic as they had achieved what they had wanted oblivious of the situation and unprepared to face its aftermath. Lack of assessment of the situation and the unpreparedness led to an untold catastrophe. **In the communal riots that followed at least 13 lacs were killed and about 150 lacs displaced. Thousands of women were raped, thousands of children were rendered orphans and thousands of homes were ruined. This was an atrocious sin and our leaders responsible for this cannot be pardoned.**

Nevertheless we pledged to give our blood and sweat once again; this time to construct our nation brick by brick into a nation of our dreams. But it did not happen. The perennial problem of J&K since then, the plight of Kashmiris and overall poverty, illiteracy and backwardness of our masses in both countries is a stark reality that stares and jeers at us as if mocking at our freedom. It was a strange kind of freedom where a country that was one for a thousand years under the rule of aliens was partitioned into two no sooner it came under its own rule.

The post-independence era has already seen us toil relentlessly through these 59 long years. Sorrows, sufferings and uncertainties have become the order of the day for the common man. All our hopes have been belied and we stand cheated. There seems to be no difference of slavery of then or freedom of now. If we look back, the present is only an agony and frustration of our shattered dreams and false promises. **Nothing has failed so miserably as our hard-**

earned freedom and we remain helpless silent sufferers at the hands of our own guardians. While they enjoy the riches of their self rule, people are left in the lurch to live or die with their miseries. The 5.85 lac odd villages where about 73% of our people live, continue to toil under almost the same conditions of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and backwardness as before independence.

- Different people may cite different reasons for our failure. But no one likes to analyse the reasons in their true perspective. We have tried to identify the same, perhaps many of you may not agree at the first sight, as the truth is always bitter. **But one day we shall have to take the bitter pill and accept the harsh truth. Unless we do this we shall end up treating only the symptoms and more acute shall become the disease.** We are already amongst the poorest, most backward and the most illiterate communities in the world barring some affluence of large cities post-liberalisation and under open-market conditions. This paltry affluence many of us mistake as "India shining."
- To refresh your memories let us remind you that by 1990-91 our economy was caught in the rut. The foreign loans had jumped to over Rs 1 lac cr and we were not in a position to honour our BoP obligations. Twenty tons of gold in May, 1992 and 47 tons in July 1992 was carried physically to the Bank of England, UK, to take a loan of \$ 600 million to pay for what our polity and bureaucracy had spent on themselves in the past. It may be hard to believe but this alone is the truth. Remember, in the preceding few years there was no war, no drought, and no import of food, yet we had to pledge our gold, that means the system had misappropriated the nation's wealth. Since our plight remained much the same even after this, it is justifiable and logical to conclude that most of this money was spent by them on themselves only. If we look closely, our system reminds us of the callous king Nassir-ud-din Muhammad Shah, known as *Rangila* the ruler of Delhi (1719-1748) who cared hoots for the British forces and enjoyed his evenings with drinks, dances and other frivolities. Our system too is enjoying the feast of their power and pelf and the country is going to the dogs.

It was the period (June 24, 1991), when the rupee and so the country and our self-esteem was devalued to their disgraceful low. It was a historical crest fall of our country.

The country's interest burden increased by 13 times during 1980-1992. It led to heavy public debts, high fiscal deficits, heavy inflation

and record devaluation of rupee. One would recall there was lavish spending by the government and its associates on themselves and on non-plan expenditures that had no returns. The growth of the country had come to noughts. Now the country is already under heavy debts as noted below and this shall be rising more rapidly in times ahead. Our system is insensitive and unconcerned. And for this we and our children will have to pay the price one day at the cost of our sovereignty (Section 21.2). Our indebtedness and interest liabilities for 2003-04, as noted below are disturbing and have crossed all safe limits,

Internal debts	- Rs 22.64 lac cr (Table 5.2)
Centre	• Rs 17.24 lac cr
States	• Rs 5.40 lac cr
External debts	- \$111.83 b \cong Rs 4.92 lac cr (Table 5.2)
Yearly interest	- Rs 1.24 lac cr (Table 5.1)
Fiscal deficit of centre and states	- > 10% of GDP
Printing of excess currency	- Rs 1.25 lac cr
Trade Deficit	- \$ 15.46 b (\$ 51.55 b by 2005-06) (Table 5.3)
Circulation of	- Fake currency, stamps and stamp papers worth lac of crores of rupees

These shocking figures are galloping at an alarming rate (see Tables 5.1-5.3). People are unaware and the governments are unmindful. Each government stays for a few years and then passes on the economic carcass to the next government. No one questions anyone as all cook on the same fire. Thus has been run our great country over the years by our guardians. To meet the rising deficits, excess currency is printed and large loans (internal and external) are acquired by the RBI year after year. This also is galloping unbound.

- It opened the flood gates. We started selling our nation to the affluent world to collect money. The process continues. The rate of swindling of the national wealth touched new heights like never before.

The public was coerced. The government rules and regulations, checks and controls and statutory requirements, and their religious compliance through the officers and inspectors became highly abusive and contemptuous for industries, businesses and the common man. The government staff had a field day. Even the honest businessmen and industrialists were forced to become dishonest if they wished to survive. The nation was the loser so also its large people. During this period (1980-92) the money went out of the Indian market. It

fattened our polity and bureaucracy. It was no different than the *lagaan* that the past rulers collected from the people. Then it went into the chest of the ruler, now it went to the individuals working for the system. There was severe money crunch, everybody wondered where the money had gone. Besides the system, it also went into the private hands.

8.2 Gandhian philosophy of rural empowerment

Gandhiji said the soul of India lived in villages and India's salvation lies in rural reconstruction. He truly visualised the nation. Concepts of many of us are also similar. But instead of alleviating the human sufferings of those living in villages, he portrayed himself also as one of them. It didn't work and the dismal plight of the rural poor continues unabated even today. They are the same today or even worse than what they were 60 years ago. He had a vision but no solution. It is sad to say so but since his voice was the gospel truth particularly for the rural populace, it becomes necessary to analyse why even after 59 long years his philosophies have failed to improve the lot of the same populace that were so dear and close to him, despite innumerable welfare and employment schemes, charity, gratis, hand-outs and dole-outs to them year in and year out as mentioned in this book.

To cure someone with diabetes will call for giving up eating sugar. In earlier times the *hakeem* would first experiment the discipline on himself by giving up sugar and then recommend it to the patient. It was then. To become one of them to remove rural backwardness or alleviate rural poverty, has no rationale in modern times. What is important is to feel for them, analyse their problems and the causes and address the same with conviction. A patient cannot treat a patient while a doctor can. To treat one must become a doctor not a patient!

Gandhiji certainly was a visionary when he said that all villages must be self-supporting and self-reliant. We also say so. But he could not suggest how? Perhaps he had in mind the self-rule through *Panchayati Raj*. But the idea was misconceived and he overestimated the calibre and capability of the illiterate and ignorant rural masses. The same gospel is being practised even today without assessing its propriety because it was advocated by Gandhiji. No wonder there is no upliftment of the rural masses because it lacks application and practicability. It can do no good to anyone except those handling the rural funds. He lacked in his vision the means to support and sustain the rural populace. Agriculture, tiny industries or spinning wheel alone were not adequate to achieve it even in those days because of large rural population. In

today's scenario of high technology and mechanisation, handmade items have little use. Even our modern textile mills have failed (Section 10.2). Another lacuna in Gandhian philosophy was thrust on self-support rather than also self-development. In the first place the primary sector had to be improved on various counts as discussed in Chapter 11, and then it needed to be strengthened and supported by the secondary and tertiary sectors but this was not conceived. Even now it is being emphasised and practised blindly by most political parties without assessing its utility. In our concept of **city centres** all this will be addressed automatically.

In our philosophy, education, exposure to modern living styles and affluence are essential (without which a village will forever remain a village and its inhabitants villagers). This may be the only way to uplift our rural populace so that one day we can become one people and one nation. If we are not able to do so, our dreams to make this country as one of the mightiest and most prosperous countries in the world will remain only dreams. To construct our dreams into reality our first task will be to ensure that our rural folks are free from wants and uncertainties of lives on a permanent basis as discussed in Chapter 1 and then rehabilitate them in a dignified way as discussed in Chapters 11 and 12.

PANCHAYATI RAJ (LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE (LSG))

A parallel rural government. Sort of a government within a government. Like state autonomy, the *Panchayati Raj* too works on autonomy to the villages who are now directly administered by the centre because the money is released by them. This has extended one more avenue for the people in the system to manipulate funds in the name of rural upliftment without doing much in reality. The state governments are nonplussed with all the funds available with the administration and are not interested in having a parallel government to take care of their rural development. In any case it undermines their own status and dignity. **The problem of our country is ignorance of the entire system, at the centre, states or LSGs. The *Panchayati Raj* is a farce and a further drain on our resources. When our cities lack adequate schools, water supply, power, sewage and civic amenities, to think that LSGs will be able to provide all this in villages is fooling ourselves.** If they are able to do so, we better call them at the centre to perform that miracle for the urban populace also. It is a crude example of this country where everything is done the wrong way and crumbles down sooner or later and there is no one to check on it. **Anything government is destined to fail, be it**

PSUs or LSGs.

- Balwantrai Mehta Committee in 1952 gave a proposal that unless the powers were decentralised and people's participation was raised, to think of rural development would be day-dreaming. And so said everyone else in the last 55 years. Even we say that participation and involvement of about 115 cr people is essential for the nation's upliftment. But is saying alone enough? Can anybody given power and money be asked to develop the nation and will he do that? People say *Panchayati Raj* (LSG) is an old system (and was practised even before the British came to our country) and that is how we conducted our administration. But it can only solve their internal disputes or day-to-day problems and not carry out any developmental work. No surprise, our rural front without any respite continues to reel under the same illiteracy, backwardness, poverty, sorrows and grief of life as 60 years ago. It is so when we have enough rural representation in our polity also. In true sense our polity too is a large *panchayat* only, as they represent 91% of populace that is rural (73% rural + 18% rural migrants to urban areas).
- Everyone likes his child to become an engineer or doctor. But wishing alone is not enough. The child must complete schooling, clear the entrance exams and then work hard for 4-5 years to become what he wants. We must learn our lessons the hard way and groom our thoughts before we carry out a task. An illiterate is not even considered for the job of a peon or a constable by the government itself and they expect the villagers to develop their villages. The government wants LSGs to prepare their own plans and projects and implement them. **What centre and state governments with their entire might and brains have not been able to do, the village folks are expected to do through LSGs! We wish them to have a magic wand.**

To display affinity with rural poor and concern for rural upliftment, most of our leaders still wear *khadi* as if wearing *khadi* makes them their saviours. Whatever it be, rural poor are still migrating to cities in search of livelihood and back home their parents and siblings are sustaining themselves somehow or the other. **Our leaders have been shouting at the top of their voices for rural upliftment – but it refuses to happen. Shouting for 60 years must have tired them, they better now relax. They have worked hard enough, let others do the rest.** Doing something without knowledge or expertise is like putting the cart before the horse be it by our central, state or local self governments. Such an approach is half-cocked and haggard and

lacks purpose and application. With such ideologies and bent of mind, we have already ruined the nation.

8.3 Beginning of our fall

Nobody likes to be a slave and therefore our fathers and forefathers sacrificed their lives to free us from the shackles of slavery. We all wanted to lead a dignified life and thus began our journey after independence. But it was not to be. We chose an insensitive, incompetent and selfish system that would think for itself rather than its subjects. We stumbled before the start and have not been able to rise since then. We tottered our ways through short-sighted, and half-cocked knowledge of our system and are in shambles now. Those in power ride high and like the earlier rulers consider themselves as the masters and the subjects as the slaves.

CHRONOLOGY OF OUR DOWNFALL

1. **Nehru era (1947-1964)** – “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny. Now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps India will awake to life and freedom.” This is the famous excerpt from Nehru’s speech in Parliament at the midnight hour on the eve of Independence day (August 14, 1947). He propounded a philosophy of half socialism and half capitalism but failed in both. It continued until he died. The economy and prosperity of the nation had almost died by then. But he did not know it. He was the first and the longest serving PM of our free nation and remained in power for 17 long years. **It is amazing that he created the causes for the destruction of the nation but closed his eyes to watch their effects.**

He was the architect of evolving bureaucracy for its people, which gave supremacy to novices, over the professionals, experts and intellectuals. These bureaucrats would head teams of engineers, doctors, architects, lawyers, economists, intellectuals and educationists, even industries and also head all departments of government including PSUs. It was a deliberate and sinister act to undermine and show mistrust in the educated class and professionals of the country. The ruins of the nation were on the anvil but he refused to see that. We surely cannot be harsh with him because he was our most beloved PM and was a freedom fighter. But just as an engineer cannot treat a patient neither can a doctor design a dam, to be a freedom fighter alone is not enough to run a nation.

- Gradually the polity and bureaucracy snubbed the educated and gave liberty to the illiterates (labour and workmen) with far-fetched ulterior motives. No wonder, today the illiterates reign supreme over the educated. The country has illiterate subjects and the inexperienced and incompetents rule them. The minority educated class is a non-entity in the total set-up and has been long marginalised. The polity, bureaucracy and so also the illiterate people all dislike this class and hold it responsible for their (people's) miseries. Our system of governance has proved more cunning than the British. While they applied this tactic to rule a colony our guardians and the bureaucracy do it to rule their own subjects.
- Professionals, experts and intellectuals who are the backbone of a society were despised and belittled at the slightest opportunity at the behest of the bureaucracy. This I can say from my first hand experience because when I joined UPSEB, Lucknow, in 1965 there already existed an Engineering Employees Association agitating against the bureaucracy. **A number of such retaliatory organisations were protesting throughout the country in 1950's and 1960's, similar to the different groups of freedom fighters during our struggle for freedom.** But they were abated with full force like the Indian freedom fighters were once by the British soldiers.

We empowered the rural populace through Panchayati Raj and enslaved the elite through bureaucracy and thus destroyed the entire nation.

Negative signals had started showing immediately after the bureaucracy was put to authority. But no heed was paid to this in the fit of newly acquired powers. We thus imbibed a system that polarised the nation. It was in bad taste and belligerent in character. In the larger interest of the nation it should have been scrapped right at the start. The deterrents should have been resolved amicably before making the whole system unscrupulous and callous. Either other services (professionals) at the dictates of bureaucracy had gladly accepted the bureaucratic superiority or the government should have reconsidered its decision of imposing non professionals¹ under-qualified, most of them young and inexperienced incumbents as the supreme bosses over specialised

1. To call them generalists is wrong, because most of the bureaucrats (barring a few) are simple graduates with no exposure or experience of any kind. All of a sudden a student of history or arts becoming the incharge of Medical Health Services does not make him a generalist.

services. This created a class conflict and mistrust amongst the professionals who not only had been left out from the mainstream, they were subjugated by the bureaucrats who possessed little experience or expertise but were bestowed towering statures and unlimited authority. It was enough to belittle the rest of the country. The country that was one before independence got fragmented into two classes, one that belonged to the system and the other that was public. **Our guardians did not know if we should start our journey with love and togetherness or with contempt, affliction and partisan feelings. It was just a replica of our earlier feudal system, the Queen or the King and their staff as the ruling class and the rest as the ruled or the slaves.** It is a different matter that gradually even the professionals who worked with the government also became a part of the system willingly or reluctantly and gradually imbibed the same traits and practised the same culture as the rest of the system. But such a system was not to deliver and that it never did in 60 years.

The dispute lingered and then died but the pain continues. It was a big insult to the professionals and indeed a national blunder. Our professionals thus fought yet another battle soon after independence, this time for their self-esteem against their own guardians for imposing on them yet another feudal system in the name of bureaucracy. But the professionals failed and the system prevailed. It was traumatic. **The damage was done. The professionals in the system never gave their utmost. Everything became routine without any purpose, initiative or drive. We got divided before we began, this time against our own polity and bureaucracy and thus the country was destined to doom right at the start. If we take cognisance of our past, the tottering economy of our country sought for a support at the start but it fell sprawled because our intellectuals, experts and professionals who could provide the required support, were pushed aside.**

One may be a very learned person, but he cannot perform a doctor's job and treat a patient for which a doctor alone is required.

(Ignorant System vs. Professionalism)

- Development of a country does not depend solely on what rules and regulations its government prescribes for its citizens, but also whether it takes the people into confidence. It must involve the citizens also for the plans to succeed. **If the people have some voice, hear it; if it is worth, consider it. One cannot make his decision as the last**

word and implement it through a wand of authority. It is feudalism, not democracy. We actually adopted a feudal and not a democratic system. Soon the country, shattered and disgruntled, got fragmented. People started losing faith in their own system but continued electing their governments for they had no option or strength to revolt. A bad beginning and a disastrous outcome. **Now look closely at the causes that must have happened before independence also that culminated in the most tragic and barbaric partition of the country. Not to live together and work together seems to be in our blood. It is our habit to spoil things for short-term gains and stay divided and weak for all times.**

- The bureaucratic lobby got a pat and support from their political bosses and gradually became stronger, mightier and more authoritative. The politicians and the bureaucracy were hand in glove, each supporting the other. **Blinded by their authority and arrogance the first government of the nation deliberately overlooked the shortcomings of the system they had adapted and allowed the disease to set in. The bureaucracy — first the ICS and later IAS officers — gradually tightened its claws and dominance, other services gradually lost their steam, silenced and reduced to insignificance, defeated, insulted and marginalised.** Their powers became so enormous that the whole nation looked small and belittled before their towering stature. It is not clear why our leadership was so averse to its own professionals and experts and was hell bent upon to impose a deliberate deterrent in the progress of the nation. No wonder our educated youth and professionals preferred to serve other nations than their own. Anybody with logic and common-sense could see the doom ahead with such a partisan system but our guardians chose to overlook it. The only reason that comes to our mind is that possibly our guardians then had seen nothing beyond the British feudal system and their working style that ruled half the world. But what they had seen was just skin deep. **A free nation cannot be run on a system that is established to rule its colonies. We had thus shut all doors to our progress and prosperity. We sealed our future right at the start and so began the beginning of our fall.** Everything under government control failed and the sufferers were the poor people. In British feudal system people had no voice and so also in our democracy except the compulsion to vote the leaders to power. The leaders (polity) became masters on public votes while the same public became poverty-stricken and voiceless.

Pandit Nehru who gave birth to this system was in power until 1964. Indeed 17 years was a long period for him to assess his achievements and mistakes and take corrective measures where needed. But everybody blind with power and authority did not consider it relevant for an introspection. Thus a very vital aspect was overlooked before the country was set to take off. **This lapse cannot be excused irrespective of our love and regard for all those who were involved in giving the administration this shape. This lapse is the root cause of our sorrows and sufferings and dilapidated condition of our country.** The sufferings and miseries the innocent people of this land have endured in the past 60 years and the millions who have already laid down their lives under miseries and deprivation cannot be expressed in words. An instant death is more glorious and less painful, slow dying is a curse. Unfortunately our people are undergoing this curse. For these self-afflicted woes we must shed tears and hang our heads in shame.

- The corruption had started breeding right from 1950s. Incompetence, inaction and lethargy had started showing up in all fields and on all fronts in the beginning itself but he remained complacent and played an ostrich or a saint in deep meditation, assuming that when British could rule half the world in this fashion he could surely rule this country of illiterates and ignorants. What did we gain ultimately in the bargain of our freedom struggle? We were out of one rut and pushed into another. Earlier we genuflected before the British imperialism, now we do so before our own. To be subjugated under our own ill-conceived and lesser accomplished rulers is indeed a big insult. If we look closely, we are slaves again and work at the dictates of our ill- conceived and incongruous system of governance. The purpose of freedom is long lost and so is lost the initiative, drive and a will to do something for the nation. We have become an ordinary country with ordinary people and fall under the third world nations.
- In the face of resentful thoughts for the educated and elite by the system this class is dealt with contempt and an utter disregard even by the masses. The common man considers the business class, industries and the affluent society as cheaters who have swallowed the wealth of the nation meant for the masses. Polity and bureaucracy in any case vent out such feelings. A true replica of *Bollywood* Cinema, villain swaggering and hero hiding due to suspicion. This misconception has scornfully created a wider class conflict in our society and a total mistrust and an avengeful attitude for each other.

The attitude of our people thus underwent a gradual transformation. In our day-to-day dealings we lack courtesy and a kindly attitude for the fellow beings as discussed in Chapter 7.

Pandit Nehru was an extremely strong personality, highly adamant in attitude and short tempered, not willing to listen to any one. His word was law and a commandment irrespective of the harm it may do. He imposed bureaucracy, nationalised many private industries and business houses and took control of natural resources in the name of PSUs, enforced checks and controls and put numerous gags on the private sector (Section 10.2). He would usually work as a single person and was an authority unto himself. The others were merely his staff. He is often compared to a banyan tree under whose shade no other plants can grow. This greatly influenced the thought process of those in power and close to him or in authority. They too gradually became self-centred and clambered to make their presence felt as their own identity was at stake. Everybody clambered to assume greater powers and authority. The evolution of this process has gradually culminated into the system that we presently have.

After Pandit Nehru, the system was adopted as a gospel truth by his successors and as one of the commandments for free India. Then started the in-fights between the political parties for power and the bureaucracy would always reign supreme acquiring more strength and teeth with time. They became permanent administrators (rather rulers) on which would depend all governments for day-to-day working and implementation of laws. The polity took for granted that they were meant only to rule and all the work was to be done by the bureaucracy who they (polity) could use in any manner they liked. With time this feeling, further deteriorated the quality of polity and hence the governance. **Moreover, since they were and are chosen by the illiterates, ignorants and poor, the only ability they needed was to somehow appease the people to ensure their votes. Their performance would commensurate with the level and strata of people who voted them to power.** The bureaucracy assumed yet more strength and authority. Moreover, the entire bureaucratic clan united in the hour of need and in total command, were able to do what they wanted and in a style that satisfied them most. In total contrast, the polity is divided and busy in undermining each other like the erstwhile rulers of our medieval past. Gradually the polity took the back seat in day-to-day functioning. The bureaucracy did all their jobs and enjoyed all the authority.

With such enormous powers and authority and even the polity at their command, bureaucracy assumed more sadistic postures for the

public, particularly the professionals and the intellectuals, businessmen and the industrialists. All were supposed to be subservient to them without fumble or resentment. They assumed such enormous stature that all the other services, even defence and police, looked pygmies before them. They could easily summon any chief of the defence staff and even make him wait. Today polity and bureaucracy are licensed to loot the wealth of the nation and rule the people like a brutal king. The prosperity of the nation is already shown the door. **With passage of time the leadership has taken a perversive shape in thought and deeds. Most of them today are dishonest to their duties, insincere to their responsibilities and unconcerned about the nation.**

2. **Indira Gandhi era** (1966-1977, 1980-1984) — She called for more socialism and by late 1960's and early 1970's nationalised a few more private sector banks and insurance companies. She took further steps to close the economy whereas, as member of GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade) (now WTO) we were supposed to open up the economy. Well, hers was a whimsical act possibly to fulfil her father's wishes. Whatever went in the government hands became inefficient, costlier and highly corrupt. But she too, infatuated by her father's dictums, played another ostrich to the realities of the nation's problems and its constant dilapidation.

- The banks extended loan facilities to small entrepreneurs at reduced margins and lower collateral securities which until then was possible at higher margins. But the government *baboo*s benefited more than the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs were harassed by these *baboo*s through their sinister checks, controls, and balances and innumerable inspectors. Every government department that was meant to provide any kind of service to the industry was empowered. Every *baboo* had a price. There were statutory requirements and innumerable permissions in writing required for everything one did and involvement of yet more *baboo*s in the offices to handle and move the file from chair to chair and table to table. One or the other *baboo* would always be on leave or raise some objection. Things of seconds would take months and until then one would wait like the poor farmer for the rains.

The industries became sick (speaking generally) and the government, incompetent by virtue and sinister by deed, remained like mute guardians. What should have been an asset became a liability for the country. The enthusiasm, originality and commitment amongst the entrepreneurs, professionals and general youth to do something for

the nation vapourised like scent from the bottle. We became an ordinary country with every thing ordinary, while the hungry wolves waited for the night to fall.

3. **Rajiv Gandhi** (1984-1989) tried to take the nation to the 21st century but the cruel hands of death snatched him from us much too early (1991).
4. **V.P. Singh** (1989-90) came with another gimmick. What he did in one year others could not do in many years. He doled out a policy of lip appeasement to all (implementation of Mandal Commission report being one). Lips can only talk not work. He kept talking and the nation kept listening and got fed-up of him too soon. He spun the sordid coin of reservation policy for the backwards and OBC's (other backward classes) and created a class conflict during this short period. His deeds put a further divide in an already divided nation on caste lines and between the rich and the poor and further fragmented an already polarised society. Many students died in the agitations that followed. But the coin spun once is still tossing.
5. **Devi Lal** became our deputy PM (1989-1991) (a special post created to accommodate him). Many state-owned ITDC hotels were converted into *chaupals*. One could see his feeling of contempt for the elite and his staunch desire to bring them down to the level of a villager because he lacked ability to uplift the villages or the villagers to the urban level. If he had been our PM for sometime it is for sure that *socialism* would have come sooner than planned. The urban areas would have erelong become rural and all of us would've become rural folks by now. But God saved us as it did not happen. It is a different matter that *ruralization* of urban areas that had already started, is happening now at a faster pace because of large-scale exodus of rural poor to urban areas in search of livelihood (also see Section 11.3).
6. **P.V. Narsimha Rao** (1991-1996) along with Dr. Manmohan Singh (Finance Minister, 1991-1995) had to adopt the policy of liberalisation under pressure from international lending bodies. **He had no option but to sell the utensils to buy medicines and honour BoP obligations. More than liberalisation it was globalisation.** Somehow the BoP menace was circumvented to everybody's relief as discussed already. The rupee was devalued to a record low (from Rs 18 to a dollar in 1991 to about Rs 32 to a dollar by 1994). The slide once begun is refusing to stop (about Rs 48.5 in 2002). Imports were liberalised, a few industries were de-licensed and PSU's were put

up "For Sale." Apart from this nothing much happened. The bureaucratic checks and controls, inspectors and their excesses continued unabated. (I was in my own industry then).

- **Now our guardians had woken up from their long snuggling siesta of 44 years, to realise to their utter astonishment and disbelief that what they had been practising for 44 years was all nonsense and that they must have an immediate *volte-face*, somewhat like the last minute rescue efforts by the crew of the great Titanic ship before the crash (the ship sank ultimately (1912)). The market that was closed from external influence until then, and most of it under the control of the polity and the bureaucracy, was opened up for global participation. A total sea change in our earlier philosophy. People wondered if like before, it may also be crying wolf and turn out to be a hoax after a few years? And it was not unfounded, most of us had the same suspicion. After all in our second attempt also we had nationalised banks and insurance companies and had taken the entire core sector under government control. Now we wanted to privatise the same core sector once again rather than selling them to outsiders. Surely our economy was in shambles. Our guardians had led the country to ruins and dragged the people to rags.**

People, political parties, media and intellectuals who made so much hullabaloo at that time against this kind of liberalisation also calmed down with time. Even the detractors then are supporters now of the same policy with the new governments. It is true also, when your child is dying of illness or hunger you may also pick up a begging bowl, shedding all shame.

Now it was a free-for-all who were in the government at whatever level. The situation was no different than a looting spree by all and sundry in the government. There was total chaos and quandary. Government had full control over public but not on its own staff. Most governments were weak and short-lived and kept busy in their party affairs to save themselves, everything else was secondary and of little significance. Also during their short stay, the governments must save for the rainy day. There is now a tacit and clandestine competition as to who amasses more wealth than the other, lest one is left behind in the looting spree.

- Now the whole country is in serious doldrums. We have been lucky in the past 13 years, to have generally good monsoons and hence good harvest. God forbid if in any two consecutive years there is a

drought (as the past statistics would forewarn) there will be a state of famine in the whole country and it shall expose us like the famine of Bengal (1943). What will happen to this country then is anybody's imagination?

- Mr. Rao also started mid-day meal for children, and also dined with them, a project to cost more than Rs 15,000 cr annually in those times. Many states stopped it soon after having consumed a few thousand crores. But the plight of the children didn't change. The mid-day meal is one typical example reflecting the absurdity of governance, totally aimless and without any purpose. And then we realised it was more a sinister move of a politician to appease the masses rather than a Nestor's² deed to fight the causes. Even the wealthiest and very generous king would think twice before doling out such an extravaganza. Firstly, we had no money, how could we sustain such a project and for how long? Was a source created to generate this money year in and year out? Secondly, what good he thought this project would do? It was just a temporary relief, in fact an attempt to make our children feel as orphans or destitutes rather than worthy children of their worthy parents. His act was no different from a *rich* religious devotee distributing food to the destitutes and beggars lined up outside a temple or a religious place. Not that others didn't do or are not doing this kind of gimmickry but we mentioned this in his case because we consider him to be the most learned of all. This proves our point that everybody cannot do all kinds of jobs.
7. **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** (1998–2004) The country thought to have got a prudent leader at last, but it was short-lived. He said Pokharan Nuclear tests would prove our worthiness and play a deterrent to Pakistan. Not only this deed belittled us in the eyes of other nations, it provoked Pakistan³ also to follow suit. We wonder whose bombs now act as a deterrent and to whom. Some newspapers and magazines have even expressed this fear in their news coverage (see Section 23.3). Our people were killed mercilessly with more ferocity than before. Not only this, we had to face Kargil war immediately thereafter and were caught unawares and ill-equipped (see Section 23.1).

2. Nestor was a king of Pilos (part of Greece) during 1100 B.C. regarded as a great Greek hero. His name is referred to as a wise old man.

3. It also gave liberty to other countries to go nuclear (North Korea, Libya and Iran are more vociferous). The world community is working hard to persuade them desist from initiating nuclear proliferation activities.

He has gone whole hog to implement liberalisation and disinvestment of PSUs in the hope of collecting huge booty in the shape of foreign exchange from outside world and in their absence even Indian bidders to meet the expenses of the system. (In the eyes of the people it is for the development of the country - which shall never happen). The situation started worsening by stagnation on industrial front, loss of jobs and job opportunities, mounting deficits and rising debts. **We are astonished to note the ignorance of our polity and bureaucracy about liberalisation and its wrong implementation (see Chapter 21).** His party swaggered unbound on its powers and authority and detached itself from the masses. They considered undermining and abusing others meant victory. The false affluence of cosmopolises due to rising foreign exchange reserves, FDIs, FIIs, bullish stock market and consequent higher liquidity in the market sent out wrong signals to the party. They propagated "India Shining" and "Feel Good" slogans and preponed the general elections. It misfired and the party stumbled to its defeat.

It is surprising why this time they counted only on the elite mood and overlooked the mood of the rural and the urban poor. The affluence of the cosmopolises, even if that was, was limited to the elite and people of some means. It was a miscalculation to have taken the poor for granted, and his party had to bear the brunt of this wrong assessment. The unexpected defeat in the general elections in 2004 baffled them. It made them more vociferous than taking a lesson from it. Now there is an infighting within the party that may one day lead to their disintegration, even a downfall.

8. **Dr Manmohan Singh** (under the chairmanship of Sonia Gandhi) (2004–) An economist and a professional with better administrative ability. Initially groped through a highly volatile opposition causing regular interruptions in the parliamentary proceedings and an adamant 'Left Front' (CPI-M, CPM, RSP and Forward Bloc) allies of his own government against privatisation. However, a weakening opposition and compulsion of Left allies to prevent the fall of the government allowed him steer through these stumbles somehow with compromises as and when considered imminent.
 - Appeasement programs (no developmental work) are yet again riding over prudence. The first in the series is 100 days job/year to one person in each family living below the poverty line under National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) scheme 2005, similar to P.V. Narsimha Rao mid-day meal. It is not defined what kind of jobs

these unemployed shall be engaged in and whether the projects are identified and detailed schemes drawn to execute the same to justify the large investment. Or is it simply a muster-roll dole-out with no legitimate return?

Now we realise this is simply an attempt to pull a large section of rural people below the poverty line to above it (to improve government's statistics) by providing them minimum calories as per government's definition of poverty level.

The coin he has spun shall have longer-lasting repercussions on our dwindling economy costing the exchequer very heavily (Rs 0.4 - 1.0 lac cr annually as estimated roughly), while the plight of our 68% poor to very poor people (Table 5.5) shall remain much the same if the past is any evidence. He has also played the same sinister game (presumably under compulsion from his party members and allies) to push our poor people to destitution telling them to live on alms rather than making them worthy citizens of a worthy nation. He is also treating the symptoms than curing the disease. We surely had not expected this from him.

New leaders and state governments have also started doling out similar charities like more free power to farmers (even if there is no power), loans, more rice and wheat, even egg with mid-day meal (Tamil Nadu, 2004) unmindful of the resources and the harm it shall be doing to our economy, stagnating developmental projects. A case of extravaganza over means and pushing the same people to destitution who we want to salvage out of it. **Short term reliefs can never be long term solutions to perennial poverty but people in the system shall never know it.**

Now comes another bombshell in the form of 6th pay commission that may inflict yet another burden of Rs.0.3 lac crore annually on an already deficit galloping budget. Presently also many states consume most of their budget amount in salaries and perks. Gradually more than the budget shall be salaries and perks and the country shall continue to reel under power cuts, water shortage, floods and lack of civic amenities. It may benefit a few (about 2.5 cr) working for the system to the grieves of the rest who will bear the brunt of the inflation that will follow. This may also widen the divide between the two. But it may possibly win them the next general elections.

Not by charity, not by dole-outs, we want our people to be naturally prosperous.

- To please his party colleagues Dr Singh has also formed umpteen numbers of high level committees involving ministers, chief ministers and senior bureaucrats to solve national problems, while he already has full fledged ministries to address the same. Let's see if they can overcome our perennial problems like floods, droughts, scarcity of water and power or improve our education, health or sanitation systems which others have not been able to do until now.

Then will come another PM with another team the basic system of governance remaining much the same, and like helpless subjects we will watch another coin spin. And so will continue the gimmicks till we are also put up "For Sale" like the PSUs are and someone else may rule us like the British ruled us once (also see Section 21.2). We propound to change the system, or we shall remain down-trodden and down.

Old machine with new operators shall produce the same lousy products.

Conclusion

- We have been rendered like sheep and goats whom our guardians can huddle and herd as they want. Our first PM evolved policy of nationalisation (controlled market) while he signed GATT in 1947 that envisaged an open market. Indira Gandhi further reinforced it in late 1960s by nationalising banks and insurance companies. Then Narasimha Rao opened the market and Vajpayee sold the same PSUs that were specially created by Nehru to bring socialism and keep private sector under thumb. Now, Manmohan Singh wants to pursue the same but for LEFT's impediments. As funds are essential to honour the government's various appeasement programmes noted above, they instead are now trying to disinvest PSUs to raise funds. But this too is under stalemate due to LEFT's opposition.

This whimsical mix and match and aimless working has already ruined us. First they control, then open, then sell and disinvest - looks ludicrous. They better decide what they should do and then only spin their coin.

- Things don't happen by whims. For progress and prosperity one must possess a clear vision besides knowledge and competence.
- **Our guardians didn't know how to run the nation then, they do not know how to do it now, then why should the public be always tormented and goaded like herds for no fault of theirs? Today the whole nation is sizzling because of such stupid policies of our**

polity and bureaucracy. Should we keep accepting them like bonded slaves and one day die like destitutes? Pandit Nehru was an apostle of peace, our torch bearer and *messiah* who led us to freedom from slavery and then to rags and miseries. For 17 long years under his direct absolute rule and another 27 years after his death, his inept philosophies continued to flourish. During this period the people suffered unbelievable woes and untold miseries. **Pandit Nehru would neither listen to any one who did not consent with his philosophy nor take a corrective course to mend his wrongdoings. He was a destructive dictator in his thoughts and deeds and was the last word. Today what we are and our miseries all around are a direct consequence of his woeful curses on us.** The bureaucracy in any case was his contemptuous imposition on the people of this free land. Bureaucracy and the polity, like obedient soldiers, religiously adopted in letter and spirit his arrogance and whimsical style of working and have goaded the country through these 60 tormenting years.

We have become like that chronic patient whose family members would try all doctors, homeopaths, *vaid*s and even quacks or go to anybody one may suggest, in the hope of finding a miracle. **So did our government, they first tried capital-socialism, then a little more socialism (nationalisation of banks and insurance companies) and then liberalisation, globalisation, disinvestment and then selling out everything at hand. They may try all gimmicks, but they shall never find a solution, while they shall still make large fortunes for themselves. In the process, the country is already bled, has become a pauper and is under heavy debts. We are telling the whole world now that we are incapable of running our industries or services – so please come and run them. And surely one day they shall be running our country (also see Section 21.2). We had once requested Israel and Italy (Section 25.5) to provide us expertise to handle cross border terrorism and advise us on maintaining internal security.**

- The developed countries are surely resourceful and are backed up with progressive brains and outlook. During British regime also they did so much of development work for us in various fields (despite our resistance, non-cooperation, disobedience and hatred for them) (see note below). Looking back from our today's global philosophy they were global for us even then, operating from UK and ruling a great part of the world. As the old saying goes, a wise enemy is better than a foolish friend (Prince and the Monkey, Section 10.2).

Note

British provided us the Parliament House where we hold parliament of our independent India, the President House, official residence of our President and the North and South Blocks, Raisina Road and the long impressive Rajpath with lush green sprawling lawns on either sides of it and the India Gate all stand tall even after 60 years of independence while they all had been built much earlier. All this stands with pride and grandeur and through this passes our Republic Day parade with great pride year after year and our President takes salute while the entire polity and the bureaucracy watch it in attendance. We in our free India could not build even one site in the last 60 years with such architectural excellence, splendour, planning and craftsmanship. The roads, railway system and its beautiful and sprawling oriental design railway stations, universities, secretariats and government houses in every state and innumerable buildings and rest houses at various places and hill stations are some examples. They all outshine even today and put to shame our sordid and debilitated new government buildings. We have not constructed even one railway station of that size and grandeur or a government building of that stature. Not that we lack good architects or town planners, we never made use of them like our other professionals. And now we hear that the Rajpath lawns may soon be converted into parking lots as the proposal is.

But we didn't want all this. We wanted freedom at all costs. We could live in wants but not as slaves. The slogan then was "self-sufficiency" and "self-reliance." without realising that we were being trapped into a hallucination created by our own guardians and that we may be made to live in our own country like the herd of animals. That was the greatest blunder when we confided in our leaders who we considered our guardians, without knowing their intentions or realising their worth. Our destiny had been cast. We were in for an oppression through our own guardians and it has been more insulting and painful than to be slaves. The general public genuflects before them for small matters, more than they did before the feudal system. But Pandit Nehru never heard their sizzle neither felt the broil of the nation.

A country can progress with unity and cohesion not confrontation. The fateful decision to bring non-experts, inexperienced and non-professionals to administer the country in utter disregard for the professionals sealed our fate and destroyed our country right on the runway.

In the passing**8.3a PERMANENT SEAT IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL (SC)**

It is good for a nation to aspire for it. To be a permanent member of the SC is a privilege but demands a lot more responsibilities. Self-

restraints and disciplines are first and foremost. The member country must be able to set examples for others to follow and work hard for healthy relations amongst member countries and a congenial environment to maintain world peace and tranquility. In this context, it will be desirable for the aspiring nation to know and possess the following vital virtues important for the well-being of the world community.

- Is it aware of the sufferings of its own people?
- Is it caring and looking after its people and their sufferings?
- Is it able to abate and take care of human rights violations?
- Is it able to control and handle crimes, and is protecting its people against the same?
- Is it able to abate terrorist and extremist activities within the country?
- Is the judiciary capable and providing fair and timely justice to its people?
- Whether it advocates Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and can persuade others to practise the same?

These are just a few important virtues, that according to us a country must possess before aspiring for such a coveted position in the UN and discharging its basic responsibilities towards the well-being and welfare of the world community. A country not capable to take care of the above in the right earnest shall be grossly inappropriate for such a position. We must realise that the position demands care for the world community and looking after their well-being. And that is possible only when the aspiring country is capable of taking care of its own people and country first. It is another matter, that in the past few years UN itself is failing in its duties and responsibilities like the League of Nations failed earlier and this is not a good sign for world peace.

8.4 Evolution of our political system

- The political parties weakened with time as their greed for power led to bifurcation and fragmentation of their own parties and shift of alliances. The awkward alliances with persons and parties who once were their foes is also a part of the same gambit without reasoning or principles. **A member of one party today would be a member of another tomorrow. Until yesterday those who were abusing the other parties now abuse their earlier party and colleagues without regret or remorse. To earn public support they openly malign their rivals as if it would raise their stature or**

capability. In the present scenario the polity keeps itself engaged in undermining each other and has little role to play in looking into the people's problems or development of the country. They know only of appeasements and reliefs being the easiest to do and for this bureaucracy is always with them. They are indeed true companions and complement each other in such matters. Polity's main task is only to retain their seats in the face of rising contenders and to dole out more of such ideas and charities that can hoodwink the masses. The developmental work and well-being of the people are non-issues.

- Every political party calls the other parties fools, incompetent and responsible for all ills. Election gatherings cover only rural people. In the rallies held in metropolises, the audience comprises mostly of the rural migrants and urban poor. But their plight refuses to improve, despite frequent election gatherings, their regular presence at such rallies and their leaders delivering such fiery speeches, like 'Dhikkar' and 'Thu Thu' rallies in Lucknow (2002) which attracted very large crowds, many died also in the stampede that followed.

Our polity is ignorant and blindfolded to the stark realities of the nation's problems. It is reduced to mere figureheads to make news headlines. They are neither capable nor willing to do any good for the nation in the face of their selfish interests. Yet they enjoy all the riches of the nation. Even the British rulers were more concerned about the prosperity and well-being of its colonies. They built railways, roads, schools and universities during their rule. Surely India would have been a better country had it been in their hands, except that we would've been known as slaves. But we have earned no laurels by becoming free. We still live our lives worse than slaves and at the dictates of our own people. Like South Africa, we too had been freed long ago and become a prosperous nation by now. **Surely our present liberty is more cruel and outrageous than the slavery of then.**

8.5 Government appeasement policies

Our democracy seeks involvement of the people only for electing their governments. Since majority of the voters belong to the lower strata/weaker section who are illiterate, to appease them somehow is the only objective of the polity. Some appeasement policies are noted below:

(I) RESERVATION POLICIES

Reservation is a human rights violation.

To lure the masses they divide the communities on caste lines through a mischievous reservation policy. **We will like to caution the people that reservations can never be a solution to our problems. It is the sole responsibility of the state to take care of all the people of the land and provide them jobs or other means of livelihood in a dignified way. Those who preach reservation are incapable of finding avenues or creating better economic conditions to provide jobs or other means of livelihood to its people. They only know how to divide and make us weak by snatching bread from one and giving it to another which is a mean and an inhuman act. Similarly reservation in education.** We should not fall so low as to become fratricides and kill our own brethren and the fellow beings for our survival. This is a cruel partisan policy of our politicians to fragment us in terms of caste, creed, religion, language, rich and poor so that we keep fighting amongst ourselves and remain weak and fragile and make it easier for them to rule us unbound. By such sinister policies the country has been wishfully fragmented into umpteen number of sections each having its own identity and little concern for others. Even the plight of those for whom the system seemingly has been doing so much, at the cost of others has not improved.

Note

The reservation policy also leads to selection of incapable persons to positions requiring high calibre, expertise and professionalism.

(II) RESERVATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR

Earlier, it was Ram Vilas Paswan (leader of Lok Jan Shakti Party, June, 2004), who propounded for reservation in private sector. Now, the UPA government under pressure from the Left Front wants to pursue the same and is even prepared to enact a law to ensure job reservation in non-government sector, presumably to absolve itself from the responsibility of unemployment. The government may be ecstatic superficially by such dole-outs to a particular weaker section of the society, unmindful of its repercussions on the performance of industries. It may hamper their expansion plans and growth, affect quality and product excellence. It may also activate labour unions with more zeal and fervour to create problems. Some industries may even choose to invest outside the country under open market conditions. Inflow of FDIs may dwindle. All this may lead to more problems created than solved. What may seemingly appear to be a soft solution to unemployment may eventually prove to be a short-term treatment without solving the long-term problem.

(III) DUBIOUS PROPAGANDA

Full page advertisements in the newspapers by various state and central governments highlighting their future programmes and promises for the public have become regular features and are on the rise. A few photographs of ministers, chief ministers and prime minister are usually affixed on these widely publicised advertisements. But most of these are a hoax, as they mostly publicise future plans while many of the earlier plans have either been shelved or have made only scanty progress. See the following,

- They announce to provide so much of power, so many canals, pumpsets, blah this and blah that, but they remain on papers. Had it not been so, the plight of our villages would have been long improved. Pumps are installed on rocky grounds and water is afar. At some places they are simply installed and no pipes are laid while money has been spent. The same is true for canals. Most of these are completed on papers but have neither water during droughts nor are capable of preventing floods. Power scenario is the same. It has not reached most of the villages. Where it has reached it may have a few twinkling bulbs in a whole village and this is enough to make news and full page advertisement. When we are facing regular power crises in cosmopolises one can imagine the condition in villages.
- Even petty issues make an advertisement. Now we see advertisements for opening up of a fish market or a culvert over a nullah. The next possibly will be inauguration of a cycle-rickshaw stand in the heart of the city or authorisation of an illegal and awkwardly situated *jhopar patti* colony.
- Authority and power and execution of jobs are two different areas. The files keep fattening and then the government changes or the bureaucrat handling the project is transferred. Often, after a few years, the project is shelved. The change of portfolios may also change the thinking, philosophy and the priorities, as every one likes to promote his own projects and toss his own coin. At the end of the day most budget allocation is consumed on overheads (maintenance of new offices and the burgeoning staff) and the project remains on files while enough publicity has taken place.
- The government *baboos* make the projects and put them in the ribboned files. These files are tossed from one table to another and from one ministry to the other for years. If it is a matter of canals or transmission lines that is to pass through many states, one can imagine the number of years this may take to arrive at a decision.

This is the general story of the past 60 years and we expect one day we shall be successful (हम होंगे कामयाब)! When I was a child I used to sing this in a chorus, then my child did this, now our new generation is doing this. True, one must never give up. But shall we ever be successful? Where to put one's efforts to be successful? Fight against the walls? There is no developmental work, government expenses are soaring and are being met through borrowings or printing of currency, job opportunities are shrinking, government and private sector both are retrenching their staff and our children are chanting "we shall be successful." We only wish if prayers to God or chanting of cheerful songs would bring us success. Unfortunately neither prayers, nor songs but work and work alone can bring us success. And people in the system surely do not know how to create work for the people or get the work done through their own machinery except doing lip service, or dubious publicity.

(IV) UNKIND RELIEFS

- About 30 women got killed in the stampede during distribution of free saris by Lalji Tondon of BJP in April 2004, during the campaign of Lok Sabha elections.
- Then in Dec. 2005 distribution of flood relief coupons in Tamil Nadu killed more than 42 persons in similar stampede that followed.
- Following suit, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh doled-out gratis to its 8.5 lacs unemployed youth as noted before; the state being in heavy debts already.

These incidents are enough to reveal the harrowing level of destitution that our country has attained. And then this is the scene of cosmopolitan cities. It is a matter of sheer imagination to assess the level of destitution in rural areas.

In a temple we distribute clothes and food to the beggars and destitutes to derive solace and to reach heaven. Our governments distribute reliefs to the people to discharge their obligations.

- Subsidies, interest-free loans, free electricity or waiver of loans are all good gestures indicating our concern for the rural poor (labour, farmers and youth). But a gratis is a gratis and is only a short-term relief to mitigate emergency hardships until regular employment avenues are created for them to earn their livelihood themselves. Such measures cannot be long-term solutions. Conditions have to be

created and people have to be made capable to earn their livelihood themselves. Therefore all relief measures in the past 60 years have been a drain on our economy and proved futile. It has weakened our people rather than making them stronger. What needed was to investigate the causes of their poor plight and address the same with righteous conviction on a long-term basis.

Permanent reliefs may be essential for those who are disabled or helpless to earn and need to be rehabilitated on a long-term basis. To a healthy man alms bring him shame and belittle his self-esteem. During droughts or floods which bring calamity to our rural people, such subsidies surely provide them the required relief. But if such occurrences are of perennial nature then not relief but investigation into the causes would be necessary to find a permanent solution for that. Our problems are floods, droughts, epidemics, lack of good quality seeds, and fertilizers, storage, transportation, lack of education, etc. All this would call for development on-long-term basis rather than reliefs or subsidies on a short-term basis. **But our system considers it enough to provide them reliefs which it mistakes as cure.**

The rural poor too now know only of reliefs and have become habituated to live on alms and handouts. Come droughts, floods, epidemics, poor seeds, fertilizers or other problems and they look up at the government for alms. The rural people now are more helpless than before. They also, more than development look for easy reliefs. **No one – neither the rural people nor the government machinery – realises that if there is no development where the relief money also will come from and for how long? After all printing of excess currency has a limit and so also living on public borrowings.**

- In the name of rural upliftment and poverty alleviation the government has been launching several programmes and projects for the weaker section, but their plight refuses to improve. The poor farmer still stands stripped and bewildered at the crossroads.
- In case of education, budget allocations fall short even to meet the salary needs not to say for libraries, R&D facilities, sports, construction of school buildings, their upkeep or a healthy educational environment. But enormous wasteful expenditure is incurred to satisfy the whims of some politicians, such as 'Green schools' of Bihar (now closed) a very dear project of Laloo Prasad, the then CM of Bihar. Similar is the case with the mid-day meal introduced by former

Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao for about 90 million children (now stopped in many states). These are only short-term gimmicks and misuse of large funds to appease the ignorant masses while the general plight of people keeps deteriorating. Neither do we have the funds, nor can such reliefs do us any good anyway. It also undermines the self-esteem of a parent as if he was incapable of earning for his family. **Remember, everybody likes to work hard for his living and takes pride in doing so.** We would rather insist on creating means of livelihood so that one can earn for his family and meet his basic needs with dignity and pride rather than living on alms. Let us not forget, that only on a sound infrastructure can we build a strong nation, not on alms or charity.

Similarly NREG scheme (2005) of the UPA government under Dr. Manmohan Singh shall also do no good to the rural poor neither shall change their plight — only time will tell — while enormous amount of money shall go out of the exchequer on this unproductive scheme. This, however, is a welcome opportunity for the government machinery to make a fast buck.

(V) MLA'S AND MP'S LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT FUND (1993)

The MLAs and MPs are also provided financial aid to support development in their constituencies. Five frontal attacks by (*Panchayats*, MLAs and MPs development fund, union government relief packages and state government rural development schemes) plus NGO's, all to develop rural areas. But rural areas refuse to develop. One may be at loggerheads to comprehend how so many agencies can work together for a common cause and implement it? And surely all this has resulted in gross waste of money and a total fiasco.

This aid for MPs was Rs 1 cr up to 1997-98, 2 cr from 1998-99, now we suppose it is being raised to 5 cr. For MLAs it varies from state to state (usually Rs 25 lacs to Rs 2 cr). In a way another official perk to the politicians and the bureaucracy. The money is released through a bureaucrat who can be the district collector or commissioner of the area. Who consumes the money and on what heads no one would generally know but the money would be spent. In Lucknow, (March, 2003) we witnessed live video tapes and other news items on how to distribute this money amongst themselves during Mayawati regime. In Dec., 2005 MPs are caught under a sting operation by a TV channel, fixing for paybacks up to 45% on contracts. Now there is a hue and cry by those caught and their supporters whether someone is legally

authorised to conduct such kind of sting operations as if politicians are empowered to legally swindle the public money. Also see Section 22.3.

(VI) DEGENERATION OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Since most political leaders are incapable of doing anything constructive they resort to small gimmicks like changing the name of streets, Institutes, railway stations or cities like changing Bombay to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkata and now Bangalore to Bengaluru or bifurcating one state into two and clamouring for more. Similarly raising percentage of reservations or stopping beauty pageants because it is indecent for our civilised society!
- One state (West Bengal) has resorted to teaching of English again which it had earlier discontinued from primary education. Another state (UP), has now banned teaching of English in the primary schools. Even public schools are to discontinue teaching English, to bring all children at par (by Rajnath Singh the then CM). A great way to abolish social bias! The corollary is that if you are not able to eradicate poverty eradicate the rich. Similarly if you are not able to educate the children keep other children also at bay.
- In the same context we will like to mention a case of interference and bullying of educational institutions in the name of appeasement to weaker sections (2004). Presently IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) and other schools not under direct control of government, are going to alter fees on the plea of accommodating students from weaker sections. The Government is promising subsidy (without making provision for it) to meet the deficit (in the global scenario we are reducing subsidies). The then HRD Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi's move was precisely to establish supremacy of the government over the professionals, in the name of appeasement and, create a feeling of contempt, conflict and mistrust between the professionals and the government. A move of making the people busy fighting over extraneous issues, rendering them weak and vulnerable and more dependent on the same system. A case of destruction rather than construction (see Section 8.3 (1)). Such partisan attitudes cause impediments to togetherness of the people and unity of the nation. A divided nation (in thought and speech) shall remain weak, poor and vulnerable. The noble cause of fees reduction could have been done in a dignified way, with understanding and respect for all.

If he had succeeded in his move what was the guarantee that his philosophy was honoured and subsidy released un-interrupted in the long term with the change of government or the incumbent? Going by the track record of the government the subsidy issue would have short lived and the institutes had ended up chasing the government for the release of subsidy consuming most of their productive time in arranging funds/subsidies to run their shows.

- This apart, can they improve education under their direct control (Section 14.1) and, raise quality of education there, check mushrooming of unscrupulous institutes in the country at every nook and corner, opening up with government fraudulent licenses and turning them into seats of abuses, rather than learning? There are reports of mass force closing of a few such institutes by the same government (Jharkhand) and other states - denying recognition to some, and bulldozing at other places (Noida — June, 2005), while unscrupulous growth of sub-standard institutes for engineering, medical sciences and other higher education continues.
- They take pride in telling the people of the recruitments of teachers they have sanctioned. Allocation of funds for them is “project executed and task of education fulfilled.” No one bothers to know who are being recruited (like large-scale manipulations in recruitments in Haryana,⁴ news item May 2004). And, whether the schools are functional, possess basic facilities and learning material and most importantly, have an environment for learning. It is little surprise that our education system has always been in such shambles and 87% of our new born either remain illiterate or only partially educated (see Section 14.1).
- **Mandal II (2006)** Our unplanned country is always thrashed by some kind of whims by its ignorant and callous politicians. Earlier Murli Manohar Joshi, and now his counterpart Arjun Singh has spun his coin, with Mandal II to raise reservations up to 50% in higher studies for weaker sections. Amazingly, more the government does to uplift these classes deeper they sink into their own agonies and miseries. For heavens sake! Let our politicians, even on humanitarian grounds, do something constructive to alleviate their miseries on long-term basis rather than always eyeing their vote banks and resorting to such short term gimmicks. Incapable of creating enough learning facilities to accommodate the ever-rising and more aspiring

4. One may be aghast to learn of the rising cases of the same teachers raping and ruining the lives of their own pupils in Haryana (Feb. 2006).

youth for higher studies the government resorts to such mean and ludicrous gimmicks of snatching bread from one for giving it to another. Amazingly most in the system, even those not in agreement with such quotas, eventually sing in the same tune.

- Similarly raising of irrelevant issues like of cow, temple and Hindutva etc. which have nothing to do with the prosperity or well-being of the people.
- The latest trend is to project oneself as a God, a saviour of the mankind or a king of the masses by crowning himself and taking out processions in a chariot through the streets of the city. **Leaders who are not able to build their own character are supposed to build the nation?, what an irony!**

(VII) CLOSURE OF DANCE BARS IN MAHARASHTRA

The Maharashtra government in 2005, just out of the blue imposed a ban on dance bars in the state leaving thousands of bargirls in the lurch without creating alternative means for them. One of Maharashtra Deputy CM himself was involved with some bargirls. This is an example of whimsical and callous attitude of our system. Many families are ruined for lack of living means. A number of girls have opted for prostitution as their profession while some perform stage shows in different parts of the country. Now we hear that many of them are going to Thailand and other countries to pursue this profession. In most cases their families are shattered.

These are some major causes that have eroded the basic fabric and cultural values of this land. It has also encouraged the illiterates, rogues and criminals to become our national leaders to rule the masses. Bandit queen Phoolan Devi (now killed) was an MP, Veerappan, sandalwood smuggler and poacher (also killed) wanted to join politics, Arun Gawli an extortionist and gangster is sitting MLA (2005) in Maharashtra and Dadua the dacoit of UP (killed in 2005) wanted to join politics with the blessings of Mulayam Singh Yadav, CM of UP, besides many more who are already ruling the roost and many who are jailed while in power.

Let the country go to dumps, but the ignorants and the rogues shall always reign supreme.

(VIII) BIHAR : FROM RICHES TO RAGS (A CASE STUDY)

Bihar is a classic case to analyse reasons of backwardness of this state. Similar reasons of failure would apply in varying proportions to most

other states also. This analysis can serve as the basis for general underdevelopment and backwardness of the whole nation.

Total land area	=	174 lac hectare (1.74 lac km ²) [1hectare = 2.5 acres]
Arable	=	115 lac hectare
Cultivated	=	85 lac hectare
Mineral resources	=	40% of India (richest state)
Population	=	more than 8.5 cr (2002)

(These figures include those of the region now known as Jharkhand)

It is observed that the states that have poor agricultural base or poor agricultural output remain poor despite their other riches because of general lack of development in other fields or lack of other avenues of employment, where the rural unemployed can be engaged. Consequently, the rural areas where people are not adequately utilised, are compelled to send their youth to other places in search of livelihood. Somewhat similar to our early civilization when people would move near water and green meadows that would provide them basic necessities of life.

Note

In the face of overall underdevelopment in all spheres because of utter political and bureaucratic failures agriculture remains to be the main source of livelihood and sustenance for most rural populace throughout the country after 60 years of our independence.

The case of Bihar is a perfect example. Youth of the state migrate in large numbers to nearby states in search of livelihood to support themselves and their dependents back home. Most of them get engaged in low grade jobs such as domestic help, industrial and constructional labour, *rickshaw* pullers, loaders, coolies and footpath or kiosk vegetable and fruit vendors.

Bihar is a rich state in terms of mineral reserves (coal, iron ore, mica), it also has a large number of heavy industries in different sectors, numerous rivers flow through it, yet it is the most backward and amongst the poorest states in the country. Some of the major causes for this heart-rending and remorseful condition of the state can be attributed to the following:

- Gross misuse of resources,
- High level of inefficiency and work abuse, labour unionism, incompetence and enormously high level of corruption,

- Very high population compared to the land available with the state. This has led to lesser avenues to be productive on the agriculture front. Individual land holdings are very low to be viable. It is about 0.51 acre per head. Their per capita agricultural produce compared to country's average, is even less than their land holdings. It has therefore become a food-deficit state. This indicates their low resource utilisation. Rivers flow through the state but because of regular droughts and floods they have become more a curse than a boon. Farming therefore, is not a worthwhile proposition for the rural people in the state. No wonder the rural poor here have little to do, resulting in their high level exodus to nearby, even far flung urban areas in search of low level jobs.
- When everything is in a dilapidated condition, education too is in a poor state. Its most rural populace is illiterate.

It is a case of poor governance in all spheres as also centre's failure and insensitiveness to the state's problems. Not that the present condition has emerged overnight. There has been a gradual degeneration of culture, human values and economy over the years. All this is a big question mark on the propriety of our system of governance at all levels. Let us pause and behold! **Our democratic system based on "majority is authority" with the support of illiterate and ignorant masses, has proved disastrous and has sabotaged the whole nation.**

8.6 Evolution of bureaucracy

We have already discussed a part of it in Section 8.3, however some more analysis is provided below:

- The system of governance during the days of British imperialism was through civil administrators. They were generally of Indian origin and trained in UK and represented a replica of British culture; and philosophy of British feudalism. Their basic aim was to belittle the Indians through their wand of authority and that would be the requirement of any colonialist. This was their purpose which they fully practised. We adopted the same system in Indian style. But it didn't bring a material difference in their attitude. The culture that prevailed earlier continued even after independence and with more ferocity. In fact the bureaucracy has emerged more powerful and authoritative post- independence. The common man is despised and belittled even now.
- **The bureaucracy works in closed compartments and interacts through papers and files.** There is little personal interaction between

them and their staff. They do not even have a round of their offices to see the working conditions or say hello to their staff. Most government offices are in shambles and many of them stink. They usually have very old furniture, swinging tables and chairs, poor almirahs with old files stacked awkwardly and a disorderly staff. Tea cups and glasses are placed between the papers and files or strewn over the floor. Look at thousands of government offices throughout the country and one shall witness similar sights. All new offices also look old and stinking in a few years. Municipal corporations, transport offices, city's development authorities, railways, industries, financial institutions, water and electricity offices, post-offices, sub-stations, telephone departments, hospitals and DGSD etc. are a few such offices that will greet you with such a scene. But the bureaucrats' own offices are usually neat and well furnished.

- There is no check or accountability of work at any stage. Monitoring of any activity is absent.
- The technical staff dare not talk to these bureaucratic heads.
- In fact they try to imitate them in their attitudes and behaviour like earlier bureaucrats aped Sir Winston Churchill.
- Work culture lacks as everybody tries to work or not work at his own whims. There is no team work, there being not much work anyway.
- Frequent reshuffling of portfolios changes the earlier philosophy, priorities and approach towards a policy matter. Priority for one can be a garbage for the other. There is no firm policy, neither a cohesion of thoughts on a subject matter. In the process, the staff down the ladder also relents. Now it has become a practice to only relent, as nothing happens. Whatever little happens is also undone with the stroke of a change in portfolio of the politician or transfer of the bureaucrat. Time and money spent in any case are immaterial for the people in the government. At the outset there may not be any issue of country's development. Even if it be, it lacks knowledge, expertise, initiative and a force and most importantly sincere intentions. Everything is casual, lacks purpose and collapses at the end.
- Projects and their execution are also through papers and files only. Projects are cleared on paper, released on paper and executed on paper. The enormous paper work keeps the bureaucrats fully

occupied and they have little time for the public. They are indeed very busy persons. Ultimately the emphasis is on paper work and one who is good at that scores over others. He can even hide his failures and no one can catch him. Most PSUs and government projects have failed because their performance is accomplished on papers.

- A bureaucrat in charge of health services, would not know about deficiencies in children, reasons of any genetic disorders or evolution of physical or mental deformities, the types of precautions or treatments the parents must exercise while rearing their children or before their birth. At most they can give their remarks or some opinion on files that are produced before them, as they do not interact with the doctors. After all what can they discuss about medical profession? So everything happens on papers only.

I have personally seen the working of the then chief secretary of UP when I visited him in connection with my state subsidy case in the mid-1980s. He was indeed a very busy person with a heap of files and piles of papers before him and I had an "opportunity" to sit across him for nearly an hour and watch him working. Possibly he wanted to make an engineer and an entrepreneur realise the enormous amount of work they were required to handle and equally tremendous responsibilities on their shoulders to discharge. All through he had been clearing papers and files and talking to his bureaucratic staff on intercom. All conversations were related to administrative matters speaking generally. And that is true also for an administrative head.

There is a widening gap between the bureaucrat and the professional. One has position, power and authority but lacks knowledge, and the other has knowledge but has no authority to perform, neither can he discuss his professional problems with him. The result is "talking through files." Our bureaucracy therefore is a farce, a disease and dilapidated condition of our country, the woeful plight of our people are its conspicuous harrowing consequences.

(I) BUREAUCRATIC SUPREMACY

- They are indeed very tall. This I realised at the very beginning of my career. The encounter was so frightening that it created a fear psychosis in me and a feeling of inferiority complex before them

(year 1965). My Chief Engineer, UPSEB, Mr. Laxman Dev was sitting on the smaller side of the table on a smaller chair same as mine. I was sitting in front of the IAS Chairman Mr. J.S. Lal sitting on a bigger chair with a tall back and dazzling like a feudal king. The fear sends shivers even today. The occasion was my first interview immediately after my engineering graduation. He roared at the Chief Engineer "ask the boy some questions" himself lighting a cigar (Sir Winston Churchill, the PM of UK during World War II, used to smoke cigar). The Chief Engineer indeed looked small.

- The second instance happened when I was called to Kanpur by the then Director of Technical Education (DTE) Mr T.G.K Charlu, an IAS officer. The occasion was my interview for a lecturership at a Government Polytechnic. It was a similar situation like I had encountered before. The DTE heading the table on a chair with a high back and some Principal of a polytechnic or a senior technocrat, whom I didn't know sitting once again on a smaller chair on the smaller side of the table. These two instances were enough to jolt my inner self. Although totally novice then with the situation and the bureaucratic system that ruled us, it gave me first-hand information on how the system was made to work. **Would such a system last for long was the immediate question that arose in my mind. To my utter surprise and dismay the system survived while the country is reduced to shambles.** The bureaucracy is in total command today with their stature taller than before and authority and powers so enormous that even the political system has to depend on them.

When I see in retrospect, the bureaucrats presenting themselves as supreme bosses before a professional candidate in the presence of senior technocrats, was to send out a message loud and clear to all professionals of the country, of the feudal bureaucratic supremacy and the place of the professionals before them. It was then, the bureaucrats no longer involve themselves in such petty matters; their authority having already been well established.

These encounters were highly depressing and made me feel so inferior and small that even if I became a Chief Engineer of UPSEB or a Principal of a technical institute in my life, I would basically remain a small man, insignificant and a non-qualified yet much taller in stature bureaucrat will subjugate me all my life. I have grown up in life with a feeling of cowardice. All my life I have avoided to meet an IAS officer. If a person like me can be so timid, one can imagine the mental status of

the common people. For them they are no less than feudal kings. They despise people and make them feel small and inferior before them. They subjugate the subjects, industries, professionals, experts and intellectuals from the specialised fields of engineering, medicine, agriculture, education and industry while they themselves remain absolute novices and unprofessionals.

- An incumbent of family welfare today shall become in-charge of industry tomorrow. We wonder if they are superhuman beings or messengers of god who would know every subject on earth by the fall of the day. A youth who takes 5 years in medical subjects to become a doctor is yet to undergo special training to acquire speciality in a subject. Still an orthopaedist cannot treat an eye patient or an ophthalmologist a heart patient. Similarly an engineer who may have two years common in his five year course too is known by his special courses that he learns in the remaining three years. Still an electrical engineer cannot design a mechanical machine unless he once again learns that subject, similarly a mechanical engineer cannot perform as an electrical engineer. But our simple art or science graduates with no special training in any field (except for two years on how to treat or mistreat the subjects) become such superhuman beings that they can handle all jobs on earth and command full contingents of professionals and experts.
- **For me to reach the level of a Chief Engineer itself was difficult. To ever become a Chairman was like asking for the moon where only a bureaucrat qualified. I would remain just an electrical engineer all my life and be subjugated by a bureaucrat. My status as a first class engineering graduate being interviewed by them for an assistant engineer's job was no more than a serf in an independent India and it was abundantly clear to me.**

These incidents were enough to shatter my inner self. Was it all that worth having gone to an engineering college which my father found so hard to finance despite my meagre needs? I don't know if I was the same again after these incidents. There was a whole lot of transformation in my thoughts, outlook and deeds. Although I left UPSEB within a year, the reason of UPSEB failure is amply clear to me and so the failure of all PSUs. The failure on all fronts wherever a bureaucrat was – was abundantly imminent. The imminent has already happened. Now we are collecting the ashes (selling the households in shape of PSUs). They continue ruling the nation unabated, with yet more powers, pelf and authority. Today they

are amongst the richest classes on our soil. The country is already bled and the majority of our people are reduced to skins and bones.

Note

Some recent moves to appoint technocrats as replacements of bureaucrats in a few departments as an appeasement to professionals is bound not to work and may only undermine the capability of the technocrats (indirectly establishing the propriety of the bureaucrats), because the system by and large remains bureaucratic where a technocrat shall remain grossly misplaced.

- Professionals and intellectuals were undermined rudely and rendered small in their own eyes. This was an insult to our freedom and was highly unbecoming for a free nation. A subordinate was supposed to be standing for as long as he was with the boss. This treatment to him was like the treatment to a hand-cuffed and chained under-trial in police custody by the cruel *hawaldar* with a whip. All this led to frustration and detachment of the professionals and intellectuals from the mainstream. And thus began the process of disintegration, mistrust and lack of faith amongst the people of the same land. The downfall of the country had begun. The doom had encircled the whole nation to cast its evil shadows in times ahead. This also led to brain-drain from our country. **Our boys gradually lost enthusiasm and creativity. We under-utilised their talent, intellect and expertise that was available in-house as they were not wanted.** Our hopes for prosperity had thus eclipsed right at the start. Consequently everything became a matter of routine and “चलता है” culture set in. If our country is ruined and its subjects are in shambles we should be little surprised.
- Since they are the most powerful and authoritative class on our soil capable of commanding any one, it is their natural instinct that they should also be the wealthiest of all. When they frame the laws and draft the policies for others they have this sinister thought working in their minds. No surprise that bulk of the wealth of the nation today is with the polity and the bureaucracy. We hear there is a move now to take control of defence also by the inauspicious bureaucracy to belittle the dignity of the chiefs of defence services and the entire defence forces. If it happens, (which eventually may), the entire nation will ultimately be controlled by bureaucrats. Even our polity shall be belittled by them. There is a move to head the police departments also by an IAS rather than by an IPS. A move today may be a reality tomorrow. There is also a move (April, 2003) to debar professionals (specially engineers and doctors) from applying for civil services (tempted by the lure of bureaucracy there

was a rising trend of professionals opting for IAS). The motive of the bureaucracy is somehow to manoeuvre total control of the land unto them. **Under political compulsions, now they are also being made immune from law against corruption (Section 9.1).**

The way bureaucracy is assuming powers and spreading its unscrupulous claws, it is leading us towards an authoritarian rule. And we are not able to see it. If it happens, it shall be a total catastrophe for the nation. If with the present powers they have rendered us to this state and amassed the bulk of the nation's wealth unto them, it is not difficult to visualise what the state of our people would be if they assume total authority. Even today as far as we know, the Defence Secretary can summon any of the defence chiefs and make him wait. A joint secretary in the Ministry of Defence is literally the boss of all Defence personnel. The British feudal system surely treated us better.

- So much so that our political system too is grossly dependent on them and many times have to act at their dictates.

The political leaders are required to seek public mandate every few years while the bureaucracy remains in power. And not necessarily the same party or the same incumbents would rule the roost once again. This the bureaucracy has realised to their ecstatic self-being. The bureaucracy would remain where it is along with its fraternity except for minor reshuffles. Generally speaking they are always in a position to dictate their philosophy and decisions to the new incumbents. Gradually administration and control of the entire country befell at the dictates of the bureaucracy rather than the polity. Polity ultimately had little freedom to do what they wanted. Even for effecting any policy decision or taking day-to-day decisions they are not able to circumvent the bureaucracy. The bureaucratic influence over the polity has thus grown tall and in their own interest the polity has since aligned with the bureaucracy.

(II) BUREAUCRATIC ARISTOCRACY

- Our polity and bureaucracy have never practised socialism. They have only pronounced it. In action they have practised only feudalism. The concept of our democracy or socialism is therefore ill-conceived and a farce like our ill-conceived freedom. **This is a peculiar case in the civilized world where having adopted to socialism in a democracy we practise the culture of master and serf.** In my known circles I have often witnessed attendants and courtiers putting the

socks on and tying laces of the shoes of the bureaucrats and removing them. They may also be washing their feet, I don't know. Possibly it was the practice in the past feudal system from where it has descended to our Indian counterparts. **But it is outrageous for a free nation.** I have been an industrialist myself and I know a number of well-to-do industrialists who can easily afford such luxuries or, so to say, hire such vassals to do such disgraceful jobs, but hardly any of them would ever like to disgrace their staff to this level.

- At the residence of a bureaucrat having gun-totting security guards I accompanied a friend of mine who was his relation. There I found a cloth merchant with his bale of cloth and a tailor in attendance. Here was a feudal master making his choices and swaggering over his supremacy. I encountered this class only on a few occasions but every occasion was a bitter experience. They are surely a class apart and portray our earlier princely traditions and culture. They always make their dominance felt and make others look small. To spend lavishly at government expense is their pride. All these bureaucrats and a few more who I know enjoy large security. In some cases a full battalion permanently camps outside their premises. They all believe in maintaining their status and supremacy more than the others. This is their prime objective. Spending lavishly in furnishing their homes at government expenses is a usual practice. In some cases their style of living may be more luxurious than even what the feudal lords once enjoyed. No surprise, due to their unbound status their families and children swagger too.

The cry for socialism from government quarters is a farce. They have been robbing the nation for the past 60 years by this false hypocrisy. Their pronouncements are fraudulent and treacherous.

(III) BUREAUCRATIC HIGH-HANDEDNESS

Their enormous powers and authority have also made them sadistic. They enjoy teasing the elite and make them feel small. They give them time for an "audience" and deliberately make them wait. Sometimes one is made to wait standing next to peons sitting outside their rooms. Or sit down on the bench provided cunningly for this purpose adjacent to the peon's stool.

The basic purpose of the British feudal lords then was to suppress all activities that were not in their interest. After independence we also adopted the same culture. Bureaucracy practised what they had seen as if they were governing a colony, not their own people. **If our polity**

and bureaucracy were to act in this manner and style, the accomplishment of freedom is a farce and a great insult to the people of India. In fact the country is being run like a colony only, polity and bureaucracy as the ruling class and the people as the ruled. The only difference is that now the people are being ruled by their own people (like being slapped with their own *chappals*).

(IV) BUREAUCRATIC INCOMPETENCE

Besides ruining the PSUs (now for sale barring LEFT's resistance because they are an ally of the government) discussed in Chapter 10, below are noted some cases of their conspicuous failures, for the people of India to assess their propriety;

A. *Unabated perennial calamities*

Droughts in UP, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, floods in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam are regular features. The whole country is exposed to small changes in nature's temperament. A low rainfall can cause drought and famine just as a heavy downpour can cause flood and epidemics. Today we stand helpless before nature's behaviour and call it a curse of God. What should have been a boon for us has become a curse (see Chapter 15). Heavy rains (2005) flooded 5'-10' even states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. These events narrate the tales of our bureaucracy's repeated and unbound failures and incompetence.

B. *Poor urbanisation (lack of planning)*

- To build markets and habitation along the roadsides was a practice in primitive period to facilitate travellers and passers-by get provisions and other necessities, exchange goods or do trading *en route*. This was so when villages were few and population was scattered over long distances and lacked means of communication and commutation. This practice continues in the modern times, unmindful of the traffic chaos and din it causes within cities and on the highways besides reflecting the shabby planning. We are now habituated to habitat our cities on the roadsides. Even many new cities and colonies that are built towards the end of 20th or beginning of 21st century by reclaiming green lands have this culture. Most of these are crammed and have haphazardly planned markets, shopping arcades, residential colonies and societies, even open drainage system. Noida is one such city of UP that we can cite off-hand. It gives a look of a city planned some hundreds of years ago when people knew

little of modern urbanisation or had little exposure to the affluent world. One may be astonished to know that in most residential colonies and shopping centres even walking area is crammed, leave aside other traffic, and the city is only partly constructed as yet. What shall it become a few year hence is a sheer imagination. The UP government and Noida authorities take pride in it as they claim it to be the most modern and affluent city — with the highest land and property prices in the country.

- Everything that should have been permanent is done on a temporary basis. These are implemented today and become redundant the next day. Colonies, buildings, shops, markets, malls and offices all are built on an *ad hoc* basis, without overall planning. Most of this is done on the whims and fancies of the bureaucracy (often to please someone and to make a fast buck in the process). The mushrooming and clustering of new residential buildings, societies, commercial and industrial areas in most cities with unmanageable crowd and parking bear a testimony to this unplanned growth. A shopping arcade developed today turns into a fish market within 3-5 years. There are other problems too, like inadequate water supply, drainage and sewer lines, garbage and stink, power distribution, traffic jams and problem of parking and public utilities, etc. Everything scoffs at its stupid planning. Same chaos is witnessed in a residential colony, commercial complex or an industrial estate, road or transport system. In industrial towns also one can see industries on roadsides, small narrow roads with open telephone lines on one side and High Tension and Low Tension power lines on the other. Our country is getting ruined at their hands before our eyes and we are helpless to hold its destruction.
- **Unsafe sky (news item 2006)** : 15 air disasters averted in 2004 and 24 in 2005. Our airports are indeed unsafe. Alarming they lack modern facilities and safety means. They are grossly inadequate to handle rising air traffic. While many airlines have requisitioned many more aircraft and we are also opening up our sky for more international airlines. Every area is absurdly planned and grossly inadequate. This is the story of past 60 years on all fronts. And we aspire to become a world power while our deeds are that of a third world nation.

C. Lack of work culture

Matters of significance have little significance in our lives. One example of it is the highly secured and grossly stapled wads of currency notes issued by our banks. One may shed tears on the plight of poor currency

and the agony of those who unstaple them. And then the cashier at the bank will write down his accounts on these notes while the user may also use them as slips of paper for his personal account or addresses and phone numbers. The poor currency notes outlive their lives in a short period. The shortened life of notes is an indirect drain on our economy besides the insult we inflict by handling them with such a contempt. We then import currency notes in huge quantities. The system should be sensitive to such small issues which are vital to inculcate in us a sense of work culture and a feel for others. It is our attitude that is callous towards such small things and ignorant to such drain. If we are not able to address the smaller issues, we cannot address the bigger ones. And that unfolds the rationale of our overall backwardness.

Note

Recently (2003) we have noticed some welcome change at least in the new wads of notes. Now the notes are stacked loose and held together with only a paper band. It would be better if they are provided with an easily snappable thread to hold them together and guarantee the count to the customer.

In the passing

- Another example (1999) to illustrate the incompetence of our bureaucracy, involving a highly reputed and well recognized bureaucrat, T. N. Seshan, when he was the Chief Election Commissioner. He got the idea of ID (identification) cards to identify the voters. Indeed a good idea but he did not know how to implement it.

I also went with my wife to one of the notified centres for the formalities and photo session. The location was one of the community centres in the city. A few tables hired from a local tent house, some government clerical staff with forms and pens/pencils and a local photographer with a feeble camera. There were no table covers, no chairs and everything looked repulsive and casual. Overall it was a very dull ambience. We filled the form. But it was difficult to write neatly on a single sheet of paper on a rough surface of a tent house table, moreover there was no one to check on it. The casual photographer also went through the formality of taking our snaps one by one. There was no seriousness or understanding of the purpose. It was a mere formality for all who were involved, absolutely casual and callous. I told my wife we will not get our ID cards. And we never did. Then I learnt through some of my acquaintances that they also experienced a similar situation in other parts of the country and they also did not get their ID cards. Recently

(2002) another staff came to my house (presumably from election office) to once again collect details on my family members for the same ID cards. Amazingly the cards are still awaited.

The elections got over and so ended the term of a great, very capable and highly dynamic and profusely admired bureaucrat of our country. This is the story of a highly capable bureaucrat. He may now blame the local administration or its poor arrangement or the failure of the staff deputed for this work or the agencies hired for the job. The fact remains that time and money were spent but nothing happened.

Same is the story of 60 years of our independence. There is nothing great in proclaiming "remove poverty," "remove illiteracy," "control population." These are good slogans. Even a *rickshaw* puller fresh from Bihar is able to chant them. If talking alone was doing then we had long solved our problems. But we need people who can implement them. We only wish if saying was doing. Pity is that most of those at the helm of affairs in polity or bureaucracy are incapable of doing anything more than lip service. We do not know how many crores would have been spent on this novel idea that came to a nought besides the time and energy the people spent. A private organisation shall never tolerate such a non-performance.

- I have cast my vote on a few occasions for having a first hand experience of our polling system. That was also a great experience. Once it was in South Delhi where I used to reside in 1980's. The local booth was arranged in a school. A local confectioner had provided enough to eat. At the end of the day all votes not cast by the real voters (who didn't turn up or fake votes) were also cast by the polling officers and thus ended the election. This was my first hand experience of an elite area of the Capital of the country where there were no toughs or musclemen. Imagine what would be happening in other cities and rural areas of the country. No wonder, we have the present mournful state of our country.

Slogan for prevention from HIV: Print media, TV advertisements and radio blared, "move with condom." Sounds as if we are promoting promiscuity and encouraging rapes in our society.

It is not only lack of funds that haunt our developmental projects rather the incapability to execute the same by our sprawling system.

8.7 Redundancy of our system

Evolution of life and civilization is a natural process. Whether government does it or not the habitation of a place evolves its own ways and means to survive. After all, those who migrate from rural areas to urban areas without any job or place to live have been living there for decades. Even people in urban areas have learned to endure without water and electricity. Necessity is the mother of all inventions. In the pursuit of finding better means to do a job, there has always been a quest to learn and invent new things. This is how the evolution of life would have reached the first known civilization. And then from ancient civilization to the modern civilization. Whatever the conditions and surroundings, man has been capable of protecting himself from natural conditions or external fears. If we have come this far, we would call it as our natural quest to evolve ways and means to survive. Look at the incredible work of art and culture of Ajanta and Ellora caves of 200 BC (Maharashtra). They did it when nothing was known or was available. Even a beggar not able to earn daily bread for himself gives birth to a child and rears him to adulthood. The evolution of life cycle is a natural process. Even a stray cattle is able to feed itself on garbage scattered on roads or kitchen leftovers offered by some kind- hearted housewives.

Earlier man didn't know how to fight the natural calamities. Today we call them man-made because man knows his protection yet plays ignorant or callous to fight the same. We are referring to floods, droughts and epidemics. In absence of any efforts by the government, the rural poor have been enduring by themselves these calamities as much as they can. It is surprising to see how the people of Orissa after the cyclone and drought (1999-2000) are still alive and exist on this earth. We have done little to rehabilitate them, regardless of the tall claims by the government. If we have been able to reach a few and mitigate their problems, it is an eye wash.

The remains of the Indus Valley civilization reveal the innovative brains its inhabitants possessed and the progress they made even then. And imagine, in the 21st century we are adopting the same sewage and storm-water drainage system in our cities that they devised some 5500 years ago and think of the mess we have made of it. You can see the open drainage system right in the capital of this great land. Go a little farther and you will find similar drains running in front of most houses in most towns and cities. People provide ramp and cover the rest with concrete slabs to avoid the stink. It has become necessary also in order

to avoid mosquitoes and accidental fall of vehicles and children, more so during the rainy season. Usually there are clear instructions from the civic authorities to keep the drains open to facilitate their cleaning. Obviously the residents pay the staff and keep it covered. People do so as the corporation staff, who occasionally clean the drains, do not remove the sludge from its sides and it gradually settles back into the same drain from where it was removed besides causing a lot of dirt, filth and nuisance in the area. What our ancestors did then we re-enact that in front of our houses and our authorities shall surely call it development? Indus Valley civilization evolved the drainage system and we invented means to make money by keeping it open. **It can happen only in India.**

We will therefore like to emphatically state that we have been living our lives our way for at least 5500 years (as much we presently know from the history of our civilization) without the present system of governance. **If we are able to survive in spite of them we shall surely make better living without them. They have proved redundant and outrageous and are responsible for all our untold sorrows and miseries.** By now we know that it is our inherent resilience, latent potential and enormous resource availability that is sustaining us despite so much of their abuse. Let us tell you, without such a system we shall perform such miracles that it may appear inconceivable today. **With prudent system of governance (Chapter 26), guidance and application of knowledge we shall transform this ramshackled and dilapidated monolith of a country into one of the richest and most powerful nations in the world.**