

Punjab Crisis: A Political Diagnosis

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PUNJAB continues to simmer.

Terrorism (the state as well as the individual variety) is rampant. Everyone has become a legitimate target of attack. What is more serious, both state and individual terrorism consider use of violence as a substitute for political action or mass mobilisation. It seems that terrorism has become integral to the political and social life of Punjab.

However, the slogan of Khalistan has not acquired mass support inspite of the unimaginative and ruthless political and administrative initiatives and the protagonists' brutal and senseless killings. On another plane, fear of communal reprisals has degenerated into panic and colours the thinking of a majority of people. Prejudice has so overwhelmed reason that a large section of both Hindus and Sikhs tends to put the entire blame on the other without making any attempt to analyse the circumstances, which has led to this situation in the context of the political initiatives taken by the ruling party.

If one analyses the circumstances and the steps taken by the ruling party since 1982, it will be evident that the idea was to exploit every situation to suit the interests of the political vested interests rather than resolve the problem or even adopt a long-term approach towards its resolution. Ad hoc arrangements and deliberately delayed initiatives have complicated the situation, without in any way altering or moderating the underlying forces.

The national political leadership has all along sought to destroy the local base of those who spearhead popular movements, instead of addressing itself to the core problem. The resultant debunking of all those who are opposed to the ruling party has become a major instrument in countering agitations in Punjab.

Inside the State itself it is the fear of competition in politics and also economy, which has generated a sense of pervasive insecurity in individuals and groups, who have acquired economic and political power either by way of inheritance or through political manipulation. Incidentally this factor has resulted in the strengthening of monopoly tendencies in polity and economy. This has also led to the compulsion of subverting the existing democratic institutions together with the provisions to decentralise political power.

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Concentration of power in individuals has, in turn, reduced their capacity to resolve or even accommodate conflicts which have their roots in emerging social and economic interests.

These leaders believe that it is possible to control events through forces, manipulation or by generating fear. They have curtailed the democratic functioning of the various institutions to safeguard their own position and frequently misuse the paramilitary forces and impose laws, which curtail the democratic freedoms of the common man rather than those of the people who openly flout the basic norms of democratic society. The ruling classes have used retrogressive tendencies like communalism, casteism, regional chauvinism, etc. to deflect cumulative social anger and/or to whip up a sense of insecurity.

Punjab is only an aggravated reflection of the phenomena being experienced in other parts of India. The crisis in Punjab has emanated over the distribution of scarce resources among groups and individuals within the ruling classes. The internal contradictions arising out of competition for the market within industrial capital and within the merchant capital have taken a communal form of competition and antagonism between Hindu and Sikh industrialists and between Hindu and Sikh traders.

There is the dominance of low productivity in small-scale industrial units in Punjab. These small-scale units have been at a disadvantageous position while competing with the products produced by medium and large-scale units. The dominance of medium and large-scale units in the market can be seen in terms of their share in the paid up capital, value added, etc. Besides this, medium and large industries show a fairly steady and high rate of profit, while that of small-scale industries has been fluctuating and is less than 50 per cent of that of medium and large industries. This internal conflict between small-scale industries and large industries arising out of competition for market has imparted its own communal character.

Not only this, the growth of agriculture in Punjab, created surpluses in the hands of capitalist farmers and rich peasants which flowed out of the confines agriculture. The rural rich felt the need for fresh avenues of investment and began to branch out into trade in agricultural products, trade in general and small and medium industry. The lopsided character of economic development in general and industrial development in particular could provide only limited

Punjab needs democratic revival

THE stalemate in the Punjab situation continues, despite the series of goodwill generating gestures by the Union Government like the visit of the Prime Minister to the Golden Temple, the revocation of the 59th amendment to the Constitution, the release of a large number of undertrial youth and the holding of the all party rally in Ludhiana. It is true that parties and the individuals significant in the context of the crisis are finding some elbow room, but there has been no significant change in the situation.

This is only to be expected. All the three major forces in the State politics, rather the Akali politics, are very much evident and active. The three tendencies can be identified as the one standing for state autonomy, but without unduly disturbing the existing political arrangement, the second stand for self-determination within the constitutional framework and the last, raising the slogan for Khalistan.

The first tendency by its political ideological stand is complimentary to the contemporary political situation. The second one is somewhat problematic; while it is competing in nature, it has to be activated to find solutions rather than pushed to join hands with the Khalistan elements. Any solution to the problem could be found only with the active participation of these tendencies and also other forces which are part of the democratic process and also have some credibility with the people and also extremists elements. But at the same time it is necessary to launch a political ideological struggle against communal approach of various political groups and parties active in the state. Further the serious mobilisations of people against terrorism (individual as well as state) has to be relied upon within the democratic frame as per the rule of law. Police atrocities and fake encounters must stop.

At this point it is also necessary to apprise the past actions and past interventions that have either directly created the crisis or have exacerbated an already present problem. Much of the damage was caused by the earlier "teach them a lesson" approach, even while being soft to chosen men and women who were posing a direct challenge to the very system.

On the one hand, this policy blunted the effectiveness of those who would normally have stood by the side of democracy and secularism and at the same time it imparted legitimacy to rank communal elements by giving them a free reign in exploiting the hurt religious sentiments.

Myopic attitude

Unfortunately, the earliest Government persisted with this myopic attitude. It viewed any threat to the ruling party as a threat to the State itself and hence resorted to frequent crackdown on the common people and also on those who had the clout to mobilize the people.

The blunder inherent in this approach was compounded by an equally mistaken view of the nature of terrorism itself. Terrorism was wrongly seen as an act of few disgruntled youths or agents of one or the other super power of misguided idealists. It was, therefore, assumed that by merely strengthening the law and order machinery, terrorism can be brought under control. Terrorism cannot be countered by another kind of terrorism. Instead terrorism of one variety feeds and fattens the terrorism of another variety.

In a communally surcharged environment, violent crimes are committed under the garb of protecting one's community interests and the honour of coreligionists. This confers the halo of martyrdom on terrorists as also to a few chosen agents of the State who are perceived to be safeguarding the interests of competing communal groups.

This long drawn out battle between the violent elements and the state repressive machinery had led to the flouting of the basic norms of a democratic society. The distorted capitalist model of development on the national plane and sectoral strategies adopted in the state itself contributed in no mean manner to keeping alive the crisis. The inevitable social tensions, arising from this, provided the conditions for the crisis.

Where do we go from here?

The Centre should be conceptually clear on the various tendencies and frame its policies to insulate the complementary and competing tendencies from the

confrontationist one, particularly on the questions of state autonomy and federalism.

Struggle for autonomy

Above all it must be realised that the Punjab crisis is one of the manifestations of the larger crisis of development in India generated by not only capitalist path but also the centralised character of the Indian State. This has alienated regions and communities giving rise to struggle for autonomy.

It is time to re-examine the union question to restructure it as a union of participating identities and therefore a debate on the Anandpur Sahib resolution may be initiated within this perspective.

While early elections are a

This statement has been prepared by eminent academicians and long-time students of the Punjab problem. They are Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty and Prof. S. C. Chaubey; both of Delhi University; Dr. Pramod Kumar and Prof. B.L. Abbi of CRRID, Chandigarh; Prof. Harish Puri of GND University, Amritsar, Prof. Sucha Singh Gill of Punjabi University, Patiala, and Prof. H.S. Mehta of SGGGS College, Chandigarh.

must, elections should not be seen as the only democratic exercise nor should they be restricted to sending representatives to the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly. Every other elected body, right upto the village level, should choose their own representatives, in what can only be a Statewide gigantic but vigorous and health-giving democratic exercise. Incidentally any opposition to holding elections now or in the immediate future suffers from an inbuilt flaw and also contains a danger. The danger comes from stalling a democratic process and reverting back to the days when the crisis was compounded by shutting out popular participation. For this it is imperative to restore people's confidence and create conditions for removing fear psychosis for holding free & fair elections.

There is also the urgent need to revive the liberal-democratic institutions in the State. A debate may be initiated on the

reconstitution of the second chamber of the legislature. It may be ensured that each one of them adhere religiously to liberal democratic norms. The steady erosion of the vitality of these institutions and the equally steady flouting of liberal norms have caused immense damage to politics in the State.

Related to this is the very real need of setting up a Civil Liberties And Democratic Rights Commission in the State. It should be entrusted with the task of dealing with cases of police and administrative atrocities on the common man and also crimes committed by individual terrorists against fellow citizens. There will be a tremendous psychological fall-out on the people of the state. Also, it will scotch rumours and wild allegations which, in the absence of a credible agency to verify and confirm, get currency. At the same time the government must take the reports of the independent civil liberties groups seriously and take corrective measures.

Unemployment

On the economic front, the once booming agriculture of Punjab cries out for a structural transformation, so as to open out further avenues of investment and productivity. Industrial growth must be postulated to drawing out labour and manpower from the agricultural sector, so as to mitigate the mounting hardship of rural people. Unemployment has a harsh edge in the State in the sense that the educated jobless are singularly devoid of any skill which can ensure them employment. Imparting of employable skill will dent the nature of the problem although leaving untouched the extent of unemployment.

We believe that we are on the threshold of a historic possibility in Punjab. We urge that this opportunity must not be lost. This is time therefore to take comprehensive democratic initiatives involving a set of interdependent measures. Nothing short of genuine and fearless participation of common people in strengthening the democratic political process in the state can help resolve the contemporary crisis.

MINIMUM WAGES ACT BEING FLOUTED: STUDY

*Jagtar Singh
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The Minimum Wages Act is being violated with impunity in Punjab, the state with the highest per capita income. The workers are not only paid low wages, they are also forced to work for longer hours and are exploited.

The state has experienced a high growth rate of total as well as per capita income in comparison with other states but this high growth of income has failed to have a positive effect on the downtrodden sections of the society and has rather accentuated inequalities.

There are the findings of a study team headed by Dr. Pramod Kumar, associate research director, Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial development. The study is based upon random sampling in selected industrial units in major industrial towns in the state.

The wages per worker in the industrial sector in Punjab during 1984-85 were Rs. 8320 per annum as compared to the national average of Rs. 11,093. The minimum wages in Punjab are revised more frequently as compared to a number of other states but about 50 per cent of the industrial units just do not implement these revised wages. The situation is worse in case of women, migrant workers and child labourers. These categories of workers are paid wages below subsistence as a bargain for their urgent need for immediate earnings. This cheap labour is acting as a subsidy to capital and enabling the employers to earn extra profits.

The study has come at the time when the state government is under pressure from the industrial lobby against frequent revision of minimum wages on the plea that it would further burden industry already working under adverse condition due to the present law and order situation.

Moreover, the relatively stagnant economy and pauperized conditions prevailing in the states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan from where most of the migrant labourers come to Punjab, has accentuated the socio-economic crisis for the local workers, strengthened the position of the management. The high cost of social living in Punjab as compared to these states, has reduced the bargaining position of the workers.

As per the study, most of the units in textile, hosiery, engineering and iron and steel rolling industries were not paying minimum wages were not being paid to the workers. The average wages of the unskilled workers were found to be the lowest in hosiery followed by iron and steel rolling, engineering and textiles and much below the minimum wages prescribed by the state government.

The study has also gone into the development strategies starting with the green Revolution which did contribute to the development of capitalist agriculture in the state but could not provide base for the structural transformation of the economy. The slow and lopsided development in general and industrial development in particular could provide only limited employment opportunities. The non-availability of sustained productive channels for farm surpluses in industry resulted in creation of fewer new job opportunities making the labour market imperfect.

The study has made some suggestions towards implementation of the Minimum Wages Act more effective. The study has stressed the need to actively involve trade unions, management representatives and labour department in the implementation of the Act. It has suggested that a representative of the majority trade union be appointed as a special labour inspector in each district. The power and functions of the special labour inspector can be worked out in consultation with trade unions and management representatives.

The over exploitation of women and migrant workers could be checked by constituting a special task force to monitor the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act and other labour legislations. The trade Unions should revive their strategy keeping in view the segments within the labour market. The less competitive groups have less bargaining position. The trade unions should introduce short term social security schemes, specially for the migrants and women to meet their immediate requirements and consequently make them less vulnerable.

The legislation prohibiting child labour should be strictly enforced. However, as child labour is the product of necessary social conditions, the need is for a relief oriented approach and for this purpose, child labourers should be provided with training facilities. The labour-law enforcing agencies should concentrate more on the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act for unskilled workers. It has also stressed upon the need to have a relook at the methodology followed to determine wages.

The study has pointed out that the industry has a capacity to pay and the flouting of various laws is mainly due to prevalence of imperfect labour market. The labour department and trade unions should make conscious efforts to get the minimum wages implemented.

NATION / Dr Pramod Kumar

An activist or opportunist?

JUDICIAL activism, as they call it, is welcome insofar as it contributes to the building up of a just and humane society. Similarly, an activist Chief Election Commissioner is a desirable input to the extent it cleanses the electoral process. But moot point that arises is, why these institutions be seen as either active or passive? An active, rather an adventurist police force in Punjab, produced so many distortions, resulting in human rights violations which were discovered by an 'active judiciary', much later. What is the guarantee that these overactive institutions of the judiciary or the Chief Election Commissioner will not produce distortions in the democratic functioning of the polity? On the face of it, this proposition appears quite naive. But if one looks at it from a holistic perspective a dismal scenario emerges.

The objective of this type of "activism" and "adventurism" is to prevent the process behind these distortions from coming to surface. Isolate an institution from its total setting, denigrate it and thereby insulate and strengthen the process. This has been happening all along, it was police in the eighties which assumed the functions of all other institutions and now it is judiciary which is doing the same i.e. to re-establish a modicum of stability. Stability must not be disturbed and dissent must not question the system. In other words, the blame for the merging crises is put on one or the other individuals or institutions which are only instrumental causes. For instance, in Punjab when the political process failed, the administration jumped into the picture with the legalised version of militancy

like TADA. When militancy went out of control the police was unleashed. And when police went out of control, the judiciary is being unleashed. Somebody has also decided to take out heavy insurance against future failure of judiciary — there comes talk of second republic to start the process all over again.

The institutions are projected as either moral or immoral and their instruments as either villains or heroes. Not only this, yesterday's heroes are presented as today's villains. For instance, it was the police force which was presented as fighting the nation's battle in Punjab earlier and now in Kashmir. And everything they did then was justified. The human rights activists at that time also pointed out the gross violations of human rights by both the state as well as individual terrorists. These activists were branded as 'anti-national' and were told that the instrument of the state, i.e. the policemen, are the torch-bearers of a just and moral system, specially in the context when the judiciary was seen as defunct, bureaucracy non-functional and political parties irrelevant. It can be argued that it was the non-performance of the judiciary during 1980s in Punjab, which produced a greater evil in police. Since lesser evil is the norm, the non-performing judiciary of yesteryears has become saviour and champion of healthy and moral values today.

NOW, in a changed context, the responsibility of building up a just, honest and humane society has been thrust on the judiciary and the Chief Election Commissioner. We are told

that the police must function within the norms of a civilised society, bureaucrats must not appropriate the privileges meant for the common people and politician should not rise above the law. The issues raised by the CEC and the judiciary are genuine, but the manner in which they are addressed to is ad hoc.

For instance, the way in which election in Punjab was cancelled in May 1991 a few hours before its commencement, resulting in loss of many human lives, and the targeting of a particular political leader in Bihar in recent elections to cleanse the electoral process, are fallouts of taking individuals as heroes or villains in isolation from the functioning of the system. The tragedy of bypassing the system is that each kind of 'activism' or 'adventurism' produces heroes so long as they are seen as convenient instruments of the dominant politics and becomes villains when a different political context throws up another hero. The emphasis is on acquiring legitimacy by denigrating each other rather than acquiring it by the massification of politics.

THE inability to subsume crises and lack of will to restructure the political system by upholding the norms of dissent and consent with the active involvement of the people has led to the politics of drift. This politics tends to exclude the questioning of conditions which have caused the crises. For instance, in Punjab terrorism was seen as a law and order problem and it was assumed that killing of terrorists will result in the elimination of terrorism. Conse-

quently, it was felt that there is need to give a free hand to the police and a consensus was built around this approach. It is not, therefore, surprising that senior police officials in Punjab are protesting against Supreme Court decisions and terming it as unjust. The ad hoc licence given to police has to be withdrawn and should belong to the judiciary now to show a human face to the world particularly when structural reforms need World Bank and International Monetary Fund patronage.

The message is clear "Kill poison with poison and let the patient die."

THE crisis is not only with the police or the electoral process or bureaucracy it is almost with every facet of social and political reality. But to present this crisis as either political, social, economic or moral only betrays an inadequate and partial understanding of the social reality. If the judiciary has a human face, it has an insensitive face also. If economy is becoming competitive, it has become more accumulative also. If politics is producing corrupt leaders, it is also throwing up political and social activists like Medha Patkar, Sunderlal Bahuguna and others. In spite of the fact that both negative and positive trends are co-existing, the fear of disintegration of Indian society and politics continue to haunt us.

The crisis is much deeper to be solved by the positive interventions made by a few individual dogooders. Society by and large has become conformist and cynicism is taking over those who once re-

solved to radically transform social existence. Consequently, a large political space remained untouched which used to be appropriated by slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' and by those who wished to radically transform society.

Interestingly, till the eighties lip service used to be offered to alleviate the plight of underprivileged sections. Slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' were reflected in the policy planning and had a trickle-down effect, which, in turn, provided much needed stability to the system without harming the vested interests and improving the overall conditions of the poorer sections. It was more a psychological spin-off.

The slogan of social justice and political equalities was provided continuity by the Mandal Commission. This had a limited scope and reach. These trends have to be given proper thrust by incorporating 'Garibi Hatao' after purging out the trickle-down effect and merging it with the Mandal recommendations minus its casteist overtones. This will naturally upset the status-quo and create an impression of instability. This will also mean the tilting of state in favour of those who have been rejected by new market forces and are struggling to find a toehold in the system.

In the absence of any such initiatives the politics of shifting the blame from one institution to another shall continue. The restoration of delicate functional balance among the various institutions integral to the system shall remain only an exercise in futility, unless democracy is made representative, distributive, functional and above all secular.

Flaws in the system

THE crisis of the Indian nation is not that in its fiftieth year as a republic it has not been able to produce a stable government. The crisis is also not that the members of the minority religious groups and caste groups are being violently targeted, or that prices of essential commodities are rising and people are increasingly exposed to the callousness of the market. The crisis is also not that criminals who are multiplying in society are entering politics. Above all, the crisis is also not that our economy is in a shambles.

Instead the crisis lies in the nature of politics and the manner in which these problems are being handled. The initiation of competitive politics since the mid-sixties brought to the fore a peculiar feature of Indian politics. The ruling elite felt threatened by the same institutions, groups and individuals which provide legitimacy to its rule. The institutions comprising the ideological and the repressive state apparatuses were used to strengthen the power base of a political leader. In the process the leader became all powerful and, with the passage of time, it became obvious that the leader in fact had become powerless to effect any radical change in society.

She became a 'goddess'-all powerful but powerless like an idol in a temple. It was the 'pujaris' who were sharing and distributing the spoils of power in the name of the goddess. These 'pujaris' inherited the legacy and continued to hunt for new 'gods' or 'goddesses' to sanctify their actions. As a result participatory institutions were either made ineffective or defunct. Dissent was muffled or projected as a threat to national unity. The process has been one of gradual de-democratisation, of whittling down of the basic rights of the people, of abdication of the basic obligation of the system, of downgrading of the most precious facet of democracy: Legitimacy.

The institutional collapse which was caused by the threat perception of these leaders was selectively reversed. Having curtailed the democratic functioning

of various institutions, these leaders frequently misused the paramilitary forces to overcome crises. The eighties saw the revival of law enforcing agencies with an overactive police; as a result the heroes of the eighties were the supercops. The nineties produced an 'overactive judiciary' which took upon itself all the functions of the state, including the moral and ethical role of the non state institutions. The Chief Election Commissioner shared the glory of performing the role of reforming the system single handedly.

Each institution is trying to emerge as the sole saviour of the system by taking upon itself the task of reconstructing the system. The dominant trend is to isolate institutions, glorify or condemn them and insulate the system. The system must not be questioned. In the process people either question an institution and /or an individual. This approach reinforces status-quo and doubles up as a cover-up for the inadequacies of the system.

Therefore, the contemporary crises should not be attributed to a political party. It has been carefully nurtured by the nature of politics. The coincidence between institutional collapse and ideological flux is not accidental. The politics of accountability is the first victim of the lack of ideology. The quest for capturing power, in the face of loss of basic principles which

PRAMOD KUMAR on present day politics

govern democratic politics, made ideologies look redundant. The difference between political parties vanished. Consequently, these parties look similar to

the voters. The mushroom growth of political parties organised around individuals was the natural outcome. Everybody seems to be in a hurry to shed whatever ideology they have had and each one appears to have uprooted himself from the past ideological persuasion and refuses to embrace any belief system. As a result each political actor has started making new friends, even of old ones.

It appears that India's political scene is full of Ronald Reagans. After Mr. Reagan was diagnosed to be a victim of Alzheimer

disease he quipped, "No problem, I will make new friends everyday". Every top political party in India is sharing this experience of making new allies without any inhibition. For instance, the party responsible for atrocities against Sikhs in 1984 is being wooed by all the secularists and the parties known for their communal outbursts are in alliance with former socialists and liberal democrats.

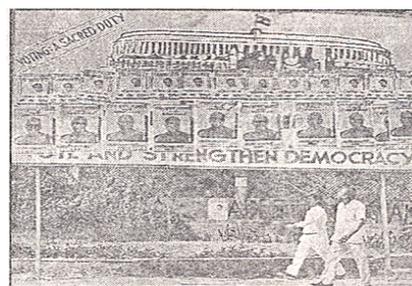
Coalition politics has also provided justification to political parties to build bridges with ideologically divergent groups. The 'bridge politics' tend to blur ideological differences. The competing political parties rather than respond to each other tend to co-opt ideologically divergent fringe groups to provide a

'stable government' thereby saving people from frequent elections. These politically opportunistic acts are justified in the name of saving people from instability. Hence, the demand that once elected, a five-year term be fixed for the members of parliament.

The legitimate question is, can any government be stable without adhering to the norms of democratic, secular and just politics? Further, can a government be stable without restoring the autonomy of institutions, legitimacy of all organs of the state? In the name of stability of government alliances are made with corrupt, communal, fundamentalist and castiest political parties. If Christians are violently targeted, the slogan of peace at all costs is also raised. The approach is that if a non-communal group operates in a communal space it becomes secular. The right kind of politics is to oppose and counter fundamentalist assumptions and not merely their violent manifestations. 'Peace should not be seen as absence of violence, rather absence of all those conditions which create violence.'

The 'bridge politics' which has allowed delicate communal ideas to degenerate into violent acts is not looked into. If the women's bill runs into rough weather, the end of ideology in political practice is not seen as the cause. The extreme violations do provoke reactions, but 'bridge politics' is considered necessary for stability. The need is to reverse the trend and produce a superior alternative. If democracy is corrupt, inefficient and less representative, make it more vibrant rather than find alternatives in authoritarianism. If the economy is accumulative and less productive, effort should be to make it more distributive and productive.

In fact the crisis has penetrated every facet of human activity. It is wrong to see the crisis as either political or economic or social. Fragmented diagnosis is bound to produce a tunnel vision.



If democracy is corrupt, inefficient and less representative, make it more vibrant rather than find alternatives in authoritarianism

GROWING FUNDAMENTALISM COULD LEAD TO POLITICAL CHAOS IN PUNJAB

PUNJAB HAS been sending out early warning signals of a deteriorating political environment for the past year or so. The recent pronouncements from the Akal Takht, the supreme temporal and spiritual authority of the Sikh community, are already worrisome.

Bhai Ranjit Singh, the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, has made it clear that if Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal wants to lead the tercentenary celebrations of the Khalsa panth, an assurance from him to abide by the agenda of the Sikh struggle is obligatory. The agenda includes a demand for recognizing the Sikhs as a separate nation, enactment of a separate Sikh personal law and release of Sikh prisoners.

The moot question is: how come Bhai Ranjit Singh, whose case for reducing the jail term in the Nirankari Baba murder case was articulated unanimously by Akali leaders, including Mr. Badal, has started acting belligerent.

The answer lies in the Akali Dal's dilemma – of being in favour of peace and not against fundamentalism and also of using religion in politics. Even the moderate faction within the Akali Dal has been blatantly operating in the religious domain. It is this which has provided another opportunity to hardline politics to assert itself.

History is witness that intra-party factionalism of the Akali Dal has the potential for degenerating and vitiating inter-community relations. This is a negation of the process of reconciliation initiated by the resurgence of democratic politics in Punjab. The agenda, shaped by the people of the state, has received a major setback.

Mr. Badal launched himself in the religious domain on Jan. 7, at Anandpur Sahib, aiming to political decimate SGPC president Gurcharan Singh Tohra. This brought him into direct conflict with Mr. Tohra and Bhai Ranjit Singh. On this part, Mr. Tohra has been raising issues relating to governance, the transfer of Udham Singh Nagar, the People's Commission probing human rights violations and framing a separate civil code for Sikhs.

Both these factions, in order to checkmate each other, have been increasingly operating in the religious domain. Having infiltrated the space of religious leaders, Mr. Badal started the politics of confrontation with individuals rather than fundamentalism. Instead of co-opting each other, the major factions started building bridges with the fringe elements bringing religion-based politics to the centre stage.

The trend started with Mr. Tohra bestowing siropas on April 13, 1997 (Baisakhi) to the relatives of slain militants, like the younger son of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale and family members of the assassins of Indira Gandhi and General A.S. Vaidya. This was the beginning of a brand of politics where the mainstay of factionalism within moderate politics was to reinforce religious fundamentalism.

The former Punjab Technical Education Minister, Manjit Singh Calcutta (Tohra faction) suggested that kirtan classes and religious prayers should be held in schools. Bhai Ranjit Singh, issued a series of codes of conduct. He ordered all gurdwaras to maintain Sangat te Pangat di Maryada by sitting on the floor during langar. He banned the installation of the Granth Sahib in hotels and marriage halls for the purpose of Anand Karaj (wedding), selling or burning of gutkas (holy scriptures) as waste paper. The AISSF, the sword arm of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale, resolved to start Singh Sajo Lehar (baptism).

At Anandpur Sahib on Jan 7, Mr. Badal hijacked the religious agenda and chalked out a programme of baptising and Puritanism and thus reinforced the religion-oriented ideology of Mr. Tohra. A similar trend was noticed in the early Eighties when the Amrit Parchar Lehar (baptism movement through partaking of amrit) to create a religious reservoir was misappropriated into politics. This provided the basis for launching a separatist movement.

The present situation might degenerate – and if that happens it would shrink the moderate space in politics and ultimately harm the likes of Mr. Badal. The crisis is the result of conducting secular politics within the religious domain. Its logical outcome is competitive religiosity.

The choice before the Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the SGPC president is either to be summarily removed or emerge as martyrs by embracing the radical agenda. They have opted for the obvious.

Given the political climate, the Badal faction would perhaps opt to pursue the proverbial fight to finish, which would result in the removal of Mr. Tohra and Bhai Ranjit Singh. This holds out the danger of sharpening political polarisation on extreme fundamentalist lines.

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An antidote to disintegration?

Dr Pramod Kumar



CONTINUING POLITICAL turmoil in the country, excessive reliance of the state on its repressive apparatus and centralisation mechanisms cry out for a re-examination of the basic constitutional scheme, including issues relating to genuine federalism.

To deny its validity, nay, its relevance per se, in the area of governance of the nation is contrary to the basic spirit of democracy. The realisation of the relevance of a dialogue and debate is generally fading. Consequently efforts to realise dreams are negligible and even desire to speculate about other possibilities is waning.

Dialogue has become urgent as there is an undercurrent of an identity crisis not only in India but in the whole of South-Asian region. The most obvious examples in India are the ULFA assertions in North-East, JKLF movement in Jammu & Kashmir, Khalistan in Punjab, the ripples of ethnic Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka and its ripples in Tamil Nadu; and Pathan separatism and Sindhi identity assertions in Pakistan. This explosion of identities has a potential to cause the disintegration of the whole of South Asia.

However, the demands for greater autonomy raised in early years have to be aligned to the new reality of globalisation, regionalisation of national politics and decline of one-party dominance in national politics.

The issue of greater autonomy for the states was nurtured in a political climate marred by over-centralisation of power and one-party dominance since Independence. The common denominator of all these assertions had been anti-Centre and anti-Congress in thrust. The political developments of the past two decades of the 20th century have made coalition of national and regional political parties at the Centre a necessity.

This has worked in two ways : on the one hand, it has provided greater access to regional parties to national resources, and on the other, made them conscious of the constraints faced by the national government. It is this predicament which has made the Akali Dal's position on redefining the Centre-State relations ambivalent.

To illustrate, the Akali Dal in its 1973 resolution proclaimed that "it would endeavour to have the Indian Constitution recast on real federal principles, with equal representation at the Centre for all the states." The same Akali Dal through its President Parkash Singh Badal, who was party to the 1973 resolution, asserted in the year 2000, that "Our constitutional framework was for more federal structure, but owing to the rule of the Congress government, both at the Centre and in the states, the powers of the states were slowly usurped and a unitary set-up was nearly established." The shift in the Akali Dal's position, as mentioned above, is mainly due to the emergence of coalition politics and the decline of one-party dominance.

Further, the trend of globalisation of economy has also provided a new context to the autonomy debate. For instance, the Akali Dal in Punjab in its 1973 autonomy resolution and later on in its 1985 memorandum to the Sarkaria Commission, asked for apportionment of financial resources within the framework of command economy. In the 1973 resolution the Akali Dal demanded, "Complete nationalisation of the trade in food grains and as such, shall endeavour to nationalize the wholesale trade in food grains through the establishment of state agencies."

It further stated that "the SAD shall try to fix the prices of the agricultural produce on the basis of the returns of the middle class farmers. Such prices would be notified well before the sowing season and only the State governments would be empowered to fix such prices." Will the new reality of liberalisation of the economy with its emphasis on free market and scrapping of the protective regime grant autonomy to the states to reverse the process? The answer to this question is obvious.

This shift has meant greater autonomy to the market forces. The real issue, therefore, is "how the states can acquire autonomy to fix prices or nationalise foodgrain trade, from the market forces which are even beyond the control of the Central Government?"

The earlier understanding of Centre-State relations has to be transformed to keep pace with the realities of the new economic order. For instance, after signing of the WTO agreement by India, will the states be autonomous enough not to abide by the terms of agreement? Or even after being given autonomy, is it possible for the states to defy the dictates of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)? If the Centre does not have the economic autonomy, how can it grant autonomy to states?

The globalisation syndrome represents a kind of dualism - that is on the one hand, there is globalisation of capital and, on the other, localisation of human capital (labour) their aspirations, culture, history, language, etc. This phenomenon has provided impetus to the "sons of the soil" movements throughout the world. This is visible within and among countries. For instance, the movements like Punjab for Punjabis (Sikhs), Kashmir for Kashmiris (Muslims), Maharashtra for Marathas (Hindus) have acquired a structural logic because of the resources crunch and intense competition for jobs due to the process of liberalisation and globalisation within the country. If the states are given autonomy to regulate their own labour market, some of the states may provide impetus to the sons of the soil movement. Therefore, the autonomy debate has to find answers to the multi-cultural needs and providing the labour free access to the market irrespective of the state borders.

Autonomy could be a powerful antidote to disintegration. But its content has to be revised in view of the changing political and economic order, irrespective of the rhetoric of both the proponents and the opponents of autonomy.

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REMEMBERING HISTORY: TO LEARN RATHER THAN TEACH LESSONS

Punjab politics is in a flux. It has become hostage to two kinds of fundamentalism. One is market fundamentalism and the other is religious fundamentalism. Anyone who is a non-believer in the 'unfettered market' is treated as an outcaste and an outdated person. It has thrown up a class of market oriented priesthood which subscribe to a rationality that 'privatization is the price of progress as death is the price of life.' This rationality is advocated even if it defeats its own purpose i.e. to create a humane and just society. This new priesthood is as dogmatic, intolerant, inegalitarian and inhuman as the priesthood of religious extremism.

Intense competition in politics, stagnant economic development and the increasing incapacity of the state to take pro-people initiatives have triggered the politics of blame game and appropriation of the panthic agenda by the competing political parties. Recent developments like issuing of dictats for censoring the film, 'Jo Bole So Nihal', raising of separatist slogans at the anniversary function of Operation Blue Star, sponsored and orchestrated by the radicals, and the stance taken by the mainstream political parties have exposed them in a compromising position and have brought to the politics of revivalism. The competing political parties have not learnt the lesson that it is already too late to address factors which had pushed Punjab into terrorism.

Twenty-one years later, at the anniversary function of Operation Blue Star, Punjab witnessed the ceremonious conferment of martyrdom to the leader of the 'Khalistan' movement amidst visible disinterest shown by the hurt and anguished Sikh community. It has also seen that voices glorifying the role of former Prime Ministers in shaping the event and its fall-out, have become feeble and apologetic.

The assertions of radicals notwithstanding, Operation Blue Star has become a marker symbolizing the need for respecting religious symbols and recognizing the rights of religious minorities in a multicultural society. Interestingly, it could not become a marker of social divisiveness, politics of religious dominance and assertion of a theocratic Sikh state. This has transformed the significance of the event from a source of justification for revenge for the hurt Sikh psyche, into an ongoing political discourse on the relevance of democratic rights of religious groups in a multicultural society. The discourse is sharpened with the practice of caution, as was reflected in the restraint shown in handling the terrorist infested Muslim shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar and attempts to condone demolition of the Babri Masjid. The strength of the vibrant Indian democracy continues to be reflected in the apologetic politics blemishing the stature of leaders like Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. If Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale could not become an unquestioned icon of the Sikh masses, the former Indian Prime Ministers responsible for Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots have also suffered an image loss in the Indian secular and democratic society. The divisive and separatist politics which caused the event is trying to make the brutal legacy to simmer and regenerate itself. To illustrate, Dal Khalsa, a radical Sikh organization, has appealed to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) to raise a martyrs' memorial at the Golden Temple as promised in 1985 and 2002. The response of the SGPC and the Akali Dal is ambivalent. This is sending signals which are not conducive to sustainable peace. Unlike the religious fundamentalist fervour of the Khalistan protagonists, memories of Operation Blue Star have not faded away. Notwithstanding its contextual articulations in the electoral battles and fringe groups' usage for keeping alive the separatist Sikh identity, the message that reverberates is that the protection of rights of religious groups and the

practice of democracy are the only insurance against dehumanized, communal and violently sectarian political articulations.

This is an outcome of 20 years of churning of the civil society and politics. In Punjab the hurt which was initially felt by members of the Sikh community and secularists, became universal. It transcended the boundaries of religions, regions, political and social affiliations. It is pertinent to point out that instead of building a frenzy around issues like constructing a Blue Star memorial, conferment of medals by the Indian state to soldiers who had displayed bravery during the operation or the assassination of General A.S. Vaidya by the radicals, need is to learn a lesson. The lesson is that rather than eulogising or denigrating merely the instruments, it is necessary to attribute accountability to the deadlier nature of the state and extremist politics. Time has shown that while individual instruments have been honoured or denigrated, factors and actors who have caused those events continue to dominate and govern. Therefore, the relevant proposition is that history should be used to learn lessons rather than to teach lessons.

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A million journeys out of Punjab

PRAMOD KUMAR

THE desire to emigrate is a fever in the arteries of every red-blooded Punjabi. The phenomenon occasionally hits the headlines when something particularly sensational occurs as, for instance, the detention last week of an MP caught for human trafficking. Unfortunately, the focus of the state continues to be on tightening immigration controls and upgrading legal responses to detection and prosecution, rather than on the human angle of why this happens in the first place.

Punjab has been a principal source of emigrant labour. People in the state have risked their very survival in their search for prosperity. They have submitted to engaging in occupations considered unclean or beneath contempt back in their own countries, in order to attain 'the foreign mystique' and earn some dollars. They may consider themselves as belonging to a martial race, but have meekly submitted to racist insults and humiliations abroad.

At one level, this is a saga of a people's tremendous capacity for physical and mental endurance. A saga shaped not merely by poverty, but by an oppressive agrarian system, indifferent governance, and of course the personal urge to enhance one's social status. It has seen

people try and smuggle themselves into the undercarriages of aircraft in sub-zero temperatures, risk travelling in overcrowded boats (which sometimes capsize as one did off the coast of Malta in 1996), endure travelling in extremely rough conditions, and sometimes without food or water. A constant attempt is made to carve out new routes to destinations in Southeast Asia, East Africa, Eastern Europe and North America. Sometimes families have migrated repeatedly over generations — from one destination in

hectare of agricultural land in the first decade of the 20th century. Once abroad, they were exposed to exclusionist policies which in turn led to riots. The next wave of immigration — from 1909 to the mid-1960s — was marked by battles against various anti-immigrant restrictions and racist policies. The 'Komagatu Maru' incident came to symbolise this. The passengers of this ship were despatched to prisons, and a few were even hanged.

The third phase marked a distinct shift. You now saw professionalised

Illegal emigration from Punjab is linked to two trends: rising agrarian debt and rising prosperity

Africa to another, from Eastern Europe to Canada, and so on.

People have been moving out from Punjab in search of greener pastures from times immemorial. But the early years of the 20th century saw a group of men travel by train from Punjab to Calcutta, and from thence in an open-deck steamer to Hong Kong. From Hong Kong, they boarded a Canadian Pacific liner to Victoria, Canada. These early emigrants were Sikh soldiers and farmers, mainly single males. The trans-Pacific steamer fare cost as much as a

labour moving out legally. This put manual workers from Punjab in a disadvantageous position. There was now a near-absence of a supportive regime to provide them with the opportunity to compete on a legal and equal basis for jobs in international labour markets through the building up of personal capacities and skills. There was, besides, no policy catering to reuniting divided families. It was also quite clear that insufficient attention was paid to safeguarding the human and citizenship rights of emigrants.

Illegal emigration from Punjab today is linked to two seemingly contradictory trends: rising agrarian debt and rising prosperity. The lesson people here have learnt is that the expansion of markets and the spread of commodity chains to newer areas generates new work opportunities. But, ironically, those who dare to explore new labour markets are often forced to do so illegally. Globalisation has facilitated the unregulated flow of capital and products across borders, but has not evolved mechanisms to facilitate the free flow of labour. Further, migrants are still not entitled to global standards of equity, justice, citizenship and livelihood rights.

India needs to examine this issue in an informed manner and with empathy. As for Punjab, it needs to be more pro-active on the issue. The energy and potential of its youth have to be channelised in a productive fashion. The militancy of the eighties and early nineties can, in part, be attributed to the widespread alienation of the young people of that generation. Neither the state, nor the country can afford a repeat of that turbulent history.

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GUEST COLUMN | *Dr. Pramod Kumar*

Punjab Shining on whom?

ELECTORAL POLITICS has come of age. It is marked by opulence, mega-mergers, media managers, a slew of promises and doles and politics of amnesia. It has liberated political parties from consistent political positions and ideological filters. The electoral process has also acquired its own autonomous space. It has become a battle of false claims and empty promises, of political leaders presenting themselves as representatives of the common persons and servants of the privileged, of trivialising of issues and appealing on a modelled image. In other words, it has been reduced to a "parade of clowns and acrobats, elephants and donkeys".

The forthcoming elections in Punjab seem to be part of this design. Interestingly, political parties are making false claims and empty promises as a cover-up for their non-performance, only a little more blatantly. For example, one of the advertisement released by the Congress Government claimed that it had "inspired top industrial houses to invest Rs. 86,161 crore in 282 mega projects thereby generating 20 lakh jobs". It is not known that how far these 'inspired industrial houses' have been able to create 20 lakh jobs by December. Whether such mega claims will prove voter friendly is a moot question. As leading political analyst Alan Altshuler commenting on the claims of the political parties in the USA, said, "Though their little favours went to little men, the big favours went to land speculators, public utility franchise holders, government contractors, illicit businessmen and of course, the leading members of the machines themselves."

At least, in this sense Punjab has been globalised. However, the glitter of "shinning Punjab" has made the political leaders candid about the outcome of their performance. It has also shown that the poorer sections have tremendous capacity to enrich the rich through their extra labour and culture of resilience. For instance, it has been claimed that if the opposition party, the Akali Dal, is brought back to power, land prices will crash. Such a claim is contrary to the ideological filter of *aam admi* used by the Congress Party in the last election. Those who do not have the means may be deprived by the rising prices of land of even their own shelter or a house. The irony of the situation is that the compensation received by the farmers ranging from Rs. 40 lakh to Rs 60 lakh for an acre of land is not adequate to get them a shelter of 5 marlas on the same land. If a political leadership is committed to the *aam admi* agenda it would not market as development, which in reality is pauperisation of poor farmers. Those aspiring to own a shelter or a piece of land for their shop or micro-enterprise educated enough to know that their life of deprivation, poverty and inequalities will continue as ever and the promises to eradicate pover-

Political parties are making false claims and empty promises as a cover-up for non-performance, only a little more blatantly. Besides anti-incumbency that provides a safe passage to issueless political, winnability criteria allow faceless politicians to find entry into the political management. Above all, the money a candidate can invest with the hope of recovering it later is a major facilitating factor – symptomatic of erosion of parties' ideological support base

ty and deprivation are a necessary ritual that constitute the core of an election campaign of the dominant political parties. Not only this, it has many more additionalities attached to it. In the words of a well acclaimed political analyst Michael Parenti, "The candidate sells his image as he would a soap product to a public conditioned to such bombardments. His family and his looks; the experience in office and devotion to public service; his sincerity, sagacity, and fighting spirit; his military record, patriotism, and ethnic background; his determination to limit taxes, stop inflation, improve wages, and create new jobs by attracting industry into the area; his desire to help the worker, farmer, and business person, the young and old, the rich and poor, and especially those in between; his eagerness to fight poverty but curb welfare spending while ending government waste and corruption and making the streets and the world itself safe by strengthening our laws, our courts, and our defences abroad, bringing us lasting peace and prosperity with honour, and so forth—such are the inevitable appeals that like so many autumn leaves, or barn droppings, they cover the land each November" these image building pronouncements without much content. In the background of these the style of governance, doles and electoral arithmetic emerge as preferable parameters for participation in elections.

The style of governance becomes the main concern of the people who do not have the means or are facing harassment in having access to gov-

ernment services. In the forthcoming Punjab elections the inaccessibility of the ruling Congress leadership, in other words, the feel-good-factor seem to have become a major issue. For instance, most of the campaign of the opposition parties revolves around the inaccessibility of the leadership rather than its performance (good or bad). The 'Vikas Yatra' has been termed as a mechanical vote catching device. In a caricatured ad-campaign the opposition parties remind the people that this *Yatra* has been undertaken only to catch votes at the end of a five-year term, while the political leaders remained elusive during this period. Even the opposition parties' have failed to actively participate in protest movements emanating from the implementation of economic reforms to which they are a votary. For instance, number of protests by unemployed youth, ad hoc employees, pauperised farmers, medicos have been responded by the repressive arm of the state as these have been termed as anti-development. If people demand employment, wages, livelihood and social security in the face of disinvestment, mega projects and retrenchment, they are labelled as anti-development.

With political parties ideologically supporting economic reforms, pauperisation of people do not find voice in the popular arena of electoral politics. Economic reforms encourage privatisation of health, employment and other public facilities such as electricity, water, transportation without providing them with means of livelihood.

Real issues like the challenge posed by the WTO agreement to small and marginal farmers, decline in the social development index with the status of women being the lowest in India, increasing non-productive youth population, unemployment, etc. thus remain outside the realm of electoral politics. Elections then are treated like events where the voters need to be 'managed'. Anti-incumbency becomes a saviour by providing parties rotational preference.

Besides anti-incumbency that provides a safe passage to issueless politics, winnability criteria allow faceless politicians to find entry into political management. In the course of the selection of candidates, political parties use this novel criterion. It does not matter whether a candidate is with or without a criminal record, has or does not have the capacity to do pro-people work. But if he has the capacity to manipulate votes and is himself 'manageable', there is every chance of his being selected. Above all, the money a candidate can invest with the hope of recovering it at a later date is a major facilitating factor. This is symptomatic of the erosion of the ideological support base of political parties.

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GUEST COLUMN | *Dr. Pramod Kumar*

Reversing the decline

POLITICAL PARTIES in Punjab have of late shifted their ideological position from regional and religious identity to linguistic and cultural identity assertions, from violent modes of political discourse to peace at any cost. In the process, never mind if the human rights are violated and if their stance is seen to be shifting gear from anti-centrism to co-operative federalism.

Shedding of traditional ideological positions by these political parties in the midst of a qualitative change in direction of the economy to market economy, have placed them in a difficult situation and they have become the target of anti-incumbency. In other words, the common good now has to be discovered through self-seeking actions of illicit businessmen, real estate developers and corporate players turned retail *karyana* merchants. To achieve this the government machinery is working overtime to disinvest itself by leveraging public property for inducing private capital. It is interesting that an 'inefficient and corrupt' state apparatus is 'efficiently and honestly' trying to eliminate itself. And now the public interest is to be protected, promoted and sustained by private initiatives.

Political parties in Punjab are also bugged by this 'new paradigm'. A dialogue has been initiated by the present political establishment on merits and demerits of giving freebies and doles and selective targeting of political adversaries as a substitute for competitive politics. This dialogue is providing a healthy shift to Punjab politics. The main thrust of the dialogue is to choose between 'fiscal management' proposals or to live with 'fiscal mismanagement' as a reversal involves a major political backlash. This debate has questioned the rationale behind free electricity to farmers and put forward a fresh proposal for the imposition of taxes and identification of modes of revenue generation. It is argued that an improvement in the fiscal health of the state and leveraging of these resources to the private sector shall provide livelihood to the needy.

All successive governments appear to have fiscal management as their main activity. Every time they resolve to withdraw these freebies, they end up giving more doles. Earlier, it was free electricity and now it is Atta and Dal also. Both the political parties promised not only free electricity and water to farmers, but also subsidised Atta and Dal. Why are political parties forced to promise these doles? Simply

Politics which concerns only members of the ruling class has no meaning for the common man. This is time for the ruling class in Punjab itself to learn some lessons rather than continue to teach lessons.

put, if the economy is unable to provide opportunities for livelihood, politics has to give doles to meet subsistence needs of people. In other words, 'fiscal mismanagement' is a feudal response to the crisis of economy.

The state has a constitutional obligation to evolve a positive agenda i.e. productive investment instead of disinvestment, employment generation rather than retrenchment, rationalisation of government expenditure rather than expenditure reduction.

It is not to argue that proponents of fiscal management do not have any development agenda. For the declining agricultural growth rate and farmers' income, their prescription is crop diversification. The need is rather to diversify the economy by a large inter-sectoral shift to high productivity flexible agriculture, move away from anti-grain policies and promote a decentralised modern small scale Industrial complex.

Another policy initiative has been towards corporatisation of agriculture and shifting small and marginal farmers from 'unviable economic activity'. Through this policy agriculture may thrive, but not the small agriculturists. Further, to push the small farmers who are without means, skills and urban linkages away from 'unviable economic activity' is to expect them to fly without wings. The rich farmers with political and economic means have already started diversifying into other activities and they need policy and institutional support.

Another dimension of this dialogue relates to the norms of competitive politics. Having shed their ideological positions, a culture of personalised politics is being nurtured and institutionalised. Individual leaders are being targeted to out-compete them in politics through the process of elimination.

Politics in Punjab has given currency to the term 'political vendetta'. This term came into

circulation during the Congress regime. A selective hunting of political adversaries was initiated. Cases of corruption were slapped on the functionaries of the predecessor Akali government. And the present Akali-BJP coalition government has slapped similar cases.

This is getting monotonous as it involves no suspense, innovation or creativity. It is straight and simple enactment of a drama with the same political actors, same instruments i.e. policemen indulging in similar tactics and even pronouncements and of course, media coverage. Above all, corruption being a convenient instrument of politics and politicians, it remains the main theme of the song.

The 2007 election results have proved that these political campaigns are meant not to eradicate corruption, but to eliminate political adversaries. People rejected this drive against corruption and elected the Prakash Singh Badal-led Akali-BJP coalition. Is it such a difficult lesson for politicians to learn? Or is it meant only to take personal revenge. If that is so, then it is not 'political vendetta' but plane vendetta. It is only a tribal way of settling scores, generation by generation.

Recently an expert on a visit to Afghanistan discovered this practice to his horror. His host was a tribal chief. At night, the room in which he was staying was sprayed with bullets. He rushed to his host and told him that bullets are being directed at him. The tribal chief confidently assured him that there was no need to worry and that he should relax. If these people kill you, in revenge we will kill two persons of theirs.

Will people feel relaxed and remain connected with this kind of politics? The answer is obvious; why should they?

Politics which concerns only members of the ruling class has no meaning for the common man. This is time for the ruling class itself to learn some lessons rather than continue to teach lessons.

People need good governance, a buoyant economy and healthy politics. A relevant lesson comes directly from Marx that it is politics which has primacy. If politics is unhealthy and anti-people, the so called 'good governance' under the banner of fiscal management will remain unpopular.

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GUEST COLUMN | *Dr. Pramod Kumar*

Revive the Upper House

THE REVIVAL of the Legislative Council of Punjab has acquired currency after nearly four decades of its abolition. Both the dominant political parties i.e. the Congress and the Akali Dal have demanded its revival in their election manifestos. This is largely in response to the limits imposed on the size of the cabinet. Its revival, it is felt, shall facilitate the expansion of the size of the cabinet and also accommodate leaders who have neither the capacity nor the inclination to face the electorate. Notwithstanding this distorted and tunnel vision, the revival of the legislative council and various other democratic institutions has become a necessity for strengthening the representative character of democracy, particularly in Punjab.

The need for its revival was felt in the mid-eighties in view of the systemic collapse of democratic institutions. In February, 1990, a group of social scientists and activists in a statement published in the press exhorted: "There is an urgent need to revive the liberal democratic institutions in the state. A debate may be initiated regarding reconstitution of the second chamber of the legislature. It may be ensured that each one of them adhere religiously to liberal democratic norms. The steady erosion of the vitality of these institutions and the equally steady flouting of liberal norms have caused immense damage to politics in the state."

Earlier, when the issue of revival of the state legislative council was raised in 1992, there were two major arguments raised against the revival of multiple democratic institutions, including the legislative council. First, this would be an unnecessary burden on the state exchequer. Second, it provided backdoor entry to leaders defeated in elections.

As is well-established, democracy is most expensive form of governance as compared to non-representative and partially representative forms. For instance, dictatorship, even governor's rule, is supposedly more effective and less expensive. Even then these are not considered desirable and viable alternatives. As is well-known, the desirability of an institution should not be

The steady erosion of the vitality of institutions has caused immense damage to democratic and participatory politics. Therefore, there is an urgent need for creating as many forums as possible to provide the people access to decision-making processes.

seen through distorted practices. Rather, ways and means should be found to remove the distortions instead of demolishing the institution.

The legislative council symbolises institutional pluralism, whereby various grassroots institutions find an opportunity to articulate their interests. On the other hand, the state legislative assembly represents cultural and social pluralism. One cannot be a substitute for the other.

Not only this, the state legislative council also has a moderating effect on the legislative as well as popular politics. This, under critical situations, can be of decisive importance. The cost-benefit approach, therefore, tends to ignore the qualitative aspects of the contribution of these institutions.

The nature of electoral politics is such that it is impossible for a common person to contest elections. A social reformer, educationist and any one who finds it morally and otherwise undesirable to indulge in malpractices which go with electoral process, cannot participate meaningfully in the decision making process. For instance, during the last decade, organised groups like the Chambers of Commerce, teachers' associations, trade unions, peasant and agricultural labourers' organisations could not meaningfully intervene because they had been marginalised in legislative politics.

Article 171 of the Constitution stipulates that in the legislative council one-third shall be elected by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards; One twelfth shall be elected by electorates at least every three years, graduates from any university in India residing in the state; one twelfth from electorates engaged at least for three years in teaching within the state; one-third non members of legislative assembly to be elected by the members of the legislative assembly. The remainder shall be nominated by the governor from amongst persons having special knowledge or practical experience in namely literature, science, art, co-operative movement and social service.

The revival of the legislative council should provide representation and expression to emerging interest groups and demographic and multi-cultural diversities. For this purpose the Constitution should be amended to accommodate representatives of Chambers of Commerce, peasant and agricultural labourers and trade unions. Checks and balances should be introduced. For instance, to check the backdoor entry of defeated candidates in the assembly elections, the Constitution may be amended to debar their entry into the state legislative council at least for a few years.

The steady erosion of the vitality of the institutions has caused immense damage to democratic and participatory politics. Therefore, there is an urgent need for creating as many forums as possible to provide the people access to decision making processes. The arguments that these institutions are expensive, ineffective, corrupt and, therefore, should be demolished, indirectly plead for masked authoritarianism. On the positive site, it can be proposed that efforts should be made to make these institutions representative, participatory, less corrupt and more efficient and effective. The most important question in a democratic set-up is to restore confidence of the people in the system. And the danger comes from stalling the democratic process and compounding the crisis by shutting out popular participation.

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Coalition and 'dharma'

WE HAVE been told by no less a person than Atal Bihari Vajpayee that there is a 'dharma of coalition politics'. Coalition politics by implication, therefore, is not merely an opportunist alliance nor is it meant to share the spoils of power. In other words, its continuity depends upon a self-imposed discipline by the parties of not being greedy, self-centred and misappropriators of power. If this norm is not followed, the existence and rationality of the coalition become suspect. Particularly so, when sharing the spoils of power becomes a main enterprise of the political parties and this is justified as a necessary evil to remain in the business of politics. These actions in political parlance are justified for expanding political power which absolves the culture of corruption, personalized ambitions and above all, the politics of opportunism.

Is the 'dharma' of coalition being followed in Punjab? What constitutes this 'dharma'? To put it simply, power sharing on the basis of a mutually agreed formula. And if this is not followed, the coalition becomes unstable. The sharing of power through Cabinet berths and portfolios continues to remain one of the major concerns of a functional coalition. Punjab mirrored this process as early as 1967. The first coalition was formed in 1967 with the sole objective of halting the dominance of the Congress. Historically, the Akalis formed five coalition governments with their main coalition partner, the Bharatiya Janata Party, formerly known as the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Portfolio distribution was aptly described by an earlier Chief Minister, Gurnam Singh, on the floor of the Assembly in 1970. He said,

"My honourable Jana Sangh members created a lot of noise over the allocation of Finance to another colleague who does not belong to their party. I must take the House in confidence that at no stage it was agreed that the Finance portfolio would be given to the Jana Sangh. It was my prerogative as the Chief Minister and I exercised it. Nevertheless, beneath this demand for key portfolios by the Jana Sangh, in reality is the desire to use the State machine to rehabilitate themselves among the people."

Another practice of coalition politics has been to co-opt legislators as chairpersons of



Guest Column

Dr Pramod Kumar

Coalition politics is not merely an opportunist alliance, nor is it meant to share the spoils of power. Is the 'dharma' of coalition being followed in Punjab? What constitutes this 'dharma'?

financial institutions. In 1970s, the rules were amended to treat office of profit as office of non-profit to accommodate legislators clamouring for ministerial berths and to provide stability to the coalition. This in fact is a major contribution of the Punjab brand of coalition politics to Indian politics. Another innovative addition is sharing of spoils of power.

If coalition dharma is being followed to such an extent, why do fissures appear between these two parties? The conflict is visible in the Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti elections. In 30 constituencies, there is a contest between BJP and SAD candidates. In another 19, BJP dissidents are fighting the SAD official candidates. The functionaries of SAD have no satisfactory answer. Rather, they assert that the coalition dharma has been implemented in its pure form as the BJP has been given a proportionate share in the allocation of portfolios, in the spoils of power and in postings and transfers of civil servants. Even func-

tions which are the sole prerogative of the Chief Minister have been compromised to accommodate the BJP.

Why has the BJP redefined the meaning of the dharma of coalition? An obvious fact is that the SAD does not have a majority of its own. And the SAD leadership has not invoked the principles of governance. It has not sent strong signals that they may prefer to go out of power rather than to compromise on governance. Moreover, the BJP leadership consists of first generation politicians who are not sensitive to the historical and national relevance of this alliance.

The BJP needs the Akali Dal more to prove their credentials as a non-communal and pro-minority party. And also to prove with the backing of the SAD that the Congress is responsible for the November, 1984, riots and Operation Bluestar. They need this alliance to come to power at the Centre.

The clamouring for a share in the spoils of power by BJP legislators shows their indifference to the central leadership of the BJP for whom it is necessary to keep the allies together and capture power at the Centre. The implications of these fissures are being debated in political circles. Three possible scenarios are being discussed.

A. It is argued that the SAD may have to explore avenues for reviving their alliance with the BSP in the parliamentary elections. If this happens, it will be a repeat of 1996 Lok Sabha elections when the SAD and the BSP entered into an alliance.

B. For long-term survival as a regional party, the Akali Dal may have to join the Third Front. This will be a major setback to the BJP and also a comment on the BJP's inability to carry a trusted alliance partner with them.

C. It is also being discussed that the SAD has to systematically expand its support base in urban areas to decrease its dependence on the BJP in the long run and for the time being continue to pamper its coalition partner, the BJP.

Time will reassert that these coalitions, non-ideological, are marriages of convenience with the sole aim of capturing power.

(Dr Pramod Kumar is a Chandigarh-based political analyst)

Institutionalising farm policies



Guest Column

Dr Pramod Kumar

THE DEBT relief of Rs 60,000 crore is India's largest ever dole given to farmers by India's renowned economists. The economist wobblers have been preaching that 'power subsidy' to the farmers is disastrous for the fiscal health and therefore, should be withdrawn. But now they have termed this bumper dole as an act of economic balance enacted with political finesse.

And their off-the-record justification is that political circumstances have forced them to take this decision. Even when they happily surrender to political opportunism, they continue to claim that their heart is in the right place, as pure and honest as ever. They provide all possible arguments to sustain the hope of politics of opportunism that the people will be content with crumbs.

As their follies begin to acquire 'cosmic' grandeur, it becomes easier for them to keep shifting their stance. These wobblers have been propagating two main mantras i.e. diversification of crops and no 'freebies' (read subsidies) for farmers. Instead of diversification of crops, it is back to the policy of grow more foodgrains.

It is unfortunate that due to the lack of a clear agricultural policy, Punjab has suffered the advocates of diversification of crops since 1986. And today, Punjab could not diversify to cash crops and also could not specialise in foodgrains. If we look back, it was learning the hard way. Susan George rightly pointed out, "The inescapable conclusion is that however hard the road, the hungriest countries must reduce their dependence on the West. They must not only produce more food crops, but also distribute them more equitably and allow more people access to food-producing resources."

The then US Agriculture Secretary, John Block, in 1986 had, at the start of the first Uruguay Round negotiations asserted that "the idea that developing countries should feed themselves is an anachronism. They could better ensure their food security by relying on US agricultural products, which

Debt relief package to farmers has been given in response to their dismal conditions. It has been given as a one-time relief to the farmers. Lack of a clear vision and commitment to the pro-people agenda has led to such ad hoc initiatives.

Nowhere has an effort been made to put in place institutional mechanisms to increase income of the farmers and prevent indebtedness.

are available in most cases at much lower costs. These countries can, therefore, utilise their land and resources for growing other crops." After a few months in 1986 we had the famous diversification report.

But what has been our politics? To characterise the crisis of agriculture as foodgrains not finding a market or the farmers getting pauperized. It is paradoxical. The agri-business in food is making huge profits and producers of food are starving. The crisis is much deeper.

For the declining agricultural growth rate and farmers' income, their prescription was crop diversification. The need was rather to diversify the economy by a large inter-sectoral shift to high productivity flexible agriculture, to move away from anti-grain policies and promote a decentralised modern small-scale industrial complex.

Another policy prescription was that doles or subsidies to the farmers are not productive for the economic health of the state. It is prudent and statesmanlike if these are withdrawn. And then comes an announcement of bumper doles of Rs 60,000 crore, India's largest ever farm loan relief package.

This package has been given in response to the dismal conditions of the farmers. It has been given as a one-time relief to the farmers. It is an ad hoc response. The lack of a clear vision and commitment to the pro-people agenda has led to these ad hoc initiatives. Nowhere an effort has been made to put in place institutional mechanisms to increase the income of the farmers and prevent indebtedness.

The investment in agriculture has declined from 2.2 per cent of the GDP in 1999-2000 of GDP at constant prices (1999-2000) to 1.9 per cent of the GDP in 2005-06. This is also reflected in the decline in agricultural growth rate to 2.2 per cent per annum in 2005-06 at the all-India level. And no initiative has been taken to increase public sector investment in agriculture. This has led to a decline in agricultural productivity and damage to the ecology and environment. There is also the need for a change in the feudal response to the crisis of capitalism in the form of doles to subsidies to increase productivity and distributive justice.

However, other factors have taken precedence; food deficit and the forthcoming parliamentary elections have brought about a dramatic shift in the policy prescriptions.

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(The writer is a Chandigarh based political analyst)

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ANCHOR

Are subsidies a self-defeating proposition? A debate...

Subsidies are not doles, but a market response to capitalism

THESE are liberating times – after a struggle of 60 years the political



DR PRAMOD KUMAR

parties have shed their pro-people concerns. In other words, politics is mirroring the 'numbing effect of private prosperity' on society. It has also will-ingly become hostage to market fundamentalism, which is considered a panacea to all woes, as opposed to the Nehruvian vision of

state-led mixed economy model, now regarded as a distortion.

The political parties are caught in a bind. On the one hand, they want to liberate themselves from the burden of providing subsidies and social security to people and on the other hand, doles have become a currency to buy votes of misery-stricken electorate. But once they come to power, terms of reference change and doles are considered dubious, so much so that efforts are made to build consensus among political parties to withdraw them.

It is a strange world where if you

seek to build consensus among political parties for betraying people's mandate, it's considered a hallmark of honest politics. The politics of conviction lies in going back to the people and building a consensus amongst them against 'doles'. But ironically, politics of betrayal of people's mandate is considered fashionable.

The argument advanced is that the fiscal health of the state is not in

a good shape. The debate in Punjab has questioned the rationale of free electricity and water to the farmers as also the food (atta-dal) subsidy.

Now let us examine the rationale of subsidized food products for 'people living below the poverty line'. The ruling party by its intervention made the genuine issue of giving food subsidy to the poor look like bad fiscal management. It has redefined the

poverty line to include about 30 pc of the state's population as against about 8 pc of the people living below the poverty line, and in turn has put excessive burden on the state's finances.

As far as subsidy for agriculture is concerned, it is not only a question of survival for the poor, but also of keeping food-producing farms globally competitive. To sustain their commercial farms, the developed countries are giving huge subsidies. According to a recent estimate (Economist, London, August 7, 2004), 52 pc of the American

farmer's income comes from government subsidies. It is ditto for the farmers of European Union and Japan who get 46 pc and 56 pc of their income, respectively, from government subsidies. In comparison, Punjab farmers get less than 5 pc of their income from subsidy to maintain equally commercialized and high-productivity farming.

There is no doubt that populist politics is a short-cut to luring people. But to argue that subsidies are doles is fallacious. Doles are distortions and an outcome of feudal

▶ **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

PUNJAB in The DOL(E)DRUMS

Subsidies are not doles

response to the crisis of capitalism. And elimination of 'freebies' is a market fundamentalist response to the crisis of capitalism. "The market", to quote a renowned economist, "has no plan for those who are not useful either for consumption or for production".

Subsidies are a capitalist response to the crisis of capitalism to ensure equity and productivity of agriculture. If there is no subsidy for farmers particularly producing food, agriculture may thrive, but the agriculturist may not survive. Food is a political and social issue. It cannot be analysed in merely economic terms. It is not like any other

commodity which is produced purely for profit. It has to be subsidised, though not necessarily in the form of free electricity and water.

To stem the declining agricultural growth rate and farmers' income, what we need is to diversify the economy (and not crops) by a large inter-sectoral shift to high-productivity flexible agriculture, move away from anti-grain policies, and promote a decentralised modern, small-scale industrial complex.

(Dr Pramod Kumar is director of Chandigarh-based Institute for Development and Communication)

Why are welfare schemes for poor termed populist

WHY is the populism in politics considered extravagant? Why are the welfare schemes directed at the poor branded as populist? Why are the political leaders who formulate pro-poor policies accused of being as reckless with state exchequer? Why subsidies, if directed at the poor, are termed as dole-outs? On the contrary, if subsidies directed to protect profits, they are described as 'rescue' packages. In other words, subsidies to the poor are given as 'doles' and doles given to the rich are presented as subsidies or rescue packages. The former is presented as populist and the latter a survival need.

This is a positional issue. During pool periods, political leaders position themselves in favour of subsidies for the poor and after getting the power, they argue for 'fiscal management' to protect profits. This is logical, as a majority of people without means are the potential voters and instrumental in the formation of the government. The people with means are the instruments of the state and are the natural allies of political leaders for appropriation of spoils. Therefore, electoral promises are made for free electricity and water, job for the jobless and when in power, users charges are imposed and staff is retrenched.

In Punjab, the Congress, which came to power in 2002 and initiated economic reforms, subsequently suffered defeat in parliamentary elections in 2004. The Congress lost 23.9% of the votes and 61.3% of the seats in 2004 parliament elections, as compared to 2002 assembly elections. Out of the 45 predominantly S.C.

constituencies, it won 25 seats in 2002 assembly elections and could only able to retain 8 assembly segments in 2004. There comes subsidy for sanitation and other programme for the S.C. population. It lost maximum 30% of the votes in the rural Malwa belt. Majority of the constituencies in Malwa are peasant dominated and semi-rural areas.

There often comes announcement of free electricity and water to placate the rural peasantry. Similar is the case with the SAD and BJP coalition government. The debate has become so diffused now that a popular sentiment has been built up against pro-poor subsidies, which are presented as wasteful expenditure.

The label 'populist' is confusing as any concession for the poor is labelled as 'populist' with negative connotations. The obsession with fiscal management i.e. disinvestment, retrenchment, leveraging public assets for attracting private capital has become fashionable with the privileged.

Both have a 'populist' appeal. The need is to leave temptation to be 'populist' to garner the votes of the poor and sharing the spoils with the privileged. Both are wrong.

A country like India, that has one-third of all the world's poor population, cannot afford the luxury of becoming victim of the 'numbing effect of private prosperity. Around 42% of the Indian population lives below the poverty line, i.e. \$ 1.25 per day. The political parties are in a bind, as the poor constitute their main vote bank. Consequently, these parties use doles, as a currency to buy votes. Subsidies are essential component of the capitalist development and doles are the feudal response to capitalist development. And elimination of subsidies (read freebies) is an innocent response of the new priesthood of market fundamentalism.

There is an urgent need to create cushion for structured subsidies to enhance productivity and ensure equity.

Fiscal management agenda should include the building capacity for making provisions to structure subsidies for target groups like small marginal farmers, scheduled castes and women, rather than merely emphasising on disinvestment or retrenchment. The emphasis should be to generate employment and income augmentation of the rural poor, rather than merely achieving higher growth rate.

As far as, agricultural subsidies are concerned, it may not be prudent to withdraw



Dr Pramod Kumar

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subsidies (free electricity and power), but the need is to rationalise the whole concept subsidies. On the contrary, to make our agriculture globally competitive and to ensure food security, more investment in agriculture and provisions for higher subsidies have to be made.

Just to reinforce the argument, it is useful to put forward an oft-repeated fact that to sustain their commercial farms, developed countries are giving huge subsidies. According to a recent estimate (The Economist, 7th August 2004), 52% of the average American farmer's income comes from government subsidies, 46% of the European Union farmer's income comes from subsidies and 56% of the Japanese farmer's income comes from

government subsidies. In comparison to that, Punjab farmers are getting less than 5% of their income from subsidy, to maintain equally commercialised and high productivity farming.

There is a challenge for the political leadership not to present 'subsidies' as doles to the poor and 'doles' as subsidies to the rich. This challenge can be met if political parties stop promoting Rai-Mai-Bap political culture.

The political parties should try to overcome abdication of pro-poor agenda, otherwise, market shall govern and not the governments. "And the market", to quote a renowned economist, "has no plan for those who are not useful either for consumption or for production. The market works for those, whose signals, it can hear, but the voices of the poor are literally inaudible. It is pointless to ask the market to accomplish, what it was never cut out to do."

(The author is a political analyst and director, Institute for Development and Communication(IDC), Chandigarh)

1984, later chapters

PEACE AND peace building is a serious business and unfortunately, it has become a pre-occupation with people themselves responsible for creating violent situations. In other words, the impediments in peace building are not ideological but political. Violence has become an instrument of power and even style of governance. People's protests, on the other hand, have become de-privileged and marginalised.

Punjab has witnessed this phenomenon in an aggravated form. Operation Bluestar was an outcome of this kind of purblind politics. Bluestar, assassination of the then Prime Minister and brutal riots of November 1984 provided the much-needed legitimacy and justification to decade long violence in post-1984 phase. The intensity of violence was so blood-splattered that thousands perished, felled by bullets or killed in riots. It can be said that had the dead-lier politics manifesting in Bluestar and riots, not been unleashed, terror-ism may have petered out in 1985 itself.

The recent intra-religious group violence in Punjab has shown that we have not learnt our lessons. Our cultural response has been to teach lessons by either destroying or outcompeting the 'enemy'. No doubt, peaceful resolution is given a chance, but after exhausting all violent alternatives. The first and foremost lesson is that we must learn to apply closure to these tragic events. Is it not strange that Punjabi society has not even thought of setting up a Peace Memorial Monument in the memory of those who became victims of this decade long terror, trauma and torture? We have also not brought to justice the persons accountable for their violative acts. Had the persons responsible for instigation of events of 1984 been brought to justice, riots in Gujarat may not have erupted. This kind of political response sets in motion a vicious circle of violence which if not dismantled is sure to have a snowball effect.

This purblind politics has not aggravated the crisis, but has provided enough space to political groups to fuel and appropriate competitive religiosity. The tragic death of Sant Rama Nand in Vienna and ugly competition between the SAD and the Congress to take political mileage out of it makes one fearful of the outcome. The danger is that if factors leading to

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Dr Pramod Kumar

Is it not strange that Punjabi society has not even thought of setting up a Peace Memorial Monument in the memory of those who became victims of this decade long terror, trauma and torture? Recent intra-religious group violence shows we have not learnt our lessons. No doubt, peaceful resolution is given a chance, but after exhausting all violent alternatives.

these events are not dealt with, Punjab may slide into another cycle of violence.

Twenty-five years have outlived the relevance of superficial apologies, and documentation of painful memories. It is not that no lessons have been learnt. Bluestar has become a marker symbolising the need to be tolerant of religious sensitivities and rights of religious groups. It could not become a marker of social divisiveness and assertions of a theocratic Sikh state.

This has transformed the significance of the event from a source of justification for revenge for the hurt Sikh psyche, into an ongoing political discourse on the relevance of democratic rights of religious groups in a multicultural society. The restraint shown in handling the terrorist infested Muslim religious shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar and attempts to condone demolition of the Babri Masjid was the outcome of the lessons learnt.

If Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale could not become an unquestioned icon of the Sikh masses, the former Indian Prime Ministers responsible for Bluestar and anti-Sikh riots have been marginalized in the secular and democratic civilisational matrix.

Unlike the religious fundamentalist fervour of Khalistani protagonists, memories of Bluestar have not faded away. Notwithstanding its occasional articulations in electoral battles and fringe groups' usage for keeping alive the separatist Sikh identity, the message that reverberates is that the protection of rights of religious groups and the practice of democracy are the only insurance against dehumanized, communal and violently sectarian political articulations.

Twenty-five years of churning in civil society and politics has highlighted the need for self-correction within religious groups or sects rather than indulge in religious misadventures. Time has shown that while individual instruments have been honoured or denigrated, factors and actors who caused those events continue to dominate. The lesson is that rather than eulogising or denigrating merely the instruments, it is necessary to attribute accountability to the deadlier nature of the state politics and extremist politics.

(Dr. Pramod Kumar is a political analyst)

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(Dr. Pramod Kumar is a political analyst)

FEBRUARY 05, 2010

Need for citizen-centric politics

Governments do not seek participation of citizens in decision-making, but claim to provide for their welfare. This has made governance less a matter of politics and more of administrative policy. The main element of this has been the government's lack of trust in the common person, who has to submit affidavits at every step

Guest Column



DR PRAMOD KUMAR

There is a crisis of governance. And the crisis is not just because debts are mounting, especially when states have abdicated most of their development functions, or because one-third of the world's poor live in India. It is also not just because corruption is institutionalised. What is really worrisome is the manner in which these crises are being addressed.

Unfortunately, after a struggle of 60 years, governance models have been given the go-by. States have abdicated their responsibility of providing citizens a dignified living. On the pretext of private-public partnership, public resources are leveraged in favour of private profit. People are asked to mind their own health, and subsidies are given to private hospitals. They are asked to pay for life-saving services even if they do not have the opportunity to earn a livelihood. The message is — people should mind their own health as the task of nation-building is being outsourced to private initiatives.

There is also a strong desire in the government to liberate

itself of the burden of providing social security and subsidies to people. However, doles have become a currency to buy votes. A number of dole-oriented programmes are being implemented to include the poor in the economic development, euphemistically called inclusive growth. This "inclusive growth" may be inspired by an observation of well-known economist Joan Robinson: "There is only one thing that is worse than being exploited by capitalists. And that is not being exploited by capitalists."

A case in point is the UPA government's flagship programme under the NREGA scheme, providing employment to the rural poor for 100 days a year. It is this kind of "integration of the poor" into the capitalist development that has legitimised the dole mindset, thereby reinforcing the current non-performing system of justice delivery.

The civil society too seems to have relieved itself of the burden of launching protest movements to transform or reform the system, apart from occasional media-driven spurts of noise to bring to justice individual violators of the law.

There is a need to rejuvenate governance. Some of the laws have become redundant, inappropriate or violative of the rights of the common people. Or, there may be asymmetry of information, perverse incentives and high transaction costs.

Governments do not seek participation of citizens in

decision-making, but claim to provide for their welfare. This has made governance less a matter of politics and more of administrative policy. The main element of this has been the government's lack of trust in the common person. It can be exemplified in a number of ways, but the most visible is the requirement to file affidavits in almost every interaction with the establishment.

Affidavits are required in support of the facts given by applicants for availing various services. These are affirmations by applicants supported by third parties in some cases. The affidavits often have to be given on legal papers sworn before a magistrate or a public notary. As these are required even for services like electricity, sewerage and water, it only provides scope for corruption.

The practice needs to be discontinued immediately, and replaced with self-declaration, a step towards bestowing full citizenship on the "colonial subjects". A similar approach needs to be adopted in discontinuing verification from public officials.

A major casualty of the present system is citizen-centric governance. Recently, a system of tracking pregnant women was introduced to prohibit sex selection tests aimed at aborting female foetus. As this violates the privacy of a citizen, it can provide licence to those who treat women as a commodity.

It will be more prudent to enforce a law on the supply side, i.e., on the medical prac-

tioners. On the demand side, attempts should be made to enhance the value of the girl child in people's mind through awareness campaigns. Incentive-oriented schemes could also be offered for the girl child.

Governance having become a prisoner of the administrative structure, any political statement is seen as interference. This "political interference", which has become an accepted part of the political culture, has produced glaring distortions in the practice of governance, particularly in recruitments, transfers, allocation of works and service delivery, leading to the dilution of hierarchy, dysfunctional internal accountability mechanisms and patronage-centric governance.

An illustration of this is tenures in Punjab Police. The average tenure of an SHO in 2009 was around six months, and seven months in 2004. In the case of DSPs, it was 10 months, and for district police chiefs one year.

Tenures of police personnel have to be fixed as per the Police Act, and a performance audit report may be considered as the basis for effecting transfers and postings.

The bigger challenge, however, is to break the police-politics nexus, as both have risen above the law.

(The author is head of the Punjab Administrative Reforms Commission and director of the Institute for Development and Communication)

MAY 06, 2010

Cultural wasteland cannot grow



dr pramod kumar
DIRECTOR, IDC

CHANDIGARH: After ageing up to five decades, Chandigarh is an architectural product up for marketing and not a city with social moorings, political sensibilities, and least of all, knowledge centre.

The architectural genius of Le Corbusier has no parallel in other spheres of human activity. It has a wide network of educational infrastructure, but no college of excellence (in even architecture).

It has a broad-based health system, but not one world-class institution of any medical speciality. It has huge shopping complexes, but nowhere is major commercial activity.

Its big sports complexes are devoid of specialist training facilities. It has many newspapers, but no institution of excellence in media education.

In the Nehruvian vision of islands of human activity, Chandigarh was to be a model of urban development. The country created Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for academic excellence and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) for finding world-class technical human resource.

The hidden cost was severe, JNU sucked talent out of regional universities and the IITs consumed huge resources, while a vast network of engineering and technical universities stagnated. Chandigarh drew huge resources, while the other urban centres degenerated.

The consequence is distortions such as large-scale immigration, Encroachment, traffic congestion and deteriorating state of sanitation, electricity and water supply, and drainage. In spite of the distortions, the city continues to hold the tag of "architectural marvel".

Isolated sanctuaries are the refuge of individuals who have the capacity to appropriate privileges and institutions that can exploit the intellectual and material resources. Many educational institutions in Chandigarh are as old as the city.

Panjab University, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), and Punjab Engineering College have grown with Chandigarh.

The National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Central Scientific Instrument Organisation, and Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH) came in the second spell of development of educational institutions.

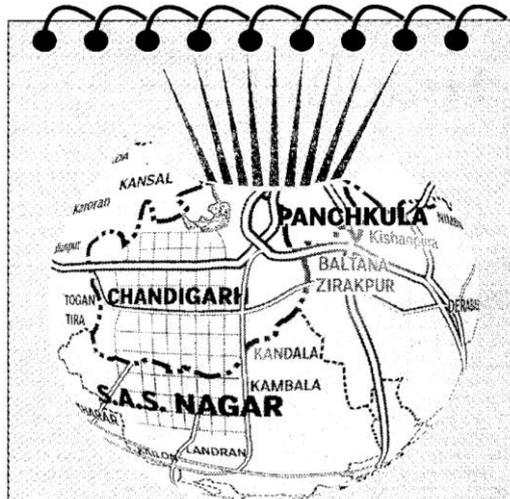
Chandigarh turned into tri-city and it brought many other training and research centre into the satellite-town space like National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Indian Institute of Agro Technology, Indian Institute of Sciences and Indian Institute of Technology were located in Mohali. There are a number of other training and research centres like Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Public Administration (MGSIPAP), Institute for Development and Communication (IDC) besides many other new centres established within Panjab University.

A legitimate question is can the tri-city with all its educational centres emerge as knowledge hub? History is not on its side.

Massive educational infrastructure, but not one college of excellence—that's the past. Knowledge centres are built not on earth, but on foundations of intellectual pursuit and creative labour.

There is a Russian proverb that when you go mushrooming, you need to be familiar with mushrooms. There's no clarity on how the institutions will contribute to the knowledge wealth of the city.

It's strange that the question is being raised in spite of multiple educational institutions in Chandigarh. The problem is design.



CAN TRI-CITY EMERGE AS A KNOWLEDGE HUB?

With a bunch of high-end national institutions of excellence and diverse specialities coming up in Chandigarh, S.A.S. Nagar and Panchkula, there is a definite buzz about the tricity. But, can the tricity, with all the right building blocks it has, realize its potential to be a knowledge hub? Beginning today, *HT Live* kicks off a special series in which eminent experts analyse the tricity's promise, potential and pitfalls in making it to the knowledge map of India.

It's not well conceived.

The absence of organic linkage with the cultural environment is acting as a structural constraint on the tri-city to become a knowledge centre from academic hub. For instance, in the north-western region, the quality of school education is poor, there is a weak tradition of interaction with the text or books and excessive reliance on oral tradition to transfer knowledge (i.e. through *pravachans*). It is, therefore, logical that the region is facing problems even to sustain the tri-city as an

educational centre not to talk of academic hub and least of all a knowledge centre.

Another major constraint is pervasiveness of the governmentality which has successfully purged the scope of academic adventurism and innovative experimentation. The middle class bureaucratic character of the city with the „domination of red and blue beacons“ curbs professional pursuits. For instance, within institutions disinterested academic explorations are responded to by „disinterested bureaucratic hierarchical controls“.

The tri-city also provides conducive environment for inbreeding of human resources within academics, civil services and other spheres of human activity and exercises restraint from nurturing excellence as it is footloose. Mediocrity labelled as excellence is accorded higher dignity.

Nevertheless, despite all these constraints, there is hope. The hope is that the natural process of human development and conscious policy corrections may in the long run lead to the development of comprehensive system of knowledge. There is an urgent need to shift the policy focus from making the tri-city as an industrial investment centre or locating international vegetable market to the creation of knowledge spaces to facilitate dialogue and spirit of enquiry. For example, for preservation of knowledge, Museums, for dialogue, dissemination and sharing of knowledge, a Vigyan Bhavan kind of facility and, for promotion of knowledge, a world class digital library having traditional folk music, classical and video resource materials may have to be set up. The tri-city has to transform itself from cultural wasteland to a cultural nerve centre reflecting the sensitivity of its diverse inhabitants, including even the slum dwellers and the migrants. A conscious uncovering of the cultural impulse of the north-western region may transform these institutions as knowledge centres.

The city represents a unique experiment in urban governance where bureaucracy rules without any stakes and roots. To liberate the intellectual impulse from the bureaucratic controls, the people's participation in governance through their elected representatives has to be broad-based.

The writer is director of the Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh (Tomorrow: Dr. K.L. Talwar, Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh)

Today, want Budget of hope

Guest Column



DR PRAMOD KUMAR

Budgets have become a usual exercise in fiscal management. These have been reduced to a political instrument to match the rhetoric of serving the *aam admi* and promoting the interests of the market. Budgets are long on words and short on 'substance' to improve the plight of the common persons. These budgets have not cared to increase the purchasing capacity of the poor, are silent on ensuring food security and have failed to provide quality access to the poor and rural population to social development.

The Central budget has committed itself to restore 9 per cent growth rate, but the same commitment towards social development seems to be missing. The financial allocation for Ministry of Education is just 0.72 per cent of GDP which has remained same as compared to 2009-10. This despite the fact on the Right to Education. It is the same story of promising opportunities without providing enabling conditions to avail these. Similarly, the budget allocation for Health Ministry is nominal 0.36 per cent of GDP. The issues relating to maternal and child health, child nutrition and pre-school education have not been adequately addressed in the central budget. Not only this, the whole exercise of gender budgeting has remained on paper. The Allocations for medical education and training have been reduced from Rs. 3,255.94 crore in 2009-10 to Rs. 2,678.84 crore in 2010-11. And, outlay for setting up of super speciality hospitals curtailed by Rs.700 crore forcing people to look for treatment in private hospitals. The allocations for premiere institutions like Post Graduate Institute for Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, and Jawaharlal Nehru Institute

Union Budget was long on words, short on substance to improve plight of common man. If Punjab Budget too does not throw up any hope for redressal, people shall conclude leaders only talk

of Post Graduate Education, Puducherry, have also been reduced.

These illustrations from the central budget underscore a concern that one-third of the country's population living on less than Rs. 20/- a day shall continue to remain outside the domain of these budgets.

Therefore, the major challenge before Punjab budget and its Finance Minister is to address the concerns of people living without means rather than harping on fiscal crisis.

No doubt, most of the states including the central government are facing a fiscal crisis. In other words, the expenditure of the governments is more than the revenue generated. Within increased deficit, public expenditure on social development, needed most by the poor, has been declining in the last 25 years in Punjab. A perusal of the state expenditure pattern on social development makes this point crystal clear. The expenditure on social development in Punjab including health declined from 66 per cent in the early eighties to 40 per cent. And, livelihood needs do not find any reference in the public finance management drive. Why is it then that the expenditure is multiplying while the governments have abdicated their functions to provide employment, public education and health facilities to the people?

Further, the trends in the last 25 years have shown

that the expenditure on the salaries of the public sector employees has declined. At least, it would not be fair to blame the government staff for the state's bad fiscal health. They can, however, be charged for inefficiency and corruption, but for that, requirement is not fiscal fix, but governance fix. Similarly, to improve tax collection in Punjab which is perhaps the lowest amongst the other developed states, the need is to rejuvenate governance.

To be over obsessed with subsidies to agriculture without appreciating the fact that 5 lakh farmers with less than five acres of land will have no choice but to starve in the urban slums. Also, without creating employment alternatives in other sectors of economy, it will be suicidal. There is also an urgent need to rationalise subsidies. Most of the subsidies to the poor are given as doles. To illustrate, the social security programmes like Pensions for old age, widows, destitutes and *Shagun* are given as doles to a large section of the 'ineligible' population.

This has become a practice with successive governments. The wastage is to the extent of Rs. 300 crore i.e. one-third of the total allocation for Pensions.

It would be worthwhile to note as to how far the Finance Minister has increased the share of the capital expenditure. All these years, capital outlay has been compromised to meet the fiscal deficit. Capital outlay is an expenditure that creates assets leading to sustainable growth in the State.

Not only this, it is urgent to increase development expenditure on education, health, family welfare, housing, labour, welfare of dalits, urban development, food and nutrition. Punjab has neglected these areas since 1980s. For example, in 2008-09, Punjab's social sector spending was around 22 per cent as compared to 36 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, 41 per cent in Bihar, 34 per cent Gujarat and 38 per cent Karnataka.

It has become endemic with government to escalate the plan size while the performance on the expenditure side has been dismal. It would be worthwhile to see how far 2009-10 plan was implemented. The practice of non-implementation of the plan makes it difficult to capture government's priorities and fix consequent accountability.

For smooth release of funds for the flagship programmes, announcements are made for setting up dedicated funds like Social Security Fund, Municipal Development, Village Development, but these remain largely on paper leading to delayed payment of pension, shagun or other social security schemes.

If social sector is not adequately funded and investments are not increased for agriculture and rural sector, consequently, a large population shall remain without jobs, sick and drug addicts. From this kind of situation, it would be wrong to expect demographic dividends, but demographic drags.

Punjab is on a downhill journey and it ranked 13th in overall growth rate in GSDP in the country. And, having recognised these facts, if the budget is not throwing up any hope for the redressal, the people shall have no other option but to conclude that to avoid the plunge, the leaders only talk.

For smooth release of funds for flagship programmes, announcements are made for dedicated funds like Social Security Fund, Municipal Development Village Development, but these remain largely on paper



When Arafat threw a tantrum in Delhi Page 24



Net divide over Gaddafi's war against Libyans Page 25

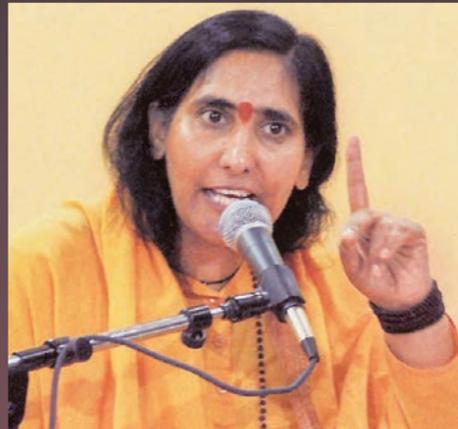
political mantra



Ramdev has said his party, Bharat Swabhiman, will contest all the Lok Sabha seats in the next general elections



Firebrand Hindutva leader Uma Bharati was sacked from the BJP



Sadhvi Ritambhara has been relegated to running an orphanage in Vrindavan



Though he leads Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Mahmood Madani is an RLD MP



BJP's Swami Adityanath has been linked to communal conflagrations in Mhow



India after Independence has seen very few religious parties and those that were formed, such as the Hindu Mahasabha, have withered away.

— AICC general secretary Digvijay Singh



We are in the business of politics and its purpose is to make people's lives better. Religion just has no space in such an endeavour. People in India are aware of this palpable reality.

— Sharad Yadav, president, Janata Dal (United)

POLITICS has come of age. It is marked by opulence, mega mergers and amnesia. It has liberated political parties from the shackles of ideology, principled positions and consistent normative behaviour. It has reduced political debates to legalistic interpretations devoid of any idealism and commitment to change. It has also become a battle of false claims and empty promises, of trivialising issues and appealing on modelled image.

And when confronted, the off-the-record justification of politicians is that political circumstances have forced them to be passive spectators. Even when they happily surrender to political opportunism, they continue to claim that their heart is in the right place, as pure and honest as ever. As their follies begin to acquire 'cosmic grandeur', they find an escape in shifting their stance. Why is this happening?

If you believe in politicians, their argument is that the right kind of people have become apathetic and therefore, do not participate in politics. If you have pretensions of being psephology-literate, then pollsters will tell you that politics is a matter of incumbency, of popularity ratings — that too of leaders and not of parties, epitomised by the phenomenon of 'Sidhuism'. But if the *aam admi* is to be believed, it is "good people who can do good".

Politicians and aspirants use this moral space to play different strings. What is bad and good is situational. Corruption is bad and honesty is good. Personal honesty has higher value because it is scarce. And in popular political parlance, individual honesty on its own has been marketed as a superior value than the fight against hunger, poverty, inequality, greed, conspicuous consumption and corruption.

This situation, defined by the public recognition of the circumscribed value of honesty, acts as an invitation to those who have proved their worth in their respective professions, ranging from cinema to sports to social activism. These

Decoding Baba's Vision of Politics



COMMENT
by Pramod Kumar

'celebrities' with their reservoir of social credit drift into politics. Their mortality rate in politics is alarming, though there are exceptions, particularly in the South.

The recent emergence of Baba Ram Dev in politics is a commentary on this political culture and the absence of political ideology. He has the dual advantage of being a mass leader and an aggressive appropriator of the space created by the propagation of 'honesty' as a supreme value rather than a historical struggle against capital accumulation, inequalities, hunger and poverty. He has used the small screen to make his concerns appear pro-people.

Historically, a number of leaders and political parties have used religious symbols and spaces to further their politics, such as Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim League, Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Akali Dal and the Hindu Mahasabha. They have argued that the division of politics on religious lines would help religious groups represent their interests better in secular politics. This is nothing but communalism. Political history has taught us that the communalisation of society and politics is fraught with danger. Punjab has learnt this lesson. Its main political parties — the Akali Dal and the BJP — resolved to move

away from communal politics to a secular Punjabi identity-based politics in the Moga Declaration in 1995.

Here is a rider. Baba Ram Dev uses the Hindu civilisational reservoir, but not in a communal guise. The issue is not whether his politics is religious or communal. The issue is — does his politics have a vision, a defined ideology and an alternative mode of reaching out to the people? The answer, perhaps, is no. As it appears, his politics is to make the conditions of exploitation bearable and saps the will of the people to transform the system. In other words, the civilisational reservoir is being used to make individuals more humane, moral and honest without questioning the basis of their miseries. Commercial interests would be the main beneficiaries of this morality of austerity, thrift and healthy life for the poor as it will facilitate them to multiply and accumulate wealth.

Notwithstanding this, if would-be political leaders are able to convince the people that they are serious and committed to fight evil, it may alter the political discourse. It must be recognised that irrespective of the absence of pro-people ideological movements, people remain bound to survival, livelihood and identity issues. But can Baba Ram Dev be absolved from the reality of people's fight for mere survival, demand for dignity in governance, and protection from abuse? In politics he will have no choice but to respond to these issues with the framework of secular and distributive justice.

— Kumar is the director, Institute for Development & Communication, Chandigarh

Lokpal: a super icon emerging

Guest Column



DR PRAMOD KUMAR

The crisis of governance is all pervasive. The message is loud and clear. The nation is not taken in by the rhetoric of political leaders branding others as more corrupt. People are fed up with mudslinging theatrics of political parties. And, in every election asking people to vote for the lesser evil. In addition, yesterday's villains present themselves as heroes of today. The political game of musical chairs has been disrupted by the screaming millions on the streets. The message is, 'Enough is enough. We are fed up.'

Recent events have shown that the language of power and wealth is different from the language of protest and justice. The language of protest has been the incarnation of super icons, be it Annaji or the lokpal. And, nobody is listening to the language of justice. The language of power has been procedural, legalistic and threatening. It was procedural when the government abdicated its responsibility to deal with the political protest against corruption and for the lokpal to Delhi Police. It is not a recent development. Earlier, the state had abdicated its responsibility for providing access to edu-

cation, health, livelihood and distributive justice to the market.

It was legalistic, as was asserted, that the civil society activists misappropriated the function of Parliament to enact laws. Not recognising the fact that laws are enacted by Parliament, but evolved as per the needs of the times, protest movements nurtured by right-based consciousness, globalisation and marketisation. For instance, introduction of the women's reservation bill was a consequence of a long protracted movement. These struggles should not be branded as blackmailing tactics. These are testimonies of a vibrant democracy, where right to dissent is protected as a cardinal principle.

It was threatening as it started a witch-hunt of those who were leaders of this movement. Only the pure, who never commit a sin, have the right to a point finger at the sinner. First, it targeted Baba Ramdev and then Anna's team. They were accused of corrupt practices. The signal was that if you support the anti-corruption campaign, be ready to be targeted for your past mistakes. The anger was so deep that these tactics could not deter people from coming out in large numbers.

The language of Anna's team is liberating for the people with means or resources from the shackles of corruption and harassment. It is also in celebration of creation of super icons like the janlokpal. We

have in the Eighties seen the birth of super cops in the fight against terrorism. This role was passed on to the judiciary in the Nineties. Now, we have an overactive judiciary with super-judges trying to perform all functions but their own. The backlog of cases is huge. People have to wait for more than 15 years to get justice. Earlier, we have also witnessed the rebirth of the Election Commission with super-regulator TN Seshan. All these overactive institutions did perform exemplary roles in their fields. But the damage they caused to the system cannot be overlooked. It took a while to make the Election Commission function without violating the space of other organs. It required tremendous effort to send the police back to the barracks. The stress and strains caused by judiciary by their interference in the functioning of the legislature and executive is now under the lens. There are lessons to be learnt from these developments.

THESE STRUGGLES SHOULD NOT BE BRANDED AS BLACKMAILING TACTICS THESE ARE TESTIMONIES OF A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY, WHERE RIGHT TO DISSENT IS PROTECTED AS A CARDINAL PRINCIPLE

Now, the onus of building a just, honest and humane society has been attributed to the janlokpal. But somebody has to take out heavy insurance against future failure of the lokpal — there comes talk of a second republic to start the process all over again.

No doubt, the issues raised by Anna are genuine. And, there is a need to have an autonomous and transparent institutional mechanism for reducing corruption. The crisis is much deeper, as rules of governance have become so overtly violative that the system has been rendered non-functional. Earlier, an easy explanation used to be the prevalence of corruption, high transaction costs and lack of transparency. An interesting outcome is that even corruption has ceased to perform one of its foremost functions, i.e., facilitation and efficiency. This has been exemplified in the preparation for the Commonwealth Games, wherein even large-scale corruption could not induce efficiency.

Along with the establishment of a lokpal (not as a super icon), there is a need to strengthen internal accountability mechanisms within each organ of the state and empower citizens to participate in decision-making at every level. Some of these initiatives have been introduced in Punjab on the recommendations of the Punjab Governance Reforms Commission.

Foremost, an initiative is to be taken to restore the identi-

ty of citizens. Even after 64 years of Independence, citizens have to prove their identity. This mistrust has been institutionalised to the extent that, even to prove their name, they have to seek affirmation from a gazetted officer of the government. The governmentality continues to treat citizens as colonial subjects.

Along with loss of identity, lack of respect and dignity is reflected in everyday interactions of the people with the government. The spatial disconnect experienced by the citizens in the police stations or district collectorates is more pronounced.

A third set of prerequisites relates to productivity, i.e., to engage people with the system in such conditions as may nurture their capacity to be productive. Instead, a culture of sharing of the spoils is being reinforced. Subsidies directed at the poor are given as dole and subsidies directed to protect the profits are described as 'rescue' packages.

A fourth set of prerequisites relates to the allocation of roles to the various institutions. The tendency to empower institutions, now lokpal, with an over-arching ad hoc licence is like killing poison with poison and letting the patient die. This has made governance less a matter of politics, and more administrative policy or discretionary political interference.

The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

[Print](#)

Not co-operative federalism but bargaining federalism

Expert views of Dr. Pramod Kumar on Centre-State relations

Dr. Pramod Kumar, Director, IDC and former Chairman, Governance Reforms Commission, Punjab while delivering keynote address in the Two-day Regional Consultation meeting on Centre-State and Inter-State relations organized by Inter-State Council Secretariat (ISCS), Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with Government of Punjab here on 27-12-2011 called for strengthening institutional framework for the cooperative federalism as provided in the Indian constitutions. He said that after the emergence of coalition government politics, some states were getting more than their due while others were suffering at their cost and resultantly states were getting lesser statutory grants. Describing this new trend as 'bargaining' federalism, Dr. Kumar pointed out that preferential treatment and liberal funding to certain states was also a major impediment in smooth relations between Centre and states. He said that each central scheme couldn't be tailor made for all states as every state has its own ground realities e.g. NREGA though a very good scheme but not suitable to the needs of labour deficit states like Punjab. Underling the need for effective fiscal management, he said that each state should be given funds under different centrally sponsored schemes but the states should be given liberty to choose the schemes and alter them to needs of particular area or region. He also lamented that often the Centre passes the buck of failure of its schemes to the states and criticizes the state subsidies while the benefit of its own much touted Rs. 70,000 crore debt waiver scheme couldn't reach the targeted and suffering peasantry. He elaborated his view point on this vital subject in the Indian context as follows:

Not co-operative federalism but bargaining federalism

The architectural design of federalism is laid down in the Constitution. In that sense it is juristic and legalistic in nature. Whereas, centre-state relations are essential a political construct, and, therefore, not a static, but a changing notion. The Constitution has provided an institutional framework for the cooperative federalism. Whereas, contemporary nature of politics i.e. coalition politics and the trend of globalisation has provided basis to bargaining federalism. It is bargaining federalism which creates tensions between centre and state and amongst states.

Market-led reforms weakened federalism

The nation-state has surrendered to the market in the sphere of both the path and pace of development. The states are not taken into confidence for Central Governments keenness to fully integrate the Indian economy with the global market.

Over the years, the Central regime has made significant institutional change such that the states are to 'fend' for themselves. This only means that the states will depend more and more on private debt to meet its expenditure responsibilities completing the full cycle for the global investors.

Federalism as practiced failed to reduce regional disparities

It was also assumed that economic reforms in the background of dynamics of market shall ultimately even out regional development across states and nurture unfed areas. However, the 10th plan and 11th plan appraisals have noted widening disparities between the states.

Not resources but autonomous resources

There is an inherent process of centralisation in place with increasing control of the Centre on allocation of resources. The problem is not resources, but devolution of autonomous resources. Resources under the rule-based devolution process of Gadgil-Mukherji formula have dwindled and has been overcome by tied assistance.

This implies that the statutory transfers were to some extent replaced by discretionary transfers.

The scope for discretion of the states to initiate state specific development strategy is being minimized and central government implicitly is suggesting that it knows what is best for the states and that 'one size fits all'. MNREGA in present form is an example particularly in the context of labour deficit states like Punjab. Another example is, the central government's district level, productivity enhancement programme. It is interesting to note that this programme was conceived keeping in view states other than Punjab and Haryana. It is district based and not state based. For this, one has to have state level policies. How can one formulate policies for enhancement of wheat productivity without taking into consideration Punjab and Haryana. Further in the health sector, let us take example from Punjab.

The national health programs currently underway are in many ways oblivious of the reality at the ground level. There is hardly any recognition of the fact that the National programs to address specific morbidities might not be enough to meet the State-specific morbidity needs.

Fiscal deficit parameter and elimination of subsidies not social development friendly

Fiscal deficit is not a technical parameter at the provincial level in India. Given the context of centre-state fiscal relations in India, at the provincial level, it is a politically negotiated outcome.

Subsidies are considered as a negative performance indicator. For instance, agriculture dominant states provide power subsidy to agriculture. No doubt, there is need to rationalise these subsidies in the background of the environmental challenges from the rice wheat crop cycles, and the pressures from the global institutions for the agriculture sector. Agriculture sector needs support, but are power subsidies the best way to support it is a question that should be transparently answered? In this context, Centre also follow double standards, when they gave Rs. 70,000 crore debt waiver to farmers. It was termed as good economics enacted with political finesse. But, when states give even genuine subsidies, these are branded as

bad fiscal management.

Need to shift to united grants

The need is to shift from tied grants to autonomous grants. It will be better if these resources were transferred to the states as an additional share in tax revenue or in the form of block grants. The state should then be let free to spend as much money on a particular scheme, according to their judgement, out of the total share allocated to them.

(Dr Promod Kumar is Director IDC Chandigarh and Former Chairman of Punjab Governance Commission)



Keynote address delivered at Regional Consultation meeting on Centre-State and Inter-State relations on 27-12-2011 at Chandigarh

Tackling the paradoxes of Punjab

SHIFT FOCUS During the last decade or so perspectives on development in the state have hinged on the mounting government debt – it is time to move beyond that

TAKING PUNJAB FORWARD



PART 5 OF SERIES

Pramod Kumar

Punjab has produced a number of paradoxes. Punjabis are in all parts of the globe but the state's economy is least globalised.

The state's agriculture is relatively developed, but with few direct linkages with industrial development.

It has a high per capita income, but dismal social development indices — drug abuse, female foeticide, rural suicides, etc, are quite prevalent.

Poverty levels in the state are low but poverty among scheduled castes (SCs) is higher and their access to health and education is lower than SCs in several other states. Again, Punjab has relatively advanced infrastructure, but the quality of public services is poor.

Punjab needs a paradigm shift. But, unfortunately, during the last decade or so, perspectives on development in Punjab have hinged merely on 'government debt'.

The state's debt is no doubt worrisome. But there are states under heavy debt that are maintaining their pace of development. The crises in Punjab are not that the state's debt is mounting, unemployment is rising, Dalits are getting pauperised, opportunities for women's productive engagement are

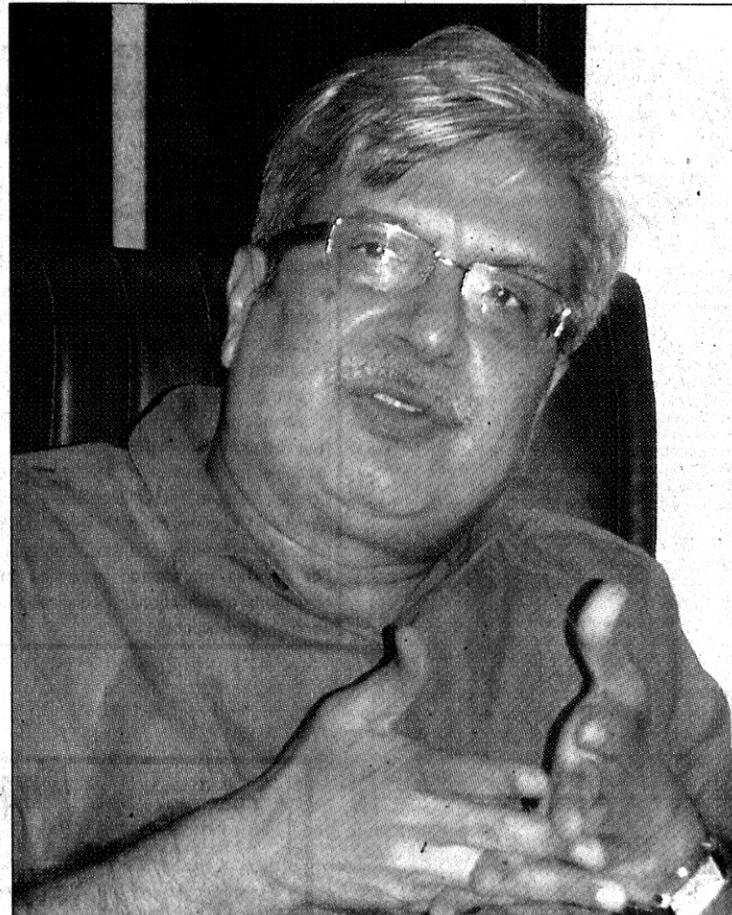
not multiplying, agriculture is becoming less remunerative for a large number of farmers, landless labourers are in a bind, and drug addiction, female foeticide and farmer suicides are becoming pervasive. The real crisis is the manner in which these problems are being addressed or ignored.

WHAT AILS THE ECONOMY

In Punjab, the agriculture sector, which is considered to be the mainstay of the economy, has experienced a massive slowdown. The investment in agriculture in India has declined from 2.2% of the GDP in 1999-2000 to 1.9% of the GDP in 2005-06. This is also reflected in the decline in the agricultural growth rate to 2.2% per annum in 2005-06 at the all-India level.

No initiative has been taken to increase public sector investment in agriculture. This has led to a decline in agricultural productivity and damage to the ecology and environment.

Punjab has not been able to diversify to cash crops. There is an urgent need to enhance agricultural productivity. Land released after increase in productivity of grains can be utilised for crop diversification and non-farm activities.



■ No initiative has been taken to increase public sector investment in agriculture, leading to a decline in agricultural productivity, says Pramod Kumar. HT PHOTO

This will also arrest mindless urbanisation.

TAKE ADVANTAGE

Punjab has a historical advantage thanks to its small-scale industries in places such as Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Mandi Gobindgarh and Batala.

It is unfortunate that policy has not paid any attention to these traditional industries in terms of technology transfer, skill upgradation, marketing and maintenance of environmental standards. If Lijjat Papad can have a turnover of around Rs 300 crore, why has Amritsari Papad (a known brand

name) not been able to capture the market?

MIXED FIGURES

Public expenditure has dropped from 66% in the early eighties to 40%. The education development index has shown that Punjab's overall rank is 12 out of 35 states and union territories.

A disaggregate analysis has shown that Punjab has done well in terms of physical infrastructure. It ranked three only behind Kerala and Haryana. On accessibility for primary education, Punjab was ranked 16th and on teachers at 13th. Paradoxically, its performance is dismal on educational outcomes

as it ranked 29th.

Education system is required to impart quality education. Around 30% schools have teachers who do not have a higher secondary certificate. As a result, the quality of education has deteriorated and most of the educated youth, particularly rural youth, have become unemployable in Punjab.

Punjab has a better reach in terms of government hospitals, but health outcomes in terms of disease prevalence is high as compared to the national average.

MANAGING THE FLUX

The core element whether seen from the perspective of debt management or fiscal mismanagement (doles-centric politics) is enhancement of productivity with equity to remain globally competitive.

If policies are examined from this position, it becomes evident that Punjab is in a flux. The votaries of debt management advocated reduction in public expenditure, retrenchment or reduction in government jobs and disinvestment of public sector. The so-called new paradigm (PPP mode) of 'leveraging public resources for private profits' is being implemented without building adequate safeguards to protect the interest of farmers.

No doubt, with all these negative prescriptions, government expenditure on salaries of staff has been reduced and public sector units, productive or unproductive, have been made defunct. Consequently, when the government ceased to be functional and the citizens demanded services, a convenient logic was advanced that there was no staff. When the students demanded quality education, untrained and unqualified teachers on contract were appointed.

DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The economy needs to be diversified for creating productive avenues. In agriculture, the focus has to be on increasing productivity by technological innovations and move away from anti-grain policies to the production of a crop basket.

Similarly, in education and health sectors, the guiding principle should be to improve education and health outcomes rather than privatisation. In gov-

PRAMOD'S POINTERS FOR STATE

ECONOMY

- Economy needs to be diversified for creating productive avenues

AGRICULTURE

- Increase public investment in agriculture. Stress has to be on increasing productivity by technological innovations and moving away from anti-grain policies to production of a crop basket
- Land released can be used to promote non-farm economic activities and introduction of commercial crops
- Further subsidies in agriculture needed

EDUCATION, HEALTH

- Guiding principle should be to improve education and health outcomes rather than privatisation
- Focus on providing quality education to children of poor and Dalits

SOCIAL INDICES

- Check drug addiction by ensuring productive engagement of youngsters in education, sports and employment
- Focus on gender justice

PUBLIC SERVICES

- Every citizen-government encounter should be productive for the citizen. Citizens must feel empowered each time they meet a government official, and not suffer loss of dignity

ernance, the need is to shift from disinvestment to productive investment, from retrenchment to employment generation, from subsidy reduction to rationalisation of subsidies and from anti-corruption drives to corruption-free governance. There is an urgent need to evolve political consensus on the direction of development.

The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh

CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

30.12.12

Governance panel asks govt to summon session

'WAKEUP CALL' PGRC recommends severest punishment for perpetrators by bringing amendments to existing laws, making justice delivery system effective

Manpreet Randhawa
 manpreet.randhawa@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The recent spurt in incidents of crime in Punjab, especially against women, has made the Punjab Governance Reforms Commission (PGRC) sit up and give a 'wakeup call' to the Akali-BJP government.

The PGRC has not only recommended severest punishment to perpetrators of crime against women but also asked the Punjab government to immediately summon an assembly session to introduce mandatory amendments in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to make rape a non-bailable offence, besides other necessary legal changes.

These issues were deliberated upon during the PGRC's meeting on Thursday with Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, who also holds the home affairs and justice portfolio.

Recommendations made by the PGRC are currently under the serious consideration of the state government before being given final legal shape.

The PGRC also suggested to the deputy chief minister to call an all-party meeting to hammer out ways and means to curb crime against women and children and how to make Punjab a safer place for them.

The commission was of the view that rapists should undoubtedly be handed over to the severest of punishment, but the government should also ensure the delivery of justice.

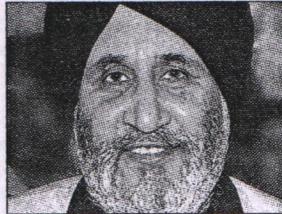
"The need is to restore people's confidence in the justice delivery system. Rather than merely focusing on the quantum of punishment, it would be worthwhile to make the criminal justice system effective enough to punish criminals in a speedy manner," the commission said.

According to the PGRC, crime against women, such as eve-teasing and molestation, should be clubbed under sexual



Something worthwhile can be achieved only if the Punjab Police are free from the clutches of Akali jathedars and function independently without bias.

SUNIL JAKHAR
 Congress Legislature Party leader



The ruling alliance would not mind it if the House actually engages in some serious discussion over the issue and there is no politicisation of the issue.

DALJIT SINGH CHEEMA
 SAD spokesman

harassment.

The commission pointed that most of the crime against women in Punjab went unreported due to various reasons. That's why women do not prefer going to police stations. Therefore, the complaints of crime against women should be registered at Saanjh kendras run under the community policing resource centre programmes. Members of the civil society should also be made part of this set-up, the PGRC added.

The commission said complaints must be dealt in a time-bound manner. To make station house officers (SHOs) and senior police officials accountable, the commission proposed that the registration of complaints be included under the Right To Service Act.

The PGRC stated that complaints should be filed online from anywhere in the state without women having to go to police stations.

SLUGGISH PROBE

The commission observed that Punjab police investigation continued to be sluggish and slow. In Punjab in 2011, as many as 2.41 lakh complaints

of crime against women were received. Only 22% of these were registered as cases. Of the 22%, only 67% cases were investigated. The commission also noted that the rate of filing of the chargesheet was also very low in Punjab. In 2011, the police filed chargesheet only in 54% of the cases under investigation.

The commission has proposed to set up seven fast-track courts in the state for speedy disposal of cases related to crime against women.

CRIME PREVENTION

The commission has recommended that as a deterrent, the accused in rape and sexual harassment cases should not be entitled to any state facility such as police verification certificate for character, no-objection certificate to travel abroad, issuance of income or caste certificates and also be barred from procuring a driving licence and a passport.

As per the commission, each city should map black spots where the possibility of crime against women is high. A plan should be in place to check crime at these spots, including

police patrol, spread of the beat system and installation of CCTV cameras for regular monitoring.

The commission proposed that public and private transport be equipped with the global positioning system (GPS) to monitor their movement; efforts should be made to replace normal taxis with radio cabs in cities for regulation.

As per the PGRC, traffic rules should be strictly imposed to check intimidation of women on the road. The cyber crime unit should start online complaint system to track obscene messages and calls leading to harassment of women. The violator should be deprived of any telephone connection for one year.

The commission observed that most of the crime against women in public spaces were committed by people in a drunken state. It has been proposed that drunken driving be curbed by proactive court proceedings leading to conviction.

TWO OPINIONS

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Sunil Jakhar has supported the idea for summoning a special session of the assembly for making important amendments for harsher punishment for crime against women. However, he stated that something worthwhile could be achieved only if the Punjab Police were free from the clutches of Akali jathedars and function independently without bias and prejudice. Otherwise, the entire exercise would prove futile, he added.

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) spokesman Dr Daljit Singh Cheema said the decision for calling the special session was the prerogative of the chief minister. "I have no confirmation on this so far. The ruling alliance would not mind it if the House actually engages in some serious discussion over the issue and there is no politicisation of the issue," added Dr Cheema.

HT DEBATE: CAN PUNJAB AFFORD TO MISS THE FDI BUS?

IT CAN BE DELAYED, BUT NOT STOPPED

Dr Pramod Kumar

Globalisation through integration of markets, capital expansion and accumulation are the main features of the current model of development. This has serious implications for people. It has led to price rise, unemployment, hunger and poor social development.

It is pertinent to note that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's model of development has been successfully implemented in Gujarat. So whatever consequences of growth that Gujarat has experienced can be seen as a precursor for things to come in other parts of India. A quick look at the implications of this model on the *aam admi* will make this point crystal clear.

Gujarat has experienced faster economic growth. Has this growth been inclusive? Who are the main beneficiaries of this high growth? Studies have shown that the workers received only 8.3% of the value addition, while the rest was pocketed by the profiteers. Other states are doing much better for the *aam admi* in terms of share of the workers' wages in value addition: Kerala, 22.47%; West Bengal, 21.9%; Tamil Nadu, 16.37%; and Punjab, 15.27% (Source: The Hindu, September 27, 2012).

PUNJAB HAS NOT MISSED 'THE WHOLESALE FDI BUS'. IT CAN TAKE STEPS TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF SMALL AS WELL AS MARGINAL FARMERS AND SMALL INDUSTRIALISTS TO BECOME COMPETITIVE

Similarly, people living below the poverty line, as per 2009-10 data, are much higher in Gujarat (23.22%) than in Haryana (19.88%) and Tamil Nadu (17.42%). If a state is making the rich richer and the reduction in poverty is not promising, then the logical outcome is starvation.

Gujarat is among the first five worst states in India on the Hunger Index. The others are Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Gujarat is in the "alarming category" and ranks 13th among 17 states on the Hunger Index. (Source: International Food Research Institute, Washington, 2008).

On the Human Development Index, the Gujarat story is dismal. It slipped from 18th to the 23rd rank in 2006 among 35 states and union territories. The high growth rate model has led to exclusion of people living on the margins of society (Source: Atul Sood



Dr Pramod Kumar, director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

(ed), Gujarat: Poverty Amidst Prosperity, 2012).

REALITY CHECK

To deepen this model of development, it has now been proposed to bring foreign investment in retail, civil aviation, power, insurance, etc. The implications of this so-called reform have been well-documented. University of California researchers have found that Walmart workers earn an estimated 12.4% less than retail workers as a whole and 14.5% less than workers in large retail in general in the US. And, Clark and Cornell University found that Walmart workers take the place of 1.4 retail workers. It implies 2.7% reduction in retail employment with the opening of a Walmart store.

Small farmers may also not benefit in the absence of technology, financing and institutional support to comply with stringent quality control and certification standards. It is not surprising that farmers even in developed countries have to be heavily subsidised to keep them afloat irrespective of the market made available by these multi-brand retail chains.

The experience of other countries shows that adverse effects on the manufacturing sector have led to deindustrialisation. With the entry of multi-brand stores, the demand for locally produced products decreased and for imported ones increased, particularly in sectors such as textiles, leather, sports goods, toys, etc.

Despite these implications, the Indian government seems to be in a hurry to accelerate the process of global integration. No doubt, given the logic of development, foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail is inevitable. It can be delayed, but cannot be stopped unless a total reversal of the policy on global integration takes place. This is unlikely as there exists a political consensus among dom-

inant political parties to integrate the local market with global capital.

Notwithstanding the political rhetoric, it is worth noting that the process has already begun. FDI in the wholesale sector has already been allowed.

Walmart has opened 14 wholesale stores in four states in collaboration with Bharti Retail and the retailer also supplies backend assistance to Bharti Retail's 150-plus supermarkets and compact hypermarkets in nine states. Of these 14 stores, one-third are in Punjab. Another global retailer, Metro Cash and Carry, has started the process of launching 15 outlets in India, of which six are in Punjab. These stores are functional in Ludhiana and Jalandhar, and under construction in Bathinda, Patiala, Zirakpur and Amritsar. These stores make products available to local retailers and procure produce from local farmers too. The process of disintermediation has begun. The issue that remains to be debated is: what will happen when these wholesale stores extend to the retail business? As per an informal survey, 70% of customers in the Zirakpur Bharti-Walmart store are retailers.

FDI IN WHOLESALE

The Punjab government has at least not missed "the wholesale FDI bus", partially satisfying the eagerness of some political and do-gooder activists. Punjab has a window. It can take initiatives to moderate the negative impact and take steps to build the capacity of small/marginal farmers and small industrialists to become competitive.

What should be debated? Is there a blueprint to make retailers, farmers and small manufacturers globally competitive? Is there a short and long-term plan to make farmers produce globally competitive through new technologies and research innovations that enhance productivity of crops? Perhaps no.

Above all, the major challenge to agriculture produce comes from the introduction of sanitary and phytosanitary standards "to protect human, animal or plant life or health from risks associated with agricultural commodities". Even if farmers' produce is competitive, its failure to comply with phytosanitary norms may lead to the collapse of agriculture. The experience has shown that farm export from developing countries faced high detention rate. The main reason for this has been detection of filth, microbiological contamination and decomposition.

Markets are callous, secular, borderless and apolitical. They only seek profits. The ruling classes have exercised their choice. Now, it is for the popular movements to seek reversal of the development model which is anti-people.



by Pramod
Kumar

THE ELECTION in Punjab was no different from any other election in that it represented a kaleidoscope of political theatrics. As in any other state, the main opposition party was supposed to be the main beneficiary of anti-incumbency. But this time there is also a third front, locally labelled as Sanjha Morcha, which is opposed to both, claiming to be the real democratic voice. There were claims and counter claims; a showcasing of development versus the promise of a development. Each party wanted to impress the voter into believing that it was different from its opponent in terms of agenda and policies, if not a complete antithesis to it. Needless to say, all the parties stressed on Punjab's growth and people's development. But, scratch the paint of rhetoric and the work of media managers and each show came across as being a carbon copy of the other.

However, the Punjab elections did have distinct features. They became highly competitive with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) making desperate attempts to come back to power and the Congress party seeing a chance to arrest the downward spiral of the United Progressive Alliance government at the Centre.

Agendas

The elections also marked the closure of the politics of the eighties and the nineties, with the voter turnout registering a complete turnaround from 24 per cent in the 1992 elections to 78 per cent this time. There is no doubt, though, that money power, kinship ties, drugs and, above all, the Dera factor continued to pollute the political environment in the state.

Rather than citing a danger to the Sikh Panth and stoking anti-Centre sentiments as it has done in the past, the Shiromani Akali Dal chose to focus on the composite Punjabi identity and co-operative federalism. Sensing that the ground situation has moved beyond Operation Bluestar and its fallout, the Congress deployed its President Sonia Gandhi and heir-apparent Rahul Gandhi to extensively campaign in Punjab. It did not

present as its star campaigner Dr Manmohan Singh, the 'Sikh' Prime Minister. Similarly, the stress on a composite Punjabi identity over panthic identity has pushed BJP leaders like Uma Bharti and Narendra Modi to the margins of the election campaign in Punjab.

Related to this is the new social engineering resorted to by political parties. This was reflected in the presence of Hindu candidates in SAD's list — 11 out of 94 — and Sikhs in the BJP's list and an equal number of rural Jat Sikhs in both the SAD and Congress camps. Dalits, who constitute around 29 per cent of the population, were represented in all the political formations. Incidentally, 25 per cent of the 1,131 MLAs in the state from 1967 to 2007 have been Dalits. Thus, electoral politics in Punjab has shown signs of bridging religious faultlines and the caste divide.

Significantly, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) could not make any major inroads in the home state of its founder Kanshi Ram. Both Kanshi Ram and Mayawati have lost elections from Hoshiarpur in Punjab. Kanshi Ram won from Punjab only once, in 1996, when the BSP was in alliance with the

Akali Dal. *Manuwad* and other ideological planks of the BSP do not find any resonance in Punjab in view of the role of Sikhism and Arya Samaj in its society and culture.

These elections saw a record number of people exercising their franchise. Curiously, more women than men turned up at the polling booths. Except for the low of 1992, the voting percentage in Punjab elections has always been high as compared to the all India average. Participation in political activity is almost part of the culture in Punjab. In most *melas* across the state, political *diwans* are set up by political parties as a regular feature.

By restoring the confidence of women and Dalit voters as well as motivating the youth to cast their vote, the Election Commission also contributed to the high turnout. Voter friendly electoral practices like easy availability of voter slips too played a part here.

PPP

Another dominant feature of the election process was that political parties chose to rain sops on the poor, youth, Dalits, women and middle class voters. The campaign ranged from people being reminded of the dreams of the freedom struggle by the Sanjha Morcha to apologetic state welfarism, which saw promises of free electricity to farmers, free laptops for stu-

dents, a cable connection for ₹100, subsidised *atta-dal* etc. being made by the Congress and the Akali Dal. This, despite the state pursuing market driven governance in which subsidies are given, for instance, to private health providers and people are exhorted to take care of their health.

Elections in Punjab have always been competitive, but the presence of mega spoilers like the Sanjha Morcha, dissidents from all political parties and the BSP has made this time's outcome unpredictable. At the core of the Sanjha Morcha is the People's Party of Punjab (PPP) which is an assembly of people with diverse political affiliations brought together by some dogooders. This outfit is championing economic health and is opposed to grant of freebies.

The PPP is a wild card. It can affect the fortunes of the Congress as well as the SAD in nearly 13 constituencies. It must be remembered how the presence of Akali Dal (Tohra) in the 2002 elections had led to the defeat of Akali Dal (Badal) candidates in around 12 constituencies. The PPP may wrest the margins of victory in these constituencies from the mainstream political parties. The BSP was another spoiler in these elections. In 2007, with 4.10 per cent of the votes, the party secured more votes than the margins by which the Congress was defeated in nearly 16 constituencies. Dissidents in

nearly two dozen constituencies can affect the fortunes of both the parties, but mainly the Congress.

Outcome

The Deras, particularly Sacha Sauda, have come to acquire tremendous significance in Punjab politics. In fact, they have emerged as a new faultline in the state. Their repeated intervention in the electoral process has the potential to cause social conflict. Their diktats can alter the results in nearly 30 constituencies in the Malwa region. The political adventurism of the Deras must be curtailed as they divert people's attention from real issues and push them to respond to diktats, inviting reactions from equally fundamentalist followers of competing religions, sects or Deras.

To sum up, electoral politics in Punjab has gone beyond the emotional agenda based on caste, religion, quota within quota that dominates the discourse in Uttar Pradesh. The electorate seems to be fed up with the mudslinging theatrics of political parties that constantly brand each other as corrupt. Development and governance dominated the electoral discourse in the state. This is a new terrain in which predictions of electoral pundits based on traditional considerations could go wrong.

The writer is director, Institute for Development & Communication, Chandigarh

Discourse shows signs of faultlines being bridged

Spoilers can play key role in Punjab



People's Party of Punjab chief Manpreet Singh Badal

Punjab Deputy CM Has A Plan For Change

by Dinesh Narayanan | Jan 15, 2013

Deputy CM Sukhbir Badal has the right ideas to fuel Punjab's growth, but has an uphill task

It is a chilly winter morning in Chandigarh. Pramod Kumar is in deep discussion with retired judge KS Grewal and Additional Director General of Police SK Sharma at a roomy office in the Institute for Development and Communications on how to stop harassment of women in public places. "Perhaps," he suggests, "we should suspend driving licences of those who harass women, or deny police verification for passports." Justice Grewal says that the issue is complex, but promises to think of ways to tackle it. Pramod Kumar is chairman of the Punjab State Governance Reforms Commission (GRC), currently the fount of ideas to improve governance in the state.

In 2009, Sukhbir Singh Badal (Deputy Chief Minister, Shiromani Akali Dal president and son of chief minister Parkash Singh Badal) invited Kumar to head a proposed GRC. Kumar was sceptical; he had seen governments come and go without anything changing. But when Badal told him that he could decide who would be on the commission, and that the government would take continuous action on its recommendations instead of waiting for its term to end, Kumar accepted. He says Badal's brief was simple: "Develop your own terms of reference keeping in mind our vision."

One of the first things the GRC recommended was reducing the number of affidavits citizens required for many services, from around 200 to less than 20. The government acted on the suggestion immediately, saving, by Kumar's estimate, a collective Rs 600 crore. Another initiative based on voter identity cards helped weed out about 40 percent false pension claimants, saving the state Rs 400 crore. These were the first signs—in 65 years—of a shift in the way Punjab's politicians approached administration.

A mandate for change

In 2012, the Akali Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party alliance created Punjab history when it became the first ruling government to win the state elections; Sukhbir Badal is widely acknowledged as the architect of the victory.

The younger Badal is one of a handful of regional political leaders—Narendra Modi in Gujarat, Shivraj Singh Chauhan in Madhya Pradesh, Nitish Kumar in Bihar, Pawan Chamling in Sikkim, Naveen Patnaik in Orissa—attempting to shift the political discourse to economic growth, human development and governance. Traditional factors such as caste, religion and identity still dominate their realpolitik, but the image they seek to project is that of progressive change agents. Barring Patnaik (born in 1946), all belong to the post-Independence generation. Sukhbir Badal, an MBA from California State University in the US, is the youngest of the lot at 50. A close friend of his, who does not want to be identified, describes him as "cosmopolitan". His Facebook page lists his personal interests as sculpture, bhangra and travelling, and one of his 'favourite quotes' is "As long as your [sic] going to be thinking anyway, think big."

'Identity, dignity, productivity'

In front of Mohali's Phase 8 police station, sits a brightly-painted building. Two young policewomen sit in a glass cabin that resembles a bank counter. The neat, air-conditioned hall has a waiting area and corner desk for the person in charge. All staff are in cream-and-brown uniforms and wear ties. This is one of 100 police outreach centres, managed jointly by police officials and citizens, which provide 20 time-bound services. The shortest wait period is five days (permission to use loudspeakers), and the longest 60 days (copy of untraced report in cases of theft).

Mohali's Senior Superintendent of Police, GS Bhullar, a twice-decorated Punjab Police Service officer, explains: "People are wary of coming to police stations. Now they do not have to step into one for services such as passport verification and applying for various permissions." (He admits, however, that this centre is yet to become popular.) These services are among the 69 brought under the Punjab Right to Services Act in October 2011, along with several revenue, health, water and electricity services.

Kumar says the idea was to "protect the identity and dignity of people and improve productivity". Sukhbir Badal says, "Corruption only happens when people have to interact with a government official. If you eliminate the interaction, how can corruption happen?"

The government is increasingly using technology to reduce face-to-face interaction. For instance, all government procurement is now done through e-tendering. Soon, people will be able to file FIRs to the police online, and then track the status of complaints.

Yet: "The level of corruption in Punjab is unprecedented," says SS Jodhka, professor of sociology at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, adding that, "The de-professionalisation of [the] police is most dangerous in Punjab." An IAS officer in the state (who prefers not to be named) says that local Akali Dal leaders influence police postings, frequently abuse power, and that in many offices, corruption is institutionalised. Other causes for crime, he says, are unemployment and an alarming increase of drug abuse.

Unemployment was 42 for every 1,000 educated individuals, compared to the national average of 25, according to the 66th round of the National Sample Survey. The state economic survey, 2011-12, says that drug abuse is emerging as a major problem.

Surinder Kler Shukla, who teaches political science at Panjab University, is just completing a study, 'What do the youth want?' Her research reveals high drug and alcohol abuse among young people. It found that 80 percent of boys and girls between 18 and 23 use drugs or alcohol fairly regularly. She says, "When I travel, people I meet often tell me 'nazar lag gayi hai Punjab nu'" [Punjab has been blighted

PUNJAB AT A GLANCE

GROWTH IN 2007-2012 (ESTIMATED)

GSDP: **6.74%** (8.2%)*

Agricultural: **1.61%** (3.41%)

Industry: **9%** (7.4%)

Services: **8.3%** (10%)

DEBT

May cross permitted level of borrowing of **3.5%** of GSDP in 2012-13

Public debt: **29.91%** of GSDP in 2011-12

Fixed payments: **75%** of revenues

*National figures given in brackets

KEY SOCIAL INDICATORS (2012)

Infant mortality rate (in 1,000): **34** (44)

Maternal mortality rate: **172** (in 100,000) (212)

Literacy: **76%** (74%)

Unemployment: **42** (per 1,000) (25)

INDUSTRY

Large and medium units: **450**

Small units: **1,68,000**

45% Punjab's contribution of wheat to central pool

25% Punjab's contribution of rice to central pool

by the evil eye].

Crime often has patronage. Recently, a girl committed suicide in Badshahpur village in Patiala district when police did not take any action for a month and allegedly threatened her after she complained she was raped. In early December last year, an Akali Dal leader was accused of gunning down an assistant sub-inspector of police in Amritsar after the cop asked him to stop harassing his daughter.

Badal says crime cannot be stopped; what matters is the response. The government is building a dedicated night patrol force and a rural rapid response force equipped with modern technology such as GPS. The aim: Reduce response time to 10 minutes anywhere in the state. It will also set up a 24-hour helpline under the home minister's office (Badal holds the portfolio) with an additional director general of police in charge. He says the government is also putting in place a new policy: If a woman complains, a police officer of a rank not less than deputy superintendent will have to go to her home to record a statement: "No girl will have to go to a police station anymore."

Wooing industry

Badal says, "We are an agricultural state and our people are entrepreneurial. [But] we do not have a port to attract people. We do not have natural capital. So we are not a natural [investment] destination."

To change this, he is hoping to create 'world class' infrastructure. "There will be an airport within an hour's drive from anywhere in Punjab. We will also link every major and medium town in the state with a four- or six-lane expressway." More immediately: "By the end of 2013, we will be a power surplus state."

Last year, Punjab's unrestricted demand was 9,500 MW and the state managed to supply 8,500 MW, according to state power secretary Anirudh Tiwari.

Badal is betting mainly on three new power projects: GVK's 540 MW plant at Goindwal Sahib, Vedanta's 1,980 MW thermal generation project at Talwandi Sabo, and L&T's 1,400 MW station at Rajpura. GVK's first unit (270 MW) is scheduled to start production in March 2013, and over the next 12 to 17 months, 3,920 MW of new capacity should go live, which will help the state overcome its 10-12 percent demand-supply gap.

But the biggest problem hobbling India's power producers could hit these projects too: Uncertain fuel supplies. Coal for GVK's unit was to come from the company's mine in Jharkhand. But coal production has not begun: GVK has not been able to acquire land. The state has been asking the Centre for a six-month supply until the problem is sorted out. "The Government of India's response has not been very encouraging, but we are hopeful," says Tiwari. The other option is to import coal, which will increase cost and delay the project. Similar issues plague Vedanta's and L&T's projects. As Tiwari says, "The choice for the people is going to be whether they want [delayed] power or expensive power."

Punjab, however, is going ahead with upgrading the distribution and transmission network. It is building a 400 kV transmission system for efficient distribution, and separating agricultural and domestic supply using exclusive feeders. Tiwari says it hopes to cover 85 percent of agricultural connections by the next paddy season.

Good infrastructure, better cities, cleaner villages and improved governance could attract investors. But for sustainable growth, it will be crucial to improve public finances and build an inclusive, democratic society.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3 power plants with total capacity of 3,920 MW to go on stream in the next 12-16 months—Fuel supplies uncertain
- Connect all major towns (50-60) with 4 or 6-lane express-ways—Work in progress
- 3 international and 5 domestic airports—Work in progress
- Every major town to have privately managed sewerage and water supply—Yet to begin
- All villages to have basic services – drinking water, drainage and concrete roads—Yet to begin



SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE

- 51,48,000 applications sorted out by December, 2012 under Right to Services Act. 69 services under the Act implemented
- Punjab Police building separate patrolling force which will operate only in the night—Expected to begin in 2013
- Rural police response system to respond to distress calls within 10 minutes. Personnel to be equipped with GPS-fitted, fully-equipped vehicles and district control centres—Expected to begin in 2013
- Police Saanjh Kendras involving community for effective service delivery—100 centres opened
- Subsidised wheat and pulses scheme for below poverty line families –Sustainability uncertain
- Implementing the National Land Record Modernisation Programme. To introduce online registration of properties—Yet to begin
- All government contracts through e-tendering—Yet to begin



INDUSTRY AND TRADE

- Integrated checkpoint at Wagah to handle increased trade with Pakistan when border opens up
- Perishables cargo centre at Amritsar international airport
- Incentives for industry on the anvil; food processing, textiles, IT, engineering focus areas

Sharpening paradoxes

Pramod Kumar nails down the state's dichotomies: "Punjab has the most globalised population but is the least globalised state. It has the most developed agriculture sector but least integrated to industry."

Punjab's finances are precarious. It is likely to cross its borrowing limit of 3.5 percent of state GDP this year. Three-fourths of its revenues go towards fixed payments.

Populism costs money too: In mid-2011, newspaper reports, quoting replies to RTI filings, said Punjab Civil Supplies Corporation diverted Central funds to sustain the government's flagship welfare scheme for the poor, the 'Atta-Dal Scheme', which supplies cheap wheat and dal to about 15 lakh families. The government was reported to owe over Rs 1,100 crore to four departments at the time. Unless it finds ways to improve its finances, Punjab's economy will struggle.

Badal doesn't believe austerity is the answer: "What we need to do is look at the resources and if it is X, target to make it 10X; if you go the other way, you will de-accelerate the economy." He illustrates: "If you have one egg instead of two, the demand for eggs will go down. If eggs don't sell, the poultry farms will collapse, if the farms collapse the feed mills will collapse and if the feed mills collapse then the farmer will collapse. That means you are collapsing the whole thing. What you need is if you [had] two eggs, now you should have three. Then the downstream goes up. That's what we did."

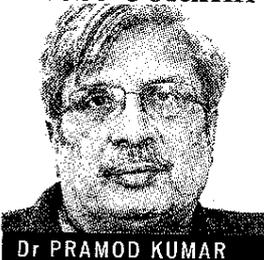
The state did manage to improve some revenues. Value-added tax receipts doubled, from Rs 5,342 crore in 2007-08 to Rs 10,017 crore in 2010-11. Excise collections went up from Rs 2,101 crore in 2009-10 to Rs 2,373 crore in 2010-11, the state economic survey shows. But its balance sheet remains unsteady.

Victory in the last elections tightened the Badals' grip on party and state, but Sukhbir Badal, as the nextgen leader, has his task cut out. He talks development, but the party is yet to internalise it. He campaigned in 2012 on the platform of development, good governance and welfare, but a senior journalist, who has covered Punjab politics for many years, says that behind the scenes he used the usual tactics: Encouraging rebel candidates in key constituencies, sewing up alliances with community leaders, distributing seats to Hindus and wooing potential rivals with key positions. "They are inclusive in a patriarchal way. They cannot tolerate dissent," says JNU's Jodhka. "Sukhbir Badal is a feudal [sic] who has come to town. It remains to be seen how the feudal [sic] establishes himself in town. You have to have a democratic sensibility." If Sukhbir Badal manages to inculcate that sensibility in himself, his party and the state, he can emerge as Punjab's changemaker.

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Splitting Andhra: Lessons from UT

Guest Column



Dr PRAMOD KUMAR

It is an established fact that the political leadership in this country has been following the politics of drift in the settlement of regional issues, be it the Punjabi Suba movement, Gorkhaland or Bodoland. And if it is forced to concede regional demands either due to threats of violence – most importantly fear of losing political power, it offers ad hoc solutions. The underlying thrust is to use every situation to promote narrow political interests rather than adopt a long-term approach towards its resolution. Ad hoc and deliberately delayed initiatives complicate the situations without in anyway altering or moderating the underlying forces.

PERVERSE WISDOM

In the present context, regarding trifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, the political leadership is guilty of the same perverse wisdom as was witnessed in the mid-sixties when Punjab was trifurcated and the state capital of Chandigarh was given the status of a union territory. Since then the Punjab problem has persisted and Chandigarh continues to be the main bone of contention. Persistence of the Punjab problem has set several chilling landmarks in terms of violent movements. For several years, the state has suffered terrorism and masked authoritarianism. If right kinds of lessons are learnt, the people of Andhra Pradesh can do very well without achieving the chilling landmarks established by purblind politics unleashed on the people of Punjab.

In mid-sixties, Chandigarh was given the status of a union

territory after prolonged agitations and several fasts unto death leading to the death of Darshan Singh Pheruman in 1969. Chandigarh was awarded to Punjab in 1970 with a promise to be transferred after five years. It did not happen. Punjab was pushed into its darkest phase in the 80s. It witnessed violent killing of thousands of innocent people, suffered Operation Bluestar, and assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, followed by the carnage against Sikhs. As a consequence, the Punjab accord was signed in 1985 between the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal with a promise to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab by January 1986. It was believed that the accord would put an end to the violence. The transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab on January 26, 1986 was deferred on January 25 by citing the reason that the Mathew Commission had failed to identify the villages to be transferred to Haryana. However, the main reason was the narrow interest of the ruling party, that is the forthcoming elections in Haryana. Further, it was announced that the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab would be done on July 15, 1986. This award is yet to be implemented.

These developments are pointers towards one thing that is common with the present development in Andhra Pradesh. They are all coloured by fragmented ad hoc diagnosis. It is the tunnel vision that has complicated this issue. Each event or development or issue was considered in isolation. It should not be for each is part of a process.

LESSONS FROM PUNJAB EXPERIENCE

What are the lessons from the Punjab experience? The

REGARDING TRIFURCATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH, POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS GUILTY OF THE SAME PERVERSE WISDOM AS WAS WITNESSED IN THE MID-SIXTIES WHEN PUNJAB WAS TRIFURCATED AND THE STATE CAPITAL OF CHANDIGARH WAS GIVEN THE STATUS OF A UNION TERRITORY

first and foremost lesson is that ad hoc solutions, no doubt, may push the dispute on the backburner, but they have potential to produce tragedies for people. Freezing of conflicts leaves its sickening mark along the way. The proposition that Hyderabad will be capital of both states for 10 years is a fodder for re-emergence of identity conflict as has been witnessed in case of Punjab.

Second, the Punjab experience has shown that such a situation throws up another party to the conflict. Instead of two parties, that is Punjab and Haryana, a third party added to the conflict is the citizens of Chandigarh. The emergence of the third party that develops a vested interest in the status quo becomes a major hurdle in the resolution of the conflict. As in the case of Chandigarh, a new identity of being a Chandigarhian has developed rather than being a Punjabi or Haryanvi. This is a consequence of its being a union territory where resources are allocated by the Centre leading to unevenness in the development, disparities and social divisiveness in relation to other areas. For instance, Chandigarh was allocated huge resources when other urban centres decayed. This island model of development created differentiated opportunities for a privileged few. It has the highest number of per capita automobiles in the country. The culture of self-centred living has created anonymous neighbourhoods that are becoming increasingly vulnerable to crime. As a union territory, Chandigarh is a unique experiment in urban governance where the bureaucracy without any stakes, roots or much political interference, enjoys unquestioned powers and sufficient resources. It has produced all kinds of distortions. People's participation

is discouraged by the bureaucratic set-up that describes it as interference. The new identity formation and its disconnect with larger identity has led to de-stabilisation of regional forces and all kinds of social unrest, ranging from communalisation to criminalisation. Hyderabad may also experience a similar kind of identity formation process leading to activation of communalisation and criminalisation process. Its own growth may also get stunted.

Another lesson is that states without a capital city lose a space that can act as a driver of growth. For instance, Punjab's growth has suffered a major setback for having no control over its own capital. It could not build another one because of the ongoing dispute. It missed the IT revolution because it did not have the advantages of its own growth pole. In other words, in the absence of its own central business capital it has suffered a major setback in the neo-liberal globalised economy. Similarly, without their own capital city and no control over Hyderabad both the states that is Telangana and Andhra Pradesh may suffer on the development front.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

If the ruling class does not have a will to transfer Hyderabad to either of the bifurcated states, it will not happen in future also. It will only provide sufficient ground to identify assertions and violent upsurges. The worst sufferers would be the people of Andhra Pradesh. However, as an alternative it would be politically prudent on the part of the parties to the conflict to agree to build their own capital rather than having a capital without their own control. Hyderabad may be declared as a global hub for the entire southern India. In any case, with the present arrangement, it is bound to develop a separate identity and emerge as a third party to the conflict.

The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh

1984 genocide: from apology to accountability

GUEST COLUMN



Dr PRAMOD KUMAR

In history, Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi will be remembered as a person who rekindled the hope of the victims of violence for justice. It is an opportunity to reopen closed issues and steer them towards closure. His candid admission that some of his party men were involved in the genocide of Sikhs in 1984 might be the step forward from the politics of apology towards fixing political as well as legal accountability. His observation has reinforced the belief that peace and peacekeeping are a serious business which otherwise, unfortunately, has become a preoccupation with the people who themselves are either responsible for or have contributed to violence indirectly.

This form of violence is privileged because it has armed itself with the instruments of apology, regret, repentance, etc, and simultaneously shielded the lesser mortals who carried out the orders on the streets. Leaders responsible for violence tender apology conveniently and delay the accountability processes. Punjab has witnessed it in an aggravated form. A section of political leaders responsible for creating conditions leading to Operation Bluestar in 1984, besides the carnage and genocide of Sikhs in November 1984, indulged in the politics of apology without accountability.

Many army men who

carried out Operation Bluestar have been either assassinated or tormented by competitive terrorism, while politicians responsible for creating those conditions have resumed power. The violence that followed the military operation and the assassination of the then prime minister was so blood splattered that thousands perished, felled by bullets or butchered in carnage.

The way forward

So, what is the way forward? The first lesson is to move from the politics of apology to the politics of accountability. For fixing the accountability for the genocide of Sikhs, successive governments lacked the necessary sensitivity and urgency. This led to the setting up of many committees and commissions of inquiry without delivering justice. It started with the Ved Marwah inquiry that was wound up in 1985 without completing its report; followed by the Dhillon Committee in 1985, Ahuja Committee in February 1987, Jain-Banerjee Committee in February 1987, Jain-Aggarwal Committee in December 1990, Narula Committee in December 1993, Ranganath Misra Commission in May 1985 and Nanavati Commission in May 2000.

Holier than justice

It has only created the chilling milestones of the

reluctance of successive governments to take action, even after 30 years, against those indicted for their role in the genocide. The report of Justice GT Nanavati Commission and Action Taken Report of the government seem to have settled down on the long highway of the justice system. The Action Taken Report has exposed political insensitivity and "bureaucratic responsiveness" further. The commission observed that "Hoshiar Singh and his men did not take effective steps to protect the gurdwara and disperse the mob gathered there..." The Action Taken Report says that "there are legal difficulties in initiating departmental proceedings at this point of time. Sub-inspector Hoshiar Singh and two constables who were on duty with him have retired." Therefore, no disciplinary action can be taken against them and action under the pension rules is possible only in respect of an event that took place within four years. Similar responses are rendered in other cases.

These bureaucratic responses bring to surface the "commitment" of the leadership to preserve rules and regulations as cardinal principles even at the expense of justice and human values. Rules must not be infringed, the rights of people may be.

These tragic events require justice-oriented polit-

ical response. On the contrary, they are taking refuge under the rulebook to defend the criminal acts of the people in power. People's destiny is unsafe in the hands of a leadership bureaucratic in approach, and dogmatic and status-quoist in commitment.

Politics of inquiry

The politics of inquiry commissions, too, should be given a burial. A people's commission should fix the responsibility for unleashing politics that led to non-state actors' killing innocent citizens, security personnel and political activists; besides Operation Bluestar, 1984, and fake encounters. This will lead to activating accountability through political discourse in elections. For investigating individual acts of violence, mandatory special investigation teams (SIT) need to work under the guidance of special fast-track courts.

Closure, not revenge

Another lesson to learn is to apply closure to tragic events, which does not mean revenge or justifying the use of violence as so privileged that cannot be brought to justice. The assertions that the violent acts of non-state actors be pardoned and state actors be hanged or vice-versa is subversion of justice. Closure does not mean subverting the institution of justice for saving those who have taken the

lives of others.

The focus of closure should be delegitimising violence, reducing incentives to violence, and delivering restorative justice. Reconciliation is an obvious goal. Is it not strange that Punjabi society has not even initiated raising a peace memorial to the victims of decade-long terror, trauma, and torture?

Reintegrate community

Another step towards closure is reintegration of the community. At the symbolic level, political reintegration was initiated by having Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister, and in Punjab, by moving towards inclusive Punjabi identity from extreme Panthic agenda. However, the integration strategy has to target both the victim and the community, alleviating the needs (physical, psychological, social and economic) of the victim and mobilising the community for supporting the victims and undermining the culture of violence by sensitising all sections of society to victimisation.

Peace is not the absence of violence but the eliminating of conditions that create violence. This will counter revenge or glory addiction, allay insecurity among people, and create an environment for conflict resolution. The central thrust of the integration approach is to transform the culture of violence into a culture of peaceful co-existence.

■ letterschd@hindustantimes.com

RAHUL'S OBSERVATION HAS REINFORCED THE BELIEF THAT PEACE AND PEACEKEEPING ARE A SERIOUS BUSINESS WHICH OTHERWISE, UNFORTUNATELY, HAS BECOME A PREOCCUPATION WITH THE PEOPLE WHO THEMSELVES ARE EITHER RESPONSIBLE FOR OR HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO VIOLENCE INDIRECTLY

The writer is director of the Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh. Views expressed are personal

Left in the lurch, Dharmi Faujis regret '84 move to save Takht

Seek Incentives Given To Victims Of Anti-Sikh Riots

Ajay Sura | TNN

Chandigarh: Thirty years after the Dharmi Faujis (Army deserters) left their barracks "to save Golden Temple and Akal Takht" from Army's assault in 1984, some of them seem to regret their decision.

These Dharmi Faujis have been sitting outside Gurdwara Amb Sahib in Mohali for the past four months, demanding special status and incentives for them and their families. According to them, they had left the barracks to protest the insult being heaped on their Guru after a call by Shiroman Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal, who now seems to have completely forgotten their sacrifice.

"Had I not left the Army then, I would have retired as Honorary Captain with Rs 30,000 pension per month. I was discharged for protesting the Army action and am now getting a pension of Rs 10,000 only," said Baldev Singh Gurdaspur, a former soldier of 3-Sikh battalion of Sikh regiment.

Baldev, who is also the president of Samuh Sikh Dharmi Fauji June 1984 Parivar Welfare Association, said around 3,500 Sikh soldiers had deserted the Army and marched towards Am-



Rohit Kundra

Dharmi Faujis sitting on dharna outside Gurdwara Amb-Sahib in Mohali

View & Counterview

“Their demands are unjustified as most of them are well settled and those protesting have not paid their loans taken from Punjab Ex-Servicemen Corporation because of which their grant has been stopped

Brig (retd) Manjit Singh | DIRECTOR, SAINIK WELFARE PUNJAB

“What's wrong if some are unable to pay the loan, considering their sacrifice for the community, their grant should be restored and they should be treated as heroes of the panth (sect)

Baldev Singh Gurdaspur | PRESIDENT, SAMUH SIKH DHARMI FAUJI JUNE 1984 PARIVAR WELFARE ASSOCIATION

ritsar at that time. Out of them, around 80 were killed. Most of them were jawans or junior commissioned officers. Some of them were arrested and tried by

the Army. They were imprisoned from a period of 28 days to 20 years by the military courts. A majority of them lost their job, pension and other benefits.

As of now, around 1500 Dharmi Faujis have been identified by the state government.

Another Dharmi Fauji Gurmail Singh said, "At that time,

SGPC to take up relics issue with defence min

Yudhvir Rana | TNN

Amritsar: Thirty years after Operation Bluestar, the whereabouts of relics, manuscripts and other valuable material of Sikh Reference Library (SRL), which was taken away by the Army during its 1984 action, remain unknown. "We will take up the issue with new Union defence minister and ask him to trace and return the SRL's books and handwritten 'saroops' (transcripts) of Guru Granth Sahib

to us," SGPC president Avtar Singh Makkar told TOI on Tuesday.

He said he didn't remember the Army had returned anything to SGPC that it took away in 1984. Former defence minister George Fernandes, in his letter to SGPC, had admitted that books and documents taken away by the Army were later handed over to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

SRL's treasure trove included handwritten 'birs' (books) of Guru Granth Sahib, edicts of

Akal Takht, documents pertaining to Sikh history and historical paintings. It had around 16,000 items collected for over three centuries. A former police inspector, who was attached with the CBI in 1984 to scrutinize the SRL material, has confessed that the investigative agency had taken the books packed in gunny bags to the Youth Hostel here and later to Meerut Cantonment.

Librarian Bagicha Singh informed that according to records, the Army had taken away 12,613

books and 512 handwritten 'saroops' of Guru Granth Sahib. However, sources claim that the number of handwritten 'saroops' was more than 2,200 since those were not registered in the records. CBI has returned around 75 books to the SGPC, but not other historical volumes and 'saroops'.

Earlier, too, SGPC had attempted to resurrect the library and appealed to people to handover religious and rare books. As a result, thousands of books, including handwritten manuscripts,

30 YEARS ON

Dharmi Faujis getting monthly maintenance grant	
State	Nos.
Punjab	1200
Haryana	85
J&K	80
HP	3
Rajasthan	3
Bihar	1
UP	18

we heard the message of Parkash Singh Badal and other Sikh leaders on BBC radio and left the barracks without bothering about the future. Today, the state has completely forgotten our sacrifice".

They are demanding Rs 5 lakh each for the family of Dharmi Faujis, a government job for the dependent children, red cards on the pattern of 1984 riot victims, pension for widows, Rs 1 lakh as shagun at the time of marriage of their children and status of 'Shaheed' for those lost their lives.

They had met CM Prakash Singh Badal but nothing has been done till now.

LESSONS LEARNT...

... Across Religions, Regions And Political Spectrum

Promod Sharma

History has witnessed that Operation Bluestar has become a marker for not violating religious symbols and rights of religious minorities in multi-cultural societies. More so, 30 years of churning in the civil society and politics, the hurt which was initially felt by the members of Sikh community and secularists, became universal. The latest interviews by the aides in media have shown that voices which glorified the role of former prime ministers in shaping the event and its fallout, have become feeble and apologetic.

It can be safely inferred that had the deadlier politics manifesting in Operation Bluestar; assassination of the then Prime Minister and Sikh genocide not been unleashed, terrorism may have been petered out in 1985 itself.

Most encouraging is that lessons have been learnt across religions, regions and political spectrum. This kind of response has constrained the protagonists of revenge for the hurt Sikh psyche.

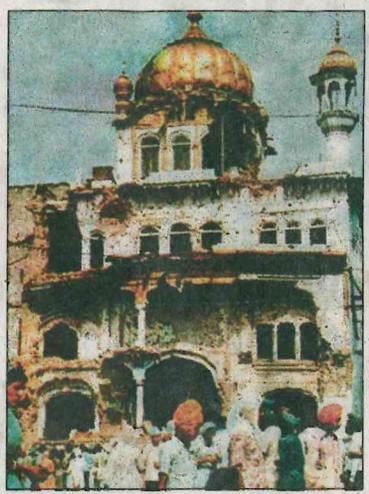
And, the lesson learnt led to the restraint shown in handling the terrorist in-

festes Muslim religious shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar and attempts to condone demolition of Babri Masjid.

In a way, it weakened divisive and separatist politics, but delayed initiatives for closure has provided a lease of life to extreme and fundamentalist politics. After having ignored twice the appeal of Dal Khalsa a radical Sikh organization in 1985 and 2002 to raise a martyrs' memorial at the Golden Temple complex, it was conceded by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 2014.

We also witnessed the ceremonious conferment of martyrdom to Bhindranwale by the SGPC after 19 years. It is mainly because no concerted efforts were made to delegitimize violence and reduce incentives to violence and deliver restorative justice. Reconciliation is an obvious goal of closure. Isn't it strange that Punjabi society has not even thought of setting up a peace memorial monument in the memory of victims of this decade-long terrorism and tortured?

There is an urgent need to set up a peace memorial monument with the active engagement of the civil soci-



BEARING THE BRUNT: The Akal Takht after Operation Bluestar

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A system of setting up a people's commission is the need of the hour. The commission should fix responsibility for unleashing deadlier politics manifesting into non-state actors violent assertions leading to killing of

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innocents, security personnel and political activists, and state sponsored violence manifesting in Operation Bluestar, November 1984 Sikh genocide and fake encounters.

Notwithstanding its contextual articulations in the electoral battles and fringe groups usage for keeping alive the separatist Sikh identity, the message that reverberates is that the protection of rights of religious groups and the practice of democracy are the only insurance against dehumanised, communal and violently sectarian political articulations.

(The author is director of Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)



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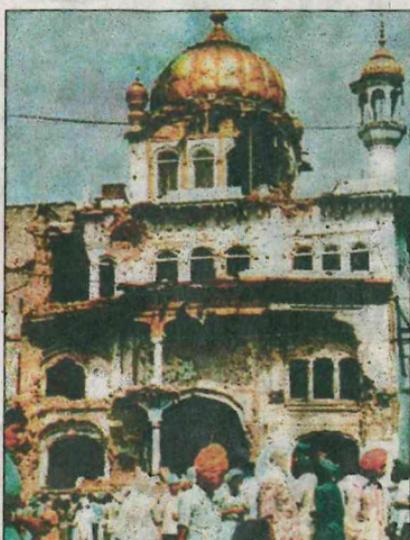
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1984
FLASHBACK TO FLASHPOINT

Build consensus to curb drug abuse



GUEST COLUMN
PRAMOD KUMAR

Drug abuse has acquired a new currency in politics. Isn't it interesting that after more than three decades of using drugs to woo voters, politicians have now realised that the noises against drug abuse can get them more political dividends? Hence, each one is trying to outcompete the others in the blame game.

Drug abuse and drug trade are secular and above political affiliations, having no religion, caste or creed. The abuse affects human life irrespective of the person's status or position in society. Drug abuse and trade have not only survived but also flourished historically in all political regimes. Therefore, to attribute its prevalence to a particular political party or individual is to ensure its longevity.

BLAME GAME, LIP SERVICE

The wide-ranging debate initiated by Hindustan Times, besides other initiatives, stressed the need to build consensus in politics to combat the drug menace. And, most of the political leaders, after blaming each other, paid lip service to building political consensus.

At the same time, they contested each others' claim about the enormity of the problem by giving numbers. There is no scientific data available on the number of addicts in Punjab as most of the studies conducted were on drug addicts. In 2001, the study conducted by Dr Neerja and Vasudha Goyal of the Institute for Development and Communication, with a sample size of 4,335 addicts, observed that 79% of the drug addicts were youths. Similar studies done by PS Verma (2010) with a sample size of 1,527 addicts and RS Sandhu (2013) with a sample size of 600 addicts, mentioned that around 73%

of the drug addicts were youths. From these studies, it was erroneously inferred as if 70% of the youths of Punjab were drug addicts. However, it is not to deny the enormity of the problem. Even if less than 10% are affected by drugs, enormity and seriousness of the problem cannot be underplayed as it affects human life.

STIGMATISATION OF ADDICTS

In HIV/Aids campaigns, it was propagated that truckers were more vulnerable to Aids and, thus, they were targeted. As a consequence, truckers and their families got stigmatised and many of them complained that people stopped marrying into their families. Similarly, attempts to isolate the Punjabi youth and project them as drug addicts also leads to their stigmatisation.

Being a complex problem, it requires a comprehensive and in-depth study to capture the extent of addiction to psychoactive substances. The United Nations' guide on Alcohol and Drug Addiction stressed the need to capture various stages of substance abuse. For instance, the first stage is experimentation in which the person does not actively seek out drugs; the second is social or recreation in which the person takes drugs on events. The third stage is where the person becomes habitual. In the fourth stage, the person continues to use drugs in spite of the negative consequences on his or her life. The fifth stage is drug addiction in which the person loses control of himself or herself to drugs. To club all these stages for formulating any intervention strategies is fraught with danger.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Drug trade and drug abuse have their own dynamics.

WITH PUNJAB BEING A TRANSIT ROUTE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRADE, VARIOUS PARTIES NEED TO STOP PLAYING POLITICS OVER THE ISSUE. THE CENTRE AND THE STATES SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO CHECK THE ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE

Drug trade has international dimensions, regional context and local sites. Punjab is a transit route for the international drug trade. Heroin is smuggled from across borders as part of the Golden Crescent Triangle. It originates from Afghanistan to its final destinations in the US, Europe and Canada. It has its regional context, as drugs such as opium, poppy husk, charas and ganja are traded from the states of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan etc. And for the misuse of prescription drugs, such as tablets, syrups and injections, the same are supplied by some chemists and peddlers.

GOVT CRACKDOWN

In view of these varied sources of drug supply, a composite plan has to be launched. The recent crackdown by the Punjab government has led to the registration of more than 14,000 FIRs under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act with 80% conviction rate as compared to other drug-affected states such as Goa and Maharashtra, where only nominal cases were registered with low conviction rates.

This initiative alone may not bring the desired results as seizures of drugs lead to scarcity, increased prices of drugs, and bribes and also have a 'balloon effect'. As reported in *The Economist* (May 24, 2014), "the squashing down on illicit activity in one place causes it to pop up somewhere else." It adds that the 'balloon effect' also operates among consumers as consumption of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine, ketamine and mephedrone are multiplied. In fact, the seizures of these drugs have already led to the addition of 348 psychoactive substances. No doubt, there

is a need to check illegal supply of drugs, but the prohibitionist drugs policies would prove to be counterproductive. Further, to give rewards for giving information on drug peddling is to reduce reformers into informers. This would take initiatives away from the people.

The central and state governments should form a consortium with multi-agency coordination between the Central Bureau of Narcotics, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, customs, central excise etc. and state enforcement agencies to effectively intervene to reduce the supply of drugs at three levels - international drug trade, to break the cycle of inter-state trade from the source to the consumers by crop eradication and control, and misuse of prescription drugs.

DRUG-FREE ZONE

On the demand side, the state and society should work together for making drug detoxification and the recovery support system accessible to the victims. A drug-free zone for the recovery and skill development rehabilitation centres to make youth productive have to be set up. A drug prevention programme with voluntary drug testing camps in schools, colleges, workplaces and factories have to be made functional. A chapter on drug abuse in educational curriculum should be introduced.

The first and foremost thing that emerged from the HT debate is that the political parties have to stop playing politics with drugs. The Centre and the states should work together to check illegal drug trade and also to impose Section 68 of the NDPS Act, 1988, to forfeit the illegally acquired assets of people involved in the drug trade. Policies need to be made to make the youth employable, build partnership with parents, and community leaders to become mentors for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

'Denial is the biggest mistake'

THE first and foremost priority should be to avoid the denial mode on drug addiction by everyone, feels Chandigarh-based Institute for Development and Communication Director Dr Pramod Kumar. "There's an abdication syndrome prevailing among all. Unfortunately, the debate has been reduced to sermonising that who should do what," he says.

"The demand of vice is a bigger problem than the one who lures you to bad habits. We must check the supply in any forceful way we can, but the focus should be the recipient, the one who is seeking the supply. For that, the role of each one of us is important. I would put the role of parents on the top," he adds.

Dr Kumar says it must be acknowl-



“Earlier, the use of drugs was the currency to woo voters, now all politicians are trying to harp on preventing drug abuse as the way to woo voters.”

Dr Pramod Kumar,

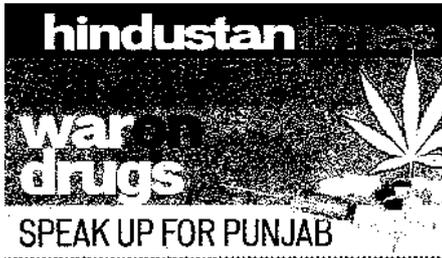
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

edged that the debate on drugs, the politics and the counter-action may be entirely new or new in a different way, but drug intake was always present in the history and culture of this region.

"The enormity of a problem is not the function of numbers. Even if one person is taking drugs, it is a problem. Sadly, drug abuse has emerged as a new currency in politics," he opines.

POLITICAL PARTIES NEED TO WEED OUT LEADERS WHO SHELTER DRUG SMUGGLERS

**HT WAR ON DRUGS
(JANUARY 11, 2015)**



Three questions that matter, answers that must be found

How grave is the drug problem in Punjab?

What specific steps should the governments, both the state and the Centre, take to tackle it?

What can the political parties and society do to deal with the drug scourge?



PRAMOD KUMAR, chief, governance reforms panel

MAKE REHABILITATION CENTRES ACCESSIBLE

After three decades of using drugs to woo voters, the leaders now realise how serious it is. Politics over drugs has become more serious than the problem itself. If researchers show 70% of the addicts are youth, politics distorts it to say 70% of Punjab youth are on drugs.

Check heroin inflow from the golden crescent transit route; kill inter-state trade of opium, poppy husk, charas and ganja by crop eradication; and prevent misuse of prescription drugs by keeping tabs on chemists. Make drug detoxification and skill development rehabilitation centres accessible, take drug awareness to schools and colleges.

Political parties should stop using drugs to woo voters. The civic bodies and citizen committees should pass resolutions to boycott leaders that distribute drugs and alcohol in elections. The parties and social bodies should launch anti-drug drives and build partnerships with the parents and community leaders to mentor the youth.

Nazaria

Lessons were not learnt. The form of governance changed, but the content remained the same. The lesson learnt was that constitutional emergency must not be imposed. But, 'masked authoritarianism' with liberal veneer can continue.

40 YRS of EMERGENCY - Emergency to masked authoritarianism..by Dr Pramod Kumar

By Dr Pramod Kumar ,Director IDC

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Emergency, imposed in June 1975, was preceded by a massive electoral verdict for the Indian National Congress in 1971.

This verdict was mainly guided by the Garibi Hatao slogan leading to raised expectations for Achhe Din. And, within the Congress, Indira Gandhi declared the old guards, to use Yashwant Sinha's phrase, "brain dead".

Indira Gandhi exercised so much influence as it was fully backed by handpicked chief ministers and Cabinet ministers and her charismatic appeal among the masses. And, her proactive decisive leadership with excessive reliance on nonelectoral advisers and committed bureaucracy made her a cult leader. For masses, she was "Indira Amma" and for urban middle-class, she became a symbol of Durga after Pakistan's massive defeat in 1971 leading to Independence of Bangladesh.

History has witnessed that when a leader becomes all powerful like God or Goddess, he or she becomes powerless to transform society. The real power vests with the coterie. It is not wrong when one of her aides mentioned that Emergency was ill-advised by one of the members of the coterie. In other words, symptoms of emergency like situation are a charismatic leader with total centralization of power, disconnected with dissenting political voices and accumulative frustration over unfulfilled electoral promises, such as poverty eradication and looming joblessness. Along with this, extra constitutional control over institutions like executive, legislature, judiciary, media, etc. led to the decay of institutions.

This context shaped the social and political protest movements. In the face of massive political opposition, internal emergency was imposed under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution. Elections to the state assemblies were postponed. New laws were promulgated through ordinances as the existing lawmaking processes were considered to be "too slow" irrespective of the fact that the Congress had a two-third majority in the Parliament. It gave blanket powers to the enforcement agencies. The political posturing changed overnight from "nation in danger" from external agencies like CIA to a state in danger from its own citizens and political opponents. The fundamental rights were suspended, individual freedom was curbed and everyday existence was regimented.

I had a ringside view of the unfolding events. It was a phase when India saw the sunset of the country's oft proclaimed faith in the democratic processes. It also unleashed anti-poor and anti-people policies in the form of demolition of slums and forced sterilization. This period did not last long. General elections were declared and a new political formation under the banner of Janata Party was formed. In 1977, the Janata Party captured the political space and promised to revitalize the system.

Jai Prakash Narayan launched the political campaign and exhorted people to act otherwise "nineteen months of tyranny will become nineteen years of terror". JP got massive support from the right wing political parties and in Punjab the Akali Dal spearheaded a mass protest against Emergency. It is surprising that has not been documented and analyzed by political historians.

The institutional collapse which was caused by the threat perception of the political leadership was selectively reversed. The 1980s saw the revival of law enforcing agencies with an overactive police. As a result, heroes of the 1980s were super cops. This role was passed on to the judiciary in the 1990s. Now we have an overactive judiciary with super-judges trying to perform all other functions but their own. We have also witnessed the rebirth of the Election Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Central Bureau of Investigation with their super-regulators. Now, the onus of building up a just, honest and humane society is on the Jan Lokpal. But somebody has to take out heavy insurance against the inescapable failure of Lokpal -there comes the talk of a second republic to start the process all over again.

The right wing parties which were opposed to the emergency, joined with the Congress in support of market forces. Anyone who is a non-believer in the "unfettered market" is treated as an outcaste. It has thrown up a market-oriented priesthood which subscribes to a rationality that "privatization is the price of progress just as death is the price of life". This new priesthood is as dogmatic, intolerant, inegalitarian and inhuman as the priest hood of religious extremism.

Hopes were belied. Lessons were not learnt. The form of governance changed, but the content remained the same. The lesson learnt was that constitutional emergency must not be imposed. But, 'masked authoritarianism' with liberal veneer can continue. Privileges and power must not be redistributed, but their public display must be checked. For instance, red lights on cars must not be displayed, but power may remain centralized in an individual leader. The labourers' names may be inscribed on bridges, but no efforts at all to make their existence dignified and productive. The sham exercises have promised psychological comfort to the Aam Admi. To market personal honesty as a superior value without linking it with the fight against hunger, poverty, inequality, greed, conspicuous consumption and corruption may tempt a leader to opt for subversion of democracy. (Courtesy The Times of India (Chandigarh)-June 29,2015)

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Emergency to masked authoritarianism

By Pramod Kumar

Emergency, imposed in June 1975, was preceded by a massive electoral verdict for the Indian National Congress in 1971. This verdict was mainly guided by the Garibi Hatao slogan leading to raised expectations for Achhe Din. And, within the Congress, Indira Gandhi declared the old guards, to use Yashwant Sinha's phrase, "brain dead".

Indira Gandhi exercised so much influence as it was fully backed by hand-picked chief ministers and Cabinet ministers and her charismatic appeal among the masses. And, her proactive decisive leadership with excessive reliance on non-electoral advisers and committed bureaucracy made her a cult leader. For masses, she was "Indira Amma" and for urban mid-

dle-class, she became a symbol of Durga after Pakistan's massive defeat in 1971 leading to Independence of Bangladesh.

History has witnessed that when a leader becomes all powerful like God or Goddess, he or she becomes powerless to transform society. The real power vests with the coterie. It is not wrong when one of her aides mentioned that Emergency was ill-advised by one of the members of the coterie. In other words, symptoms of emergency like situation are a charismatic leader with total centralization of power, disconnected with dissenting political voices and

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accumulative frustration over unfulfilled electoral promises, such as poverty eradication and looming joblessness. Along with this, extra-constitutional control over institutions like executive, legislature, judiciary, media, etc. led to the decay of institutions.

This context shaped the social and political protest movements. In the face of massive political opposition, internal



Indira Gandhi with Chandrashekhar in AICC meeting session in Shimla, 1971

emergency was imposed under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution. Elections to the state assemblies were postponed. New laws were promulgated through ordinances as the existing law-making processes were considered to be "too slow" irrespective of the fact that the Congress had a two-third majority in the Parliament. It gave blanket powers to the enforcement agencies. The political postur-

ing changed overnight from "nation in danger" from external agencies like CIA to a state in danger from its own citizens and political opponents. The fundamental rights were suspended, individual freedom was curbed and everyday existence was regimented.

I had a ringside view of the unfolding events. It was a phase when India saw the sunset of the country's oft proclaimed

faith in the democratic processes. It also unleashed anti-poor and anti-people policies in the form of demolition of slums and forced sterilization. This period did not last long. General elections were declared and a new political formation under the banner of Janata Party was formed. In 1977, the Janata Party captured the political space and promised to revitalize the system.

Jai Prakash Narayan launched the political campaign and exhorted people to act otherwise "nineteen months of tyranny will become nineteen years of terror". JP got massive support from the right wing political parties and in Punjab the Akali Dal spearheaded a mass protest against Emergency. It is surprising that has not been documented and analyzed by political historians.

The institutional collapse which was caused by the threat perception of the political leadership was selectively reversed. The 1980s saw the revival of law enforcing agencies with an overactive police. As a result, heroes of the 1980s were

super cops. This role was passed on to the judiciary in the 1990s. Now we have an overactive judiciary with super-judges trying to perform all other functions but their own. We have also witnessed the rebirth of the Election Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Central Bureau of Investigation with their super-regulators. Now, the onus of building up a just, honest and humane society is on the Jan Lokpal. But somebody has to take out heavy insurance against the inescapable failure of Lokpal — there comes the talk of a second republic to start the process all over again.

The right wing parties which were opposed to the emergency, joined with the Congress in support of market forces. Anyone who is a non-believer in the "unfettered market" is treated as an outcaste. It has thrown up a market-oriented priesthood which subscribes to a rationality that "privatization is the price of progress just as death is the price of life". This new priesthood is as dogmatic, intolerant, inegalitarian and inhuman as the priest-

hood of religious extremism.

Hopes were belied. Lessons were not learnt. The form of governance changed, but the content remained the same. The lesson learnt was that constitutional emergency must not be imposed. But, 'masked authoritarianism' with liberal veneer can continue. Privileges and power must not be redistributed, but their public display must be checked. For instance, red lights on cars must not be displayed, but power may remain centralized in an individual leader. The labourers' names may be inscribed on bridges, but no efforts at all to make their existence dignified and productive. The sham exercises have promised psychological comfort to the Aam Admi. To market personal honesty as a superior value without linking it with the fight against hunger, poverty, inequality, greed, conspicuous consumption and corruption may tempt a leader to opt for subversion of democracy.

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ਕੀ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਬਕ ਸਿੱਖੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ?

1971 ਵਿਚ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡੇ ਵੋਟ-ਫ਼ਤਵੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜੂਨ 1975 ਵਿਚ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਲਾਈ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਫ਼ਤਵਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਹਟਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਅਰੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ 'ਚ 'ਅੱਛੇ ਦਿਨ' ਆਉਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਮੀਦਾਂ ਜਗਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਅੰਦਰ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨੇ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਅੰਦਰਲੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਮਹਾਂਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖੁੰਢੇ ਅਤੇ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਿਹਾਅ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਕਰਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਯਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਸਿਨਹਾ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਬਰੇਨ ਡੈਂਡ' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਾਰਟੀ 'ਤੇ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਜਕੜ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚਰਚੇ ਕੁਝ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੈਬਨਿਟ ਮੰਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਸੀ। ਇੰਦਰਾ ਦੀ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾਮੁਖੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋ-ਐਕਟਿਵ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਕ ਹਸਤੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਟੁੱਟੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਲਾਹਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਗਤਨੁਮਾ ਅਫ਼ਸਰਸ਼ਾਹੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਆਮ ਜਨਤਾ ਲਈ ਉਹ 'ਇੰਦਰਾ ਅੰਮਾ' ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਮੱਧ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਦੁਰਗਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਦਾ ਬਿੰਬ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਉੱਭਰੀ ਸੀ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ 1971 ਵਿਚ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਾਰੀ ਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਬੰਗਲਾਦੇਸ਼ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।

ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਗਵਾਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਨੇਤਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਦੇਵਤੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਸੁਪਰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਲਈ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਨਿਰੋਂਘਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਲ ਤਾਕਤ ਉਸ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਜੁੜੀ ਪੁਜਾਰੀ-ਜੁੱਛਲੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਚਲੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਮੰਨ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਜੁੜੀ ਪੁਜਾਰੀ-ਜੁੱਛਲੀ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਮੋਂਬਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਪੁੱਠੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਸੀ।

ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਵਰਗੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਦੇ ਲੱਛਣ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ, ਜਦੋਂ ਇਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਮਈ ਨੇਤਾ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਰ ਲਈ, ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਦੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰੀ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚੋਣ ਵਾਅਦੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਕਰਕੇ

ਉਹ ਬੋਦਲ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਐਗਜੈਕਟਿਵ, ਵਿਧਾਨਪਾਲਿਕਾ, ਜੁਡੀਸ਼ੀਅਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੀਡੀਆ 'ਤੇ ਗੈਰ-ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਜੱਫਾ ਵੀ ਮਾਰ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹ-ਸਤਾ-ਹੀਣ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਅਸਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਇਹ ਸਨ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਰੰਗਤ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਿਰੋਧ-ਲਹਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਮੁਲਕ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹੇ ਇਸ ਇੰਦਰਾ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਉਭਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਦਬਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਾ 352 ਅਧੀਨ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਲਾਈ ਗਈ। ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਸੈਂਬਲੀ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਮੁਲਤਵੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ,



ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ

ਆਰਡੀਨੈਂਸਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ-ਤਿਹਾਈ ਬਹੁਮਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਨਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਰਡੀਨੈਂਸ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਢਿੱਲੀ-ਮੱਠੀ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਸੂਬੇ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ। ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ-ਫਰਮਾਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਬਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਰੋਕ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਮਿਲ ਗਈਆਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ।

ਮੁਲਕ ਦਾ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਮੁਹਾਵਰਾ ਰਾਤੋ-ਰਾਤ ਬਦਲ ਗਿਆ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹਾਕਮ ਪਿਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸੀ. ਆਈ. ਏ. ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਖਤਰੇ ਦੀ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਦੁਹਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ, ਉਹੀ ਦੁਹਾਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਅੰਦਰਲੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਖ਼ਤਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਮੁਲਕ ਦੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਖੋਹ ਲਏ ਗਏ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ 'ਤੇ ਪਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਦੀ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਦੇ ਰਹਿਮ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ।

ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਉਸ ਦੌਰ ਦੀ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਵੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਕਿ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਲੰਮੀ ਲੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹ ਉਹ ਦੌਰ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਭਾਰਤ 'ਚ ਉਹ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਵੱਡੇ-ਵੱਡੇ ਦਾਅਵੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਸਿਲਸਿਲੇ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਲੋਕ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤੇ ਗਰੀਬ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਇਜ਼ਹਾਰ ਬਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਢਾਹ-ਢੁਆਈ ਤੇ ਜਬਰੀ ਨਸਬੰਦੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਦੌਰ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਲੰਬਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੱਲਿਆ। 1977 ਵਿਚ ਆਮ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਜਨਤਾ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਝੰਡੇ ਹੇਠ ਇਕ ਨਵੀਂ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਿਰ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਈ। ਜਨਤਾ ਪਾਰਟੀ 1977 ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਫਿਜ਼ਾ 'ਤੇ ਛਾ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਢਹੋ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕ ਰਾਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਮੁੜ ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ। ਜੈ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਨਰਾਇਣ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਦਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਖ਼ੁਦ ਆਉਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਜਬਰ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਦੇ 19 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 19 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਜੇ. ਪੀ. ਨੂੰ ਮੁਲਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੱਜੇ ਪੱਖੀ (ਰਾਈਟ ਵਿੰਗ) ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਿਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਵੀ ਮਿਲੀ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਫਿੜੀ ਰੋਸ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਮੋਹਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਨ। ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੱਥਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਲਮ ਬੰਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਉਸ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟੁੱਟਵੇਂ ਤੇ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਬਹਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਕਿ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਰਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਬੇਜਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ। 1980 ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਹ ਉਹ ਦੌਰ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੁੜ ਬਹਾਲੀ ਹੋਈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਲੋੜੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਅੱਠਵੇਂ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੇ ਸੁਪਰ-ਕੈਂਪ ਵਜੋਂ ਜਾਣੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫ਼ਸਰ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੀਰੋ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਫਿਰ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੀ ਰੋਲ ਨਿਆਂਪਾਲਿਕਾ ਨੇ ਹਥਿਆ ਲਿਆ। ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਜੁਡੀਸ਼ਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ, ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸੁਪਰ ਜੱਜ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਦਾਲਤੀ ਫਰਜ਼ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਲੋਕ-ਰਾਜੀ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਚੋਰੀ ਖ਼ੁਦ ਬਣਨ ਲੱਗੇ। ਫਿਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਹ ਦੌਰ ਵੀ ਦੇਖਿਆ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਚੋਣ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਪੁਨਰ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਟੀ. ਐਨ. ਸੇਸ਼ਨ



ਡਾ: ਪ੍ਰਮੋਦ ਕੁਮਾਰ

ਵਰਗੇ, ਸੀ. ਏ. ਜੀ. ਵਿਨੋਦ ਰਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਸੀ. ਬੀ. ਆਈ. ਵਰਗੀ ਏਜੰਸੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਪਰ ਰੈਗੂਲੇਟਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਏ। ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਉਹ ਦੌਰ ਆਇਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਮੱਤ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਜਨ ਲੋਕਪਾਲ ਹੀ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ, ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਵਵਾਦੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਅਸਫਲਤਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਵੱਲ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਨਿਊ-ਰਿਪਬਲਿਕ ਦਾ ਨਾਅਰਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸੱਜੇ-ਪੱਖੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਰਕੀਟ 'ਤੇ ਹਾਵੀ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿਤ ਪੂਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਲ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ

ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਭਰੋਸਗੀ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਦਾ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਫ਼ੂਤ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ। ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰਮੁਖੀ ਪੁਜਾਰੀਪੁਣਾ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਤਰਕ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਨਿੱਜੀਕਰਨ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਲਈ ਉਸੇ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੀ ਅਣਸਰਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਮੌਤ। ਇਹ ਨਵਾਂ ਪੁਜਾਰੀਪੁਣਾ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੱਟੜ, ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਖਣਾ, ਤੰਗਦਿਲ, ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਣਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿੰਨਾ ਕਿ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕੱਟੜਤਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਪੁਜਾਰੀਪੁਣਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਆਖ਼ਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਸਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਫਿਰਿਆ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਬਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਿੱਖੇ ਗਏ, ਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦਾ ਮੁਖੰਟਾ ਬਦਲ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਓਹੀ ਰਹੀ। ਸਬਕ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਐਮਰਜੈਂਸੀ ਮੁੜ ਕੇ ਨਾ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋਵੇ। ਨਵਾਂ ਦਸਤੂਰ ਕੁਝ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ—ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ਉਦਾਰਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਕਰੋ, ਬੁਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਆਪਹੁਦਰਾਸ਼ਾਹੀ (ਮਾਸਕਡ ਅਥਾਰਟੇਰੀਅਨਿਜ਼ਮ) ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖੋ। ਸੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੋਲ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਲੋਕ-ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ ਪਰ ਰੱਖੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਸੇਦਾਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਰੱਖੋ। ਮਿਸਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੈ—ਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਲ ਖੱਤੀ ਹਟਾ ਲਵੋ ਪਰ ਸਾਰੀ ਸੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਤਾਕਤ ਇਕੋ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖੋ। ਪੁਲਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂਅ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਕਰ ਦਿਓ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਚਾ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਦੰਡੀ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ ਖਿਆਲੀ ਰਾਹਤ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਧਰਵਾਸ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੈ, ਚੋਰ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇਤਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਭੁੱਖਮਰੀ, ਗਰੀਬੀ, ਨਾਬਰਾਬਰੀ, ਲਾਲਚ, ਬੇਲੋੜੀ ਜੁਗਲੀਆ ਖਪਤ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਰੱਸ਼ਣ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਾਤਮੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਉਸ ਨੇਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਢਾਅ ਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਵੀ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਵੀ।

(ਲੇਖਕ ਆਈ. ਡੀ. ਸੀ. ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ ਚਿੰਤਕ ਹਨ)
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Masked authoritarianism is not the answer

BY PRAMOD KUMAR

Emergency was imposed on June 25, 1975, against the backdrop of accumulative frustration over unfulfilled electoral promises such as poverty eradication and looming joblessness, disconnect with political voice and centralisation of power in a leader. It gave blanket powers to enforcement agencies, stifling genuine democratic concerns of people. It injected an extraordinary zeal in state agencies to work overtime to protect the state from its own citizens. The political rhetoric changed overnight from a 'nation in danger' from external forces to a 'state in danger' from its own citizens. The fundamental rights were suspended, every sphere of human activity was regimented and political adversaries were put behind bars on fabricated cases.

I had a ringside view to the unfolding process. A fellow student, Satya Pal Jain, who was state president of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and general secretary of Panjab University Students' Council, was denied admission to the law department on frivolous grounds. As he was a student, his imminent arrest would have been delayed. He asked my help to sneak out of the university to get the obscure document demanded by the authorities. We were, however, caught by the police and he was arrested. His popularity as a student leader was a poor challenge to the widespread fear, and no one came to his support. False charges were slapped. It was alleged that he addressed a rally in front of the law department and exhorted students to revolt against prime minister Indira Gandhi. He requested me to inform his ailing parents and advised me not to remain in touch with him as I may also land in prison. I remained in touch, but unfortunately I was not arrested.

It was a phase when India saw the sunset of the country's oft proclaimed faith in the democratic processes. It also unleashed anti-poor and anti-people policies in the form of demolition of slums and forced sterilisation. Dissent was muffled or projected as a threat to national unity. The process has been one of gradual de-democratisation, of whittling down of the basic rights of the people, of abdication of the basic obligation of the system, of downgrading of the most precious facet of democracy: legitimacy. This period did not last long. A new political formation under the banner of the Janata Party in 1977 captured the political space and promised to

In the post-Emergency phase, the difference between political parties vanished. Everybody seems to be in a hurry to shed whatever ideology they have had.



revitalise the system.

The institutional collapse which was caused by the threat perception of the political leadership was selectively reversed. The 1980s saw the revival of law enforcing agencies with an overactive police. As a result, heroes of the 1980s were supercops. This role was passed on to the judiciary in the 1990s. Now we have an overactive judiciary with super-judges trying to perform all other functions but their own. We have also witnessed the rebirth of the Election Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Central Bureau of Investigation with their super-regulators. Now, the onus of building up a just, honest and humane society is on the Jan Lokpal. But somebody has to take out heavy insurance against future failure of Lokpal—there comes the talk of a second republic to start the process all over again.

The coincidence of institutional collapse and ideological flux is not accidental. In the post-Emergency phase, the difference between political parties vanished. Everybody seems to be in a hurry to shed whatever ideology they have had. For instance, the party responsible for atroci-

CRUSHING DISSENT
Old Delhi witnessed a massive demolition drive ordered by the government during the Emergency

ties against Sikhs in 1984 is being wooed by all the secularists and the parties known for their communal outbursts are in alliance with former socialists and liberal democrats. These politically opportunistic acts are justified for saving people from instability.

This notion of stability has become hostage to two kinds of fundamentalism. One is market fundamentalism and the other is religious fundamentalism. Anyone who is a non-believer in the 'unfettered market' is treated as an outcast. It has thrown up a market-oriented priesthood which subscribes to a rationality that 'privatisation is the price of progress just as death is the price of life.' This new priesthood is as dogmatic, intolerant, inegalitarian and inhuman as the priesthood of religious extremism.

Any attempt to question this class of priesthood processes which has produced tragedies for the Indian people is projected as a threat to 'stability'. Stability must not be disturbed and dissent must not question the system. Hopes were belied. Lessons were not learnt. The form of governance changed, but content remained the same. The lesson learnt was that constitutional emergency must not be imposed. But, 'masked authoritarianism' with liberal veneer can continue. Privileges and power must not be redistributed, but their public display must be checked. For instance, red lights on cars must not be displayed, but power may remain centralised in an individual leader. It promised psychological comfort and exhorted the poor to look after themselves for their own survival and dignified existence.

This has been the dominant trend in politics and society. Fatalism symbolised our economic development, revivalism the core of our politics and opportunism the divine virtue of our middle class sponsored social practice.

The need is to reverse the trend and produce a superior alternative. If democracy is corrupt, inefficient and less representative, make it more vibrant rather than find alternatives in masked authoritarianism. If the economy is accumulative and less productive, effort should be to make it more distributive and productive. There are no short-cuts. India needs a renewal, and not revival.

The author is director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh.



Punjab direly requires a paradigm shift

BY INVITATION



PRAMOD KUMAR

Facts often do not speak for themselves. It depends upon which facts are selected to hinge arguments and propositions. Similarly, the use of the measure is also inseparable from our vision. To consider the measure beyond questions is not only lethargic but also dangerous. If we stop asking questions, what we are measuring and for what outcomes, it becomes blind faith. In the words of Prof Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, "What we measure affects what we do... In the quest to increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), we may end up with a society in which the citizens are worse off... GDP mainly measure market production, though it is often treated as if it were a measure of economic well-being. Conflating the two can lead to misleading indicators about how well-off the people are and entail wrong policy decisions."

For instance, in Punjab, the Green Revolution was marketed as a powerful engine of growth which contributed to high GDP. However, two decades later, it came as a discovery that it has led to depleting water table, environment damage and soil degradation, besides the decline in farmers' income. The consequence of single-digit measurement obsession like the GDP led to endangering the future of farming, farmers and at least one generation of Punjabis.

GDP 'WRONGLY USED'
The monumental work of these Nobel Laureates further cautions, "If we remain locked into an index of economic progress that includes only what is created and not what is destroyed", it leads to environmental disaster. It is not to discount the use of GDP as it tells about market production, but to present it as a measure of economic well-being is misleading. "GDP is not wrong as such,

but wrongly used."

Similarly, fiscal deficit is seen as a cause of declining growth. It would be worthwhile to ascertain a correlation between fiscal deficit and the rate of growth of the economy. There were times when the growth rate was lower and the state enjoyed a fiscal surplus. The fetish to remove fiscal deficits has produced a number of distortions. In 2004-05, the government came out with a scheme to contract untrained teachers from the same village to reduce government expenditure. As a consequence, the quality of teaching further deteriorated. While the education system was required to impart quality education, the policy planners aimed at a fiscal fix. A relevant question in view of the increasing debt servicing cost for the states is: why is the cost of public expenditure so high? The fiscal management is governance without responsibility and fiscal mismanagement is governance with accountability. Both are bad.

CITIZENS' WELL-BEING
As is well-known, a fragmented diagnosis produces tunnel vision - strategic or otherwise. It is well-accepted that well-being is multidimensional, including living standards (income, consumption, wealth), health, education, work, quality of governance, social capital, environment, social, political and economic security. On the citizens' well-being indicators, contrary to popular perception in the state, Punjab's relative position compared to other states is quite good. For instance, both on poverty eradication and reduction in disparities, Punjab's performance is better than many others. A study published in the Economic and Political Weekly, led by Prof Sudipto Mundle, a former member of the

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NO AUTONOMOUS UNIT
These comparisons help us realise that Punjab is not an autonomous unit. Its vision has to be located in the shift in development thinking which brought back into focus the significance of non-economic factors influencing the economic outcomes. Also, to take into consideration the movement away from command economy to market economy and from local to global. And, it is vital to understand that it is the market which shall govern, not the governments. So far, the story of implementation is riddled with targets met and goals lost.

Punjab has to reinvent itself to ensure rights of the poor and underprivileged rather than promoting metropolitan regimes, facilitate foreign direct investment, withdraw subsidies, and encourage privatisation in social development. The land question is now transformed into land acquisition with pricing, instead of redistribution and viability of cultivable land. However, no institutional mechanism has been put in place to harmonise private capital driven by profit and public funds to

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Punjab needs a paradigm shift. The question we should answer: growth for whom and by whom? Let us understand Punjab through two historical accidents. It is a coincidence that the international border not only acted and was seen as a constraint, but even reorganisation of Punjab with Chandigarh being a union territory, has put Punjab into a major disadvantageous position.

It is an established fact that the capital cities stimulate technology, establish network of communities and tap resources. Without a capital city of its own, Punjab lost a space which could have acted as a driver of growth. It has suffered a major setback for having no control over its capital.

The state could not build its own capital because of the ongoing dispute. It missed the IT (information technology) revolution because it did not have the advantage of its own growth pole. In other words, in the absence of its own central business capital, it has suffered a major setback in neo-liberal globalised economy. And, it has lost its legitimate share in the revenue generated in Chandigarh.

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The impact of socio-economic development is not inclusive. Most relevant questions arise, such as why the Dalit population, in less casteist Punjabi society, is more deprived in terms of access to land, education, health as compared to non-Dalits. Secondly, why children from poor families in Punjab are more deprived in terms of access to higher education?

There is an imperative need to evolve political consensus on the direction of development and also to restore federal character to ensure autonomy of the states to allow prioritisation of development initiatives is sync with people's needs. To find the right solutions, right diagnosis has to be done.

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Sunday Spotlight

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Rising tide of anger in Punjab

INTERVIEW

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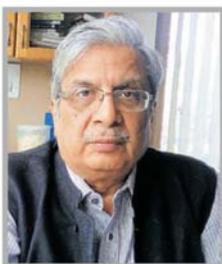
Punjab hurtles through an unsettling phase. Sacrilege incidents, the clemency row, farmers stir and attempts to erode sanctity of sacrosanct Sikh religious institutions like the Akal Takht, have put Punjab on the boil. The political narrative has fast altered. Pramod Kumar, political analyst and Director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh, discusses the convolutions and ramifications of the crisis with **Gautam Dheer** of *Deccan Herald* in Chandigarh. Excerpts:

How do you view the ongoing crisis in Punjab?

A number of simmering problems in sphere after sphere activated the hawks on the margins. People's unfulfilled expectations were visible in protests: peasantry agitating for adequate compensation; discontentment against growing nexus between political actors, illicit businesses and officialdom, leveraging public resources and political adventurism effecting religious sentiments. But, granting pardon to chief of Dera Sacha Sauda sect Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh by the Sikh clergy was the final straw. This crisis cannot be labelled as a resurgence of Khalistan. The violation of Sikh scriptures, the holding of a congregation of Sikhs dubbed as 'Sarbat Khalsa', announcement of terrorists as custodians of Sikh religious institutions- Akal Takht and SGPC- by hardliners point towards strategic management. The way in which events have unfolded indicate that these were planned and politically motivated.

Is the crisis a home grown conspiracy, and has the government done enough?

The crisis has lent wings to hardliners across borders. The widespread protests against ruling establishment for securing pardon from Sikh clergy, followed by denigration of holy Guru Granth Sahib mobilised people for a congregation of Sikhs (Sarbat Khalsa). The organisation and participation in 'Sarbat



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Khalsa' was facilitated not merely by religious groups, but also reportedly by individual leaders belonging to the competing political parties. The organised protests through the 'Sarbat Khalsa' platform by select Sikh religious

groups and protagonists of a separate Sikh state torpedoed the political protest to relaunch an extremist agenda. The government response in the first instance was insensitive and led to killing of two Sikh followers. Confident of their sway over the religious domain, the ruling establishment allowed extremist groups to hold the congregation of Sikhs. The government arrested and charged radical leaders with sedition. This created a sense of security among the people.

Why have we reached such a stage? Who is to blame?

The political battle is being fought in the religious domain (panthic) rather than on the development, agrarian front or on governance. The struggle to capture Sikh religious institutions like SGPC and Akal Takht, targeted the ruling Akali Dal that controls these institutions. The protests also very carefully appropriated the absence of counter narrative to 'Khalistan'. The consensus in the country to ensure justice for Sikhs butchered in 1984 anti-Sikh riots was extended to rehabilitate terrorists. This provided claim to a section instigating revenge for hurt Sikh psyche and a separate Sikh state. This was further reinforced by eventually conceding twice denied appeal of Dal Khalsa for conferment of martyrdom on leaders of Khalistan by the Akal Takht. These organisations after having acquired legitimacy raised their claim to control the SGPC and the Akal Takht and 'liberate' these from the moderates. The state on the one hand allowed coming together of fundamentalist groups in order to appropriate religious (panthic) constituency and on the other, its inept handling of the violation of the sanctity of Sikh religious scriptures provided enough fodder to fringe groups to articulate their divisive agenda in mainstream politics.

What is the way forward?

There is a need to apply closure to tragic events without submitting to a martyrdom psyche that one's perpetrator of violence is a martyr and the others' is a villain. In other words, violent acts of non-state actors be pardoned and state actors indulging in violence be hanged and vice-versa. But, closure should not mean subversion of the institution of justice for saving those who have taken the life of others. The main focus should be on de-legitimisation of violence, reduce incentive to violence and deliver restorative justice.

Sunday Spotlight

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Rising tide of anger in Punjab

There is simmering discontent among various sections of people in Punjab, a culmination of events which took place over the last about six months. The incidents related to religious issues, farmers' unrest, to name a few. Which way these incidents will play on the people and impact on the political roadmap of the state in the Assembly elections slated for 2017 may not be difficult to say as the ruling combine is facing an anti-incumbency factor

SP Singh



Thirty-three years after a Jalandhar-born Punjabi passed a blasphemy law in Pakistan that mandated life term for desecrating holy scriptures, the Parkash Singh Badal government in Punjab approved a move to amend Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code to award life imprisonment for "committing heinous acts of sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib."

Clearly, desperation is dictating political strategies. Anti-incumbency is starting at the government in the face, elections are about a year away and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is fast emerging as a new player, claiming significant, perhaps massive, resonance. The beleaguered Akalis seem to be desperate to quell widespread anger.

Of late, anger is part of the political script in Punjab. A number of incidents involving the sacrilege of the Sikh holy scripture—Guru Granth Sahib—saw massive crowds spilling onto the streets demanding that culprits be brought to book and highlighted the government's failure to address a plethora of grievances.

The ham-handed approach led to the death of two innocents in police firing on October 14 in a Faridkot village, and the wrongful arrests of two baptised Sikh brothers further stoked the anger. The all-powerful Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, who is also the home minister, claimed that Pakistan's ISI and a foreign conspiracy was behind the incidents. His top police officers gleefully released to the media taped conversations of the brothers with their "handlers" in Dubai and Australia.

But then, the script went wrong. The "handlers" came forward, walked into diaspora-run radio and TV channels' offices, and were found to be philanthropists merely helping those injured in the protests by sending meagre amounts.

Sukhbir, however, continues to talk

about foreign conspiracy, and the CBI has taken over the inquiry into the incident, but public anger has not yet abated. Preachers, with massive followings, have emerged as the new leadership, and the Badals know the seething-with-rage devout are also voters. People, fired with religious zeal and a sense of hurt, have not appreciated being painted as conspirators or rent-seeking opportunist pawns in the hands of terrorists sitting in foreign countries.

Cornered, the Badals shunted out Sumedh Saini, the head of the state police, and posted Suresh Arora, an officer known for his uprightiness. The move somewhat got the police off the hook, but not the Akalis. Senior ministers soon found it difficult to move about freely.

The community's top cleric—already the subject of much ire for having pardoned Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh, a Sirsa (Haryana)-based Sacha Sauda sect head, without much of an explanation—has been avoiding public events, fearing he'll be booed and jeered. The clergy withdrew the pardon but proved the charge—that clerics and SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee which manages religious aspects of the gurdwaras)—were Badals' puppets.

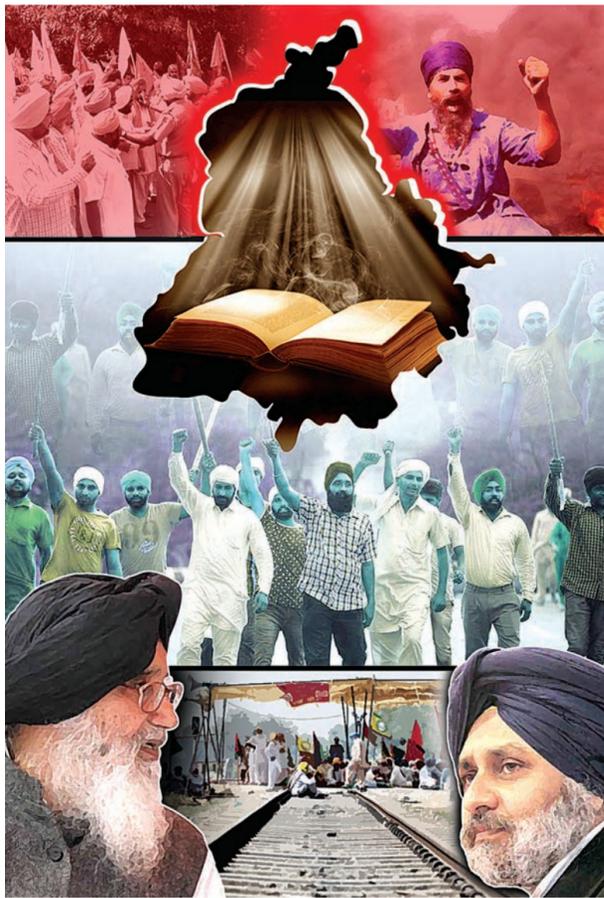
With the situation rife, hotheads crawled out of the woodwork to speak the language of the militant days of the 1980s. Maverick Simranjit Singh Mann, who earned dubious fame when he refused to enter Parliament without his 3-feet sword, joined hands with factions of Dandami Takals, the seminary once headed by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the militant leader of the 1980s who is reviled and deified in equal measure, and gave a call for Sarbat Khalsa, a collective congregation of the Sikh community.

On November 10, unprecedented crowds converged at the venue, but the organisers used the occasion to announce the appointment of Jagtar Singh Hawara, convicted for former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh's assassination, as the Akal Takht jathedar (Sikhs fondly compare the post with that of the Pope). While the community has not responded warmly to these decisions, the regime knows the next wave of anger is just a trigger away.

Triggers matter. The Arab Spring did not happen because fruit-vendor Mohammed Bouazizi set himself ablaze, angry with rampant corruption in Tunisia; World War I did not happen because Franz Ferdinand, the nephew of the Austro-Hungarian emperor, was killed. But these were potent triggers.

Anger against Badals

With their vice-like grip on power, too many close kin as power centres, blatant monopolistic business practices, and megalomania-infused statements, the Badals have failed to check this incrementally rising tide of anger. Signs of



the storm were visible much earlier. At one point, buses of Badal-owned transport companies became a visible target. Just last month, farmers' protests had blocked trains for a week.

Now that the Opposition Congress seems set to put its house in order and the AAP is shoring up its party structure, the ruling Akali Dal is at its wit's end about churning out a response to hordes of people gushing with anger every time the farmers' come out, the clergy opens its mouth or an incident of sacrilege happens.

Ever the statesman, Badal has now said if there has been a mistake, he is ready to apologise. Before it could even make headlines, Sukhbir rushed to say "enough is enough" and he would no longer tolerate protesters mobbing his ministers. Signs of desperation are clear.

Thursday's decision to introduce life sentence in sacrilege cases amounts to pandering to the radicals in order to stay ahead of them, a strategy that went horribly wrong in the early 1980s. Besides, a natural corollary in Punjab's Shiromani Akali Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party

alliance politics will be a demand for similar punishment for those committing sacrilege against other religions' scriptures.

Once it comes into force, no political party will be able to repeal such a law. Pakistan's blasphemy laws, introduced in early 1980s, are well entrenched till date. It's a no-brainer to underscore what such laws can do to a secular polity.

For years, Sukhbir had painstakingly cultivated an image of a young politician focussed on good governance, in sync with the investors. All he needed was to temper that image by also focussing on agriculture and shoring up the state's education and health sectors—Punjab's government-run schools and hospitals are either an apology or often just a rumour. It is sad to see that at best the younger Badal could only replicate what a fellow Punjabi did in neighbouring Pakistan in 1982.

His name was Zia-ul-Haq, the late president of Pakistan. And history does not remember him too fondly.

(The writer is a senior journalist based in Chandigarh)

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"For the state's peace and development, I will not hesitate in even apologising to the public...The way these anti-panthic leaders have undermined the significance of Akal Takht and SGPC, reflects their arrogance and desperation."



PARKASH SINGH BADAL, Punjab CM

"The government has evidence of foreign agencies behind the recent congregation (Sarbat Khalsa), details of which will be shared with the CBI. The Congress was in close coordination with radical elements."



SUKHBIIR BADAL, Akali Dal President and Deputy CM

"On October 14, the Punjab Police opened fire in Faridkot District killing two civilians who had assembled to protest sacrilege... A judicial inquiry be ordered by a sitting Judge of the Supreme Court."



RAHUL GANDHI in a memorandum to President Pranab Mukherjee

"No apology can wash your (Badal) sins...SAD's charge of Congress masterminding 'Sarbat Khalsa' is an attempt to deflect public attention from sacrilege in Punjab. The government failed to identify the culprits behind the sacrilege and punish officers responsible for killing of two peaceful protesters."



Capt AMARINDER SINGH, Congress Deputy Leader in Lok Sabha

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

- Akal Takht grants clemency to Dera Sacha Sauda chief for 2008 Blasphemy Act
- Sikhs and radicals up the ante seeking removal of 3 of 5 head priests
- Akal Takht relents, revokes pardon
- Mega Sikh congregation, dubbed as Sarbat Khalsa, held on Nov 10
- Unauthorised congregation removes three head priests
- Jagtar Singh Hawara, the assassin of former Punjab CM Beant Singh, made head priest of Akal Takht
- Government launches offensive, arrests many organisers

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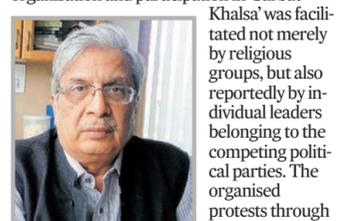
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Khalsa" was facilitated not merely by religious groups, but also reportedly by individual leaders belonging to the competing political parties. The organised protests through the 'Sarbat Khalsa' platform by select Sikh religious groups and protagonists of a separate Sikh state torpedoed the political protest to relaunch an extremist agenda. The government response in the first instance was insensitive and led to killing of two Sikh followers. Confident of their sway over the religious domain, the ruling establishment allowed extremist groups to hold the congregation of Sikhs. The government arrested and charged radical leaders with sedition. This created a sense of security among the people.

Why have we reached such a stage? Who is to blame?

The political battle is being fought in the religious domain (panthic) rather than on the development, agrarian front or on governance. The struggle to capture Sikh religious institutions like SGPC and Akal Takht, targeted the ruling Akali Dal that controls these institutions. The protests also very carefully appropriated the absence of counter narrative to 'Khalistan'. The consensus in the country to ensure justice for Sikhs butchered in 1984 anti-Sikh riots was extended to rehabilitate terrorists. This provided claim to a section instigating revenge for hurt Sikh psyche and a separate Sikh state. This was further reinforced by eventually conceding twice denied appeal of Dal Khalsa for conferment of martyrdom on leaders of Khalistan by the Akal Takht. These organisations after having acquired legitimacy raised their claim to control the SGPC and the Akal Takht and 'liberate' these from the moderates. The state on the one hand allowed coming together of fundamentalist groups in order to appropriate religious (panthic) constituency and on the other, its inept handling of the violation of the sanctity of Sikh religious scriptures provided enough fodder to fringe groups to articulate their divisive agenda in mainstream politics.

What is the way forward?

There is a need to apply closure to tragic events without submitting to a martyrdom psyche that one's perpetrator of violence is a martyr and the others is a villain. In other words, violent acts of non-state actors be pardoned and state actors indulging in violence be hanged and vice-versa. But, closure should not mean subversion of the institution of justice for saving those who have taken the life of others. The main focus should be on de-legitimisation of violence, reduce incentive to violence and deliver restorative justice.

SACRILEGE SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

- June, 2015: Guru Granth Sahib stolen, but little headway made by police
- Oct 12: First sacrilege as torn pages of the holy book found scattered on streets
- Over a dozen incidents of desecration of Guru Granth Sahib since then
- Two incidents of sacrilege of Hindu holy books- Gita and Ramayana- take place
- Oct 15: Two killed as police open fire on a group protesting sacrilege in Faridkot
- Two arrested, both baptised brothers, on charges of sacrilege, foreign hand claimed
- Foreign handlers in Australia come out in open, rubbish police claim
- Days later, brothers released for lack of evidence

WHY IT HURT THE MOST:

In Sikhism, the holy book is worshipped as the living Guru. "Guru Maneyo Granth" (Granth Be Thy Guru) is central to Sikh worship as it is said to imbibe a living spirit of 10 Sikh Gurus.

SPIRALLING FARMERS' UNREST

- Farmers have been on warpath seeking higher compensation for crop damage
- Majority of cotton crop completely damaged due to white fly attack
- Farmers' agitation hit around the same time with sacrilege, clemency row
- Movement of nearly 1,000 trains disrupted in October as farmers squatted on rail tracks for days
- Talks with government remains inconclusive
- Compensation of Rs 8,000 given against demand of Rs 40,000
- Loads of police cases registered against farmers, later withdrawn

SAD-BJP WANING TRAJECTORY

- SAD-BJP may confront a decade of anti-incumbency in early 2017 elections
- Ongoing controversies hit SADs credibility as a 'pro-farmer, pro-Sikh' party
- SAD reels under strained relations with its ally BJP in Punjab
- SAD sought to reclaim lost turf by positioning itself in religious (panthic) domain
- Gamble on clemency to Dera chief backfires, may cost SAD dear, even politically
- Resurgent Punjab Congress and AAP may pose formidable challenge.
- Inept handling of present crisis dented government's credibility.
- Party accused of allowing extended space to radicals

A model state now at crossroads

Ashutosh Kumar



Punjab in recent months has moved from one crisis to another. Only two months ago, the state was reeling under violence after spate of farmers' suicides in the wake of cotton crop loss led to widespread protests by farmers seeking compensation from the government, accused of irregularity in purchase and distribution of spurious pesticide.

After this, Punjab had to face mass anger due to the repeated incidents of desecration of the revered Guru Granth Sahib. Days earlier, the Akal Takht made a serious flip-flop, first they exonerated Dera Sacha Sauda chief for allegedly impersonating the 10th Sikh Guru and then retracted it after statewide protests.

Looking at the larger picture, the anger is not only about people's hurt religious sentiments that have brought back the painful memories of the days of militancy or about the inadequate compensation for the crop loss. Arguably,

these incidents have provided an outlet to the disillusioned people to vent their frustration that has arisen due to widespread corruption and politics of intimidation that has prevailed in the state for quite some time now, a result of the well-entrenched politician-mafia nexus.

The slipping control of the Badal family-led Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) government has raised the spectre of electoral opportunity for the Opposition. To compound the woes of the SAD-led eight-year-old coalition government, its long-term partner, the BJP, has distanced itself from the firefighting efforts. It is turning out to be a personal challenge for Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal who has been instrumental in turning the Akali Dal agenda from ethnicity-based issues to one based on development and peace and enjoys the image of a moderate leader and a reconciler.

Badal is facing the flak for undermining the authority of the sacred Sikh institutions, using them for electoral gains and turning a cadre-based and ideologically-driven party like the SAD into a tainted "family party".

What does the woes of the Akalis augur for the emergent political scenario

in the state as it stares at the 2017 elections? Since the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP seems to be contemplating about the opportune time to jump the ship as the state party leadership feels that remaining in coalition would result in the party facing the anti-incumbency wave.

In fact, if the much-neglected BJP has refrained until now from breaking up the alliance, in place since 1997, it is simply because the party has not succeeded in extending its traditional narrow, urban and caste-Hindu social support base. In addition, there is always a lurking danger that the party without having a credible local leadership with statewide support going alone in the fray may actually help the Congress that has always had decent support across the regions and communities.

Would it be then advantage Congress given the bipolar party system in place in post-1966 Punjab? The state unit of the Congress since the 2012 debacle has been in disarray. The infighting between the party's factions led by state president P S Bajwa and regional satrap Capt Amarinder Singh has thwarted any concerted effort to take on the Akalis.

Simmering tension

The simmering tension is likely to remain even if a reluctant Rahul Gandhi brings Capt Amarinder back as the campaign head or state unit president. Moreover, the Capt Amarinder Singh-led Congress, when in power between 2002 and 2007, did not really succeed in bringing about development or checking patronage-based politics.

Troubles facing the main contenders presents a clear opportunity to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to reap rich electoral dividend. In a state having 13 Lok Sabha constituencies, the debutant AAP finished third in eight constituencies in the 2014 elections. In seven of these eight constituencies, it received more votes than the margin of victory of the winning candidate, thus leaving its distinct impact over the final electoral outcome. However, things are not well with the AAP either.

The gain was due to the impeccable public record of the party candidates. These architects of AAP success are in political wilderness now, as the party "high command" has arbitrarily removed district-level conveners and workers. The whole exercise of "cleans-

ing" the party of dissidents, including its two sitting MPs under the Punjab Plan, is in true old-days Congress fashion. The emphasis as of now seems more on silencing the dissidents' rather than strengthening the party organisation.

The AAP leadership apparently refuses to learn from the dismal fate of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which despite making an impact in the early 1990s due to sizeable number of Dalits in the state (31 per cent), has floundered due to lack of autonomy to the state unit. The AAP candidates losing their deposit in the recent bypoll is hardly a surprise.

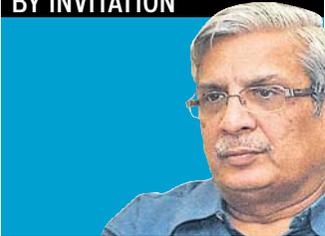
The state politics is in a flux as mainstream parties are fighting their own demons, whereas hitherto dormant radical SAD factions look for long-term electoral revival, taking advantage of the recent crises. What gives hope in these difficult times is that the people simply do not want to go back to the harrowing days of ethnic strife that saw the beginning of the decadence of what once was the "model state" of India.

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DEBT TRAP In Punjab, the share of market borrowing has gone up from 3% in 1990-91 to more than 90% in 2011-12. On the contrary, loans from the Centre as a source of financing fiscal deficit has declined from 85% of the gross fiscal deficit in 1990-91 to 2% in 2012-13. This has multiplied the debt and debt servicing costs, leading to diversion of funds from the social sector

What Punjab needs is a governance fix, not a fiscal fix

BY INVITATION



DR PRAMOD KUMAR

Financial package for Punjab has to be located in the nature of Centre-state relations. Its utilisation has to be analysed in relation to the prevalent governance vision, economic and social development priorities and fiscal discipline. Its outcome has to be measured in terms of its capacity to enhance access of marginalised population to the social security net, education, public health facilities and safety and security apparatus.

The legitimate question arises: Will this package alter the existing nature of market-oriented distributive justice framework? The answer is no. The financial package can only help correct the distortions in the federal structure and in the existing delivery mechanisms without altering the thrust of liberalisation and privatisation growth paradigm.

India is a multicultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious society. The plural character of the Indian society and the dynamic nature of the Indian Constitution along with the fast changing socio-economic and political reality have provided a dynamic basis to the Centre-state relations. Federalism, according to the Centre-State Relation Commission is

not a static paradigm, it is a changing notion.

NOT COOPERATIVE, BUT BARGAINING FEDERALISM

Let me attempt to characterise the changing context of the Centre-state relations. With the emergence of coalition politics, it was assumed that with regional groups having acquired greater stakes in politics, it would be able to reverse the trend of over-centralisation nurtured by single-party dominance since Independence. Greater access of the regional parties to political power has in fact transformed the content of federalism from anti-centre to cooperative federalism and, in practice, bargaining federalism. It would not be wrong if we argue that the present political dispensation in the state has relatively reduced the bargaining capacity. Further, being a small state with only 13 members of Parliament (MP), Punjab's capacity to influence policies at the Centre is rather limited. That's why it doesn't have a bargaining advantage that other states have.

MARKET-LED REFORMS WEAKENED FEDERALISM

Further, the trend of globalisation has transformed the terms of discourse between the Centre and states. The nation has surrendered to the market in the sphere of path and pace of development. The states are not involved or even taken into confidence for entering into global agreements such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or linking petroleum prices with the global market that directly affects agricultural-dominant states. However, the Centre wants state gov-

ernments to share the negative fallout of their economic policies like cut in the petroleum subsidy. From where will revenue loss faced by the states be met? This only means that the states will depend more and more on private debt to meet its expenditure responsibilities. For instance, in Punjab, the share of market borrowing has gone up from 3% in 1990-91 to more than 90% in 2011-12. On the contrary, loans from the Centre as a source of financing fiscal deficit has declined from 85% of gross fiscal deficit in 1990-91 to 2% in 2012-13. This has multiplied the debt and debt servicing costs leading to diversion of funds from the social sector.

NOT JUST RESOURCES, BUT AUTONOMOUS RESOURCES

There is an inherent process of centralisation in place with increasing control of the Centre on allocation of resources. The problem is not resources, but devolution of autonomous resources. Resources under the rule-based devolution process of the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula have dwindled and have been overtaken by tied assistance.

The scope for discretion of the states to initiate state-specific development strategy is being minimised and the Union government is implicitly suggesting that it knows

what is best for the states and that "one size fits all". The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) in the present form is an example, particularly in the context of labour deficit states like Punjab. Another example is the Union government's district-level agriculture productivity enhancement programme. For this, one has to have state-level policies. How can one formulate policies for restructuring macro infrastructure like irrigation network, electricity supply system at the district-level instead of the state-level?

FINANCE COMMISSION'S STATISTICAL CONSTRUCTS

The argument that Punjab should not be given financial package as it is in a fiscal mess is fallacious. For instance, the 13th Finance Commission observed that Punjab, West Bengal and Kerala need support to meet fiscal deficit that was an outcome of politics of populism and fiscal indiscipline. On the other hand, the 14th Finance Commission argued that Punjab was neither in economic distress nor fiscally undisciplined as of now. Hence, no need for financial package. The Union finance minister said that West Bengal would benefit from the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission as it could

manage to carry forward fiscal discipline and deficit tag. And, Union minister of state for finance Jayant Sinha further added that prosperous Punjab does not deserve a financial package. What has happened in these five years? Has Punjab become prosperous? Or it has observed fiscal discipline? It will be an empiricist trap to argue from the parameters of the Finance Commission as these are statistical constructs. This must be placed in the larger context of India's federal structure.

DON'T COMPROMISE ON DEVELOPMENT SPENDING

Formulating policies by using fiscal deficit as the main guiding principle may distort the vision and lead to a drift from peoples' welfare needs. For instance, the share of social sector expenditure has gone up from 17.3% in 2004-05 to 32% in 2012-13. Interestingly, the social sector spending in 2004-05 was low. Pursuing the fetish of removing fiscal deficits, the government came out with a scheme to employ untrained teachers from the same village on contract for reducing the government expenditure on salaries. As a consequence, the quality of teaching deteriorated. While the system was required to impart quality education, the policy planners aimed only at fiscal fix. The imbalance in the long-term development expenditure that has been compromised in the state for meeting deficit targets must be corrected.

Subsidies are considered a negative performance indicator. For instance, agriculture dominant states provide power subsidy to farmers. This is considered negative. Agriculture sector needs support. In

this context of subsidies, the Centre follows double standards. When it gave ₹70,000-crore debt waiver to farmers, it was termed good economics enacted with political finesse. But when the states give even genuine subsidies, these are branded as bad fiscal management. The need, therefore, is to apply filters so that subsidies are not distributed as doles but promote equity, productivity and competitiveness. Thus, it is more of a governance issue.

NEED TO RESTORE FEDERAL CHARACTER

To hinge arguments for non-performance of the state in social development and social security around fiscal deficit would lead to distortions in governance. The need is to review development priorities and shift the same in favour of capital formation, social development and peoples' well-being and also to restore federal character for ensuring autonomy of the states to allow prioritisation of development initiatives in sync with people's needs.

To find the right solutions, right diagnosis has to be done. There is a need to restructure the policy of federal transfers based on single-minded obsession towards sustainability or efficiency of financial allocations. The increasing debt servicing costs for the states raises some fundamental question about why the cost of public expenditure is so high. Along with this, Punjab needs a governance fix rather than a fiscal fix.

(The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)

THE NEED IS TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND SHIFT THE SAME IN FAVOUR OF CAPITAL FORMATION, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PEOPLES' WELL-BEING AND ALSO TO RESTORE FEDERAL CHARACTER FOR ENSURING AUTONOMY OF THE STATES TO ALLOW PRIORITISATION OF DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN SYNC WITH PEOPLE'S NEEDS

50 years of Punjabi Suba & still no closure

PRAMOD KUMAR

Punjabi society is yet to learn of the need to bring closure to various events. There has to be a paradigm shift in resolution of conflicts: As has been witnessed in the case of reorganisation of states on a linguistic basis, the demand for Khalistan and apportionment of river waters to denial of waters — conflicts were allowed to fester.

FIFTY years of Punjabi Suba Movement-led reorganisation of Punjab is a timely reminder to bring in a paradigm shift in the political, socio-economic and cultural patterns and resolution of conflicts. A perusal of various protest movements shows that they are coloured by fragmented diagnosis. Each event is considered in isolation. Solutions offered are inadequate, ambivalent and delayed. The process of resolution of crises in Punjab since Independence has been one of gradual de-democratisation. There has been whittling down of the basic rights of the people, abdication of fundamental obligation of the system and downgrading of legitimacy. From linguistic demarcation of states to state autonomy to demand, from sharing to apportionment to denial of waters; from the culturally rich Lahore to the modern city Chandigarh as a capital, to a tenantry in Chandigarh without ownership rights — constitutes the journey of 50 years.

Punjabi society is yet to learn to bring closure. Historical accidents which changed the political and socio-cultural demography of Punjab are the Partition, which led to the division of Punjab in 1947 and the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966. The Indian Punjab was severely affected as its cultural and economic capital Lahore remained with Pakistan. The process of rebuilding and resettlement of a large number of Punjabi migrants was all the more difficult with the inheritance of a hostile border. The hostility centred around territory, apportionment of river waters and identity. More than 3 million people were displaced and thousands killed. Rather than confronting issues relating to political and economic sovereignty and citizens' well-being, political leadership continued to give expression to the pre-Partition politics of identity.

The question of separate linguistic identity, intermeshed with religion, remained dominant even after Independence. Master Tara Singh, a prominent Akali leader on October 19, 1949, said that "Every



FOR A CAUSE: (left) Sant Fateh Singh and Master Tara Singh agitated for a Punjabi Suba

minority except the Sikhs had been given justice. The Muslims demanded Pakistan they got it." The Shiromani Akali Dal was in favour of formation of provinces on a linguistic and cultural basis, but at the popular level they tended to mix religion with language and made it a "life-and-death" situation for the Sikhs that a new Punjab be created.

In December 1953, the Government of India appointed the States Reorganisation Commission. In 1955, the Akalis launched a non-violent agitation for a Punjabi Suba. The States Reorganisation Commission maintained that Punjab was not sufficiently distinct from Hindi and the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state is a disguise for a religion-based Sikh state. This was seen as a discrimination against the Sikh minority as all other 14 languages in the Constitution were granted statehood. Sant Fateh Singh, an Akali leader, accused the then government of being biased against the Sikhs, "If non-Sikhs had owned Punjab as mother tongue, then the rulers of India would have seen no objection in establishing a Punjabi state". The growing popularity of Master Tara Singh created the fear that the movement for a separate independent Sikh state might become stronger. To counter the demand for a Punjabi Suba, an agitation for Hindi was launched parallelly, which advocated a "Maha Punjab," irrespective of language. Communal overtones in this were explicitly visible.

The increasing strength of the Akali Dal alarmed the Congress leadership. In 1956,

an understanding was reached between the ruling Congress Party and the Akali Dal, after that several Akalis joined the Congress. A regional plan was conceived and that was accepted by the Akalis in their meeting on September 30, 1956. The new state was to be divided into the so-called Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions. Two regional committees, consisting of the members of the legislature belonging to the respective regions, were to be constituted. However, this formula could not be implemented as S. Pratap Singh Kairon, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, came under the influence of Hindu communalists, and the Akalis walked out of this arrangement. The Akalis became firm on their view that political demography of Punjab was not favourable to capture political power in the state. They forcefully articulated their demand for a Punjabi Suba. After a struggle lasting for more than a decade, in 1966 the Sikhs were granted a state. Punjab was divided into Punjabi-speaking (and Sikh-dominated) Punjab and Hindi-speaking (and Hindu-majority) Haryana. In addition, six of Punjab's mountain regions were transferred to Himachal Pradesh. The Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966, was a unilateral decision of the Centre rather than a result of negotiations. The numerical dominance of the Sikhs as a single political entity was now unchallenged. The reorganisation did not resolve issues relating to the greater autonomy to the states, apportionment of river waters between Punjab and

Haryana, reallocation of Punjabi-speaking areas and the transfer of Chandigarh.

It was treated as a territorial division, with the issues relating to autonomy not addressed. Moderate politics was made redundant as it was seen as a threat to the ruling party's monopoly of legislative power. The extremists, who were a threat to the system, were patronised to make the moderate political leadership redundant. The state resorted to frequent crackdown on the people and on those who had the clout to mobilise the people. Consequently, the demand for greater autonomy to the state was raised in 1973 and acquired the form of a movement in 1978. The situation was allowed to drift. The initiative was seized by the extremists and the demand for an independent state became vociferous.

Punjab was pushed into its darkest phase. It witnessed violent upsurges, suffered Operation Bluestar conducted by the Army to flush out terrorists from the Golden Temple, killing innocent devotees. The assassination of the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was followed by the November 1984 carnage against the Sikhs. The Punjab Accord was signed in 1985 between the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal with a promise to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab by January, 1986, river waters issue was to be presented to a Supreme Court tribunal, and an inquiry held into the Delhi carnage. It was believed that the accord would put an end to violence. The transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab on January 26, 1986 was deferred by citing the reason that the Matthew Commission had failed to identify the villages to be transferred to Haryana. The reason was the narrow interest of the ruling party, the forthcoming elections in Haryana. It was announced that the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab would be on July 15, 1986. This award is yet to be implemented.

Both Punjab and Haryana, without a capital city, lost space that could act as a driver of growth. Punjab missed the IT revolution because it did not have the advantages of its own growth pole. Due to the absence of its own central business

capital, it has suffered a major setback in the neo-liberal globalised economy.

Similarly, the river water dispute between Punjab and Haryana has been guided by apportionment rather than harnessing of water resources. Further, the political leadership has abdicated its responsibility to the judiciary. People have become indifferent to political rhetoric and administrative ad-hocism.

The manner in which these issues have been addressed provided much-needed legitimacy and justification to the decade-long use of violence. In hindsight, it can be said that if the deadlier politics manifesting in Operation Bluestar and November, 1984 anti-Sikh carnage, had not been unleashed, terrorism might have petered out in 1985 itself. The so-called Khalistan movement could acquire mass support only due to the ill-conceived Operation Bluestar and November, 1984, anti-Sikh carnage. This was the turning point.

The lesson to learn is to apply closure by resolving the long-standing legitimate demands of the people. For instance, there is the visible trend of co-existence of Khalistan assertion with secular Punjabi identity. It has to be understood in the broader context of South Asia. Even in Pakistan, the identity formation, be it a Pakhtoon or Baluch, is contrary to the ideological basis on which Partition took place in 1947. These identities question religion as well as communal-based identity articulations. Therefore, the appreciation of this broader process of identity formation may provide a new thrust to linguistic, cultural or regional identities. Further, the river-water dispute to be resolved by emphasising harnessing of resources, the states to be provided with their own capital to act as a growth pole and evolve a creative framework for co-operative federalism. In totality, it would have meant harnessing of resources, to develop cooperative federalism and help the capital city to evolve not as a territory, but as a culturally vibrant and integrative space.

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Centres of learning can have no boundaries on thought

There is an increasing trend to reinforce the assumption that efforts to realise 'other utopias' are counterproductive. Any departure from status quo is considered rank deviation from the prescribed path of development.

PRAMOD KUMAR

ALBERT Camus once said, 'I would like to love my country and justice too'. History has witnessed that the better way to love one's country and have pride in its greatness is to appreciate and tolerate critical ideas and strive for justice. I remember once having been interviewed by a self-appointed custodian of Indian nationalism, a television anchor, on the hanging of Kasab. He reprimanded me for not supporting his idea that Kasab should be hanged expeditiously rather than getting bogged down in time-consuming legal processes. He asserted that not hanging him would make India look weak. In other words, the idea that countries emerge stronger by becoming justice-oriented was branded as anti-national.

Let me give another example. Attempting to examine critically the role of globalisation may land you on the wrong side of the powers that be and also be labelled anti-national. India was globalised with East India Company before 1947. And Indian people did not like it and launched a freedom struggle against it. And now globalisation has become a new fad with a new phraseology, 'Make in India'. The present ruling class is trotting the globe to invite multinationals to come and harvest huge rewards under the label. If some people were to make a critique of it and exhort fellow Indians to launch a second freedom struggle, there is high likelihood that the so-called followers of Gandhi and Patel would call it anti-national.

Another example. The market-driven mass culture glorifies the use of technology and provides a false sense of security. The efficient use of technology through media by the United States in the war between Iraq and Kuwait reinforced their destructive capacity to create phenomenal awe, leading to threat and submission by the lesser mortals. Mass media reduces people to mere consumers and feeds them with ideas without any critical inputs. For instance, any debate on hoisting of the National Flag in Central universities has been overruled, for which orders have been issued in a huff in the background of the agitation by students of Jawaharlal Nehru and Jadavpur universities. The timing of these orders by the ultranationalists facilitated invoking of the label of anti-national for persons fighting for justice, who are otherwise nationalists. Such propaganda has the capacity to mesmerise the multitude of masses. It has generated, like religion, the myth of being saviour of this great nation and, in the process, mystified the reality. There is need to demystify this kind of ultranationalist labelling of critical thinking. Otherwise, it will lead to chaos. Ultranationalism is being presented as the in thing. It has become a dominant trend and the range of learning is driven by ultranationalist information dissemination, thereby rendering universities and colleges redundant. This is surely a doomsday vision.

If people oppose globalisation, demand activation of justice systems and question the dissemination of 'pre-digested knowledge and easy-to-understand capsules', they are branded as undesirables, being against the particular notion of nationhood. There is a trend in politics and media to 'induce people to want simple answers to difficult problems... the tendency is to pitch all messages to the lowest level of mental capacity'. There are leaders who promise jobs to youth in a jiffy, if elected; electricity tariff reduced to half, if elected, and so on. But, if people protest and demand the promised bright future, they are branded as anti-development.

Societies have their own dynamism and are always in struggle to find answers to pertinent questions for making living more humane. There is an increasing trend to reinforce the assumption that efforts to realise 'other utopias' are counterproductive. And, any departure from the status quo is considered as rank deviation from a particular path of development labelled as 'globalisation' and the same is presented as the only source of growth and a particular type of nationalism alone is presented as sacrosanct.

The natural outcome of this is to purge the scope of academic adventurism and innovative experimentation from the places of learning. Universities are supposed to explore the impossible and settle issues through dialogue, relying excessively on evidence-based research.

I always wonder why these custodians of Indian value systems are very comfortable with self-appointed gurus and critical of the universities. Their discourses betray scientific enquiry and are even non-interactive, boring and alienating and producing, to use a Paulo Friere phrase, 'narrative sickness'. It is lamentable that the universities promoting dialogical tradition are being silenced.

Why has this become more pronounced? One of the reasons is the leadership vacuum — we have a political class which needs management gurus and media managers to connect with people and not leaders with whom the people connect. When small people occupy big positions and have a tendency to interfere in small autonomous spaces, it inevitably produces bigger crises and tragedies for the people. They have serious reservations about dialogical tradition being pursued in universities. If centres of learning have to become places of creativity, innovation and excellence, they have to transcend the boundaries demarcated by status-quoism for marching towards achieving more humane social existence. Of course, creativity must be grounded in content rather than hang only in the banners.

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As Part Of A New Series, TOI Gets In The Middle Of The Tug Of War Over Chandigarh

How long can states be without capitals?

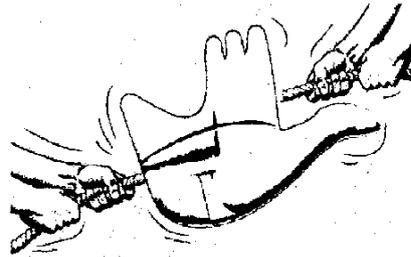
Pramod Kumar

In the mid-sixties, Chandigarh was given the status of a union territory (UT) after prolonged agitations and several fasts-unto-death leading to the death of Darshan Singh Pheruman in October 1969.



Chandigarh was awarded to Punjab in February 1970 with a promise to be transferred after five years. It did not happen. Punjab was pushed into its darkest phase. It witnessed killing of thousands of people, suffered Operation Bluestar conducted by the Army to flush out terrorists from Golden Temple, assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi followed by November 1984 carnage against Sikhs. As a consequence of these events, the Punjab accord was signed in 1985 between then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Har-

chand Singh Longowal with a promise to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab by January 1986. It was believed the accord would put an end to the violence. The transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab on January 26, 1986, was deferred by citing a spurious reason that Mathew Commission has failed to identify villages to be transferred to Haryana. However, main reason was narrow interest of ruling party — forthcoming elections in Haryana. It was announced the transfer will be done on July 15, 1986. This award is yet to be implemented. As a consequence, both Punjab and Haryana without a capital city lost space that can act as a driver of growth. For instance, Punjab's growth has suf-



ferred a major setback for having no control over its own capital. It could not build another one because of the dispute. It missed the IT revolution because it did not have advantages of its own growth pole. In other words, in absence of its own central business capital, it has suffered a setback in neo-liberal globalized economy

Interestingly, it is the elite living in Chandigarh and belonging to both Punjab and Haryana that are not keen to disturb the status quo. They have emerged

as a third party to the conflict with a new identity as Chandigarhians, rather Punjabis or

Haryanvis. This new identity and its disconnect with the larger identity has led to the destabilization of regional forces. Both Punjab and Haryana should bring closure to this conflict. Ideally, Haryana should agree to build its own capital with proper compensation from the centre. And Chandigarh should be transferred to Punjab. However, it would be politically prudent on part of parties to the conflict to agree to build their own capital rather than having a capital without their own control and give much required development push.

(Prof Pramod Kumar is director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh)

CHANDIGARH CHROMOSOME



Should Chandigarh be the capital of Punjab or remain a UT?

Express yourself at:

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column

Dr PRAMOD KUMAR



The French President's visit had every other flavour except that of people of Chandigarh, as they were kept on the margins

Urban island impeding pursuit of excellence

The historic visit of the President of France, Francois Hollande, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened a number of avenues for Chandigarh as a city. Why is this visit being viewed as distinct from the earlier visits of foreign dignitaries? Firstly, it has brought the uniqueness of Chandigarh's architecture into focus and also provided linkages with the new trend of building smart cities. Secondly, it has placed Chandigarh as a possible venue for holding international summits. However, both these aspects have not been adequately articulated in the public domain.

The event had every other flavour except that of the people of Chandigarh. It was choreographed in a manner that it left no window open for visiting dignitaries to peep into the vast reservoir of people's experience of living in the city of Le Corbusier. Moreover, it was meticulously organised to keep people of Chandigarh on the margins.

Chandigarh was envisioned as a city with an enviable infrastructure comprising a good road network, international airport and fast railway network. It has the potential to emerge as a destination for global summits and conferences, film and theatre festivals, etc.

On the contrary, the French President's visit demonstrated that the city lacks public infrastructural facilities and hosted the event in an ill-equipped private hotel. The event lacked imagination and engagement of citizens and knowledge centres. The city needs to nurture a culture of organising knowledge and innovation summits for its own people as well.

Why was there such a lapse? Is it because the bureaucratic setup lacks will and imagination? Perhaps not. It is more than that.

Urban planning is not simply an abstract exercise. It does impact human

URBAN PLANNING IS NOT SIMPLY AN ABSTRACT EXERCISE AS IT IMPACTS HUMAN EXISTENCE, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS OF A CITY'S INHABITANTS

existence, mingles with social and cultural interactions, delves into cultural discourse and ultimately affects the thought process of a city's inhabitants. For example, Chandigarh has a wide network of educational infrastructure, but not a single college of excellence. It has exceptionally rich health infrastructure, but not a single institution with health specialty. The city has huge shopping complexes but has failed to emerge as a centre for major commercial activity. Its large sports complexes do not offer the desired specialisation in many fields. Despite the fact that a large number of newspapers are printed in the City Beautiful (as it is known popularly), there is an obvious deficit of excellence in communication, media, education and research. Amidst such abysmal state-of-affairs, a pertinent question that comes to mind is who amongst these contestants has the capacity and vision to transform Chandigarh from an educational centre to knowledge hub to centre for international summits?

Are cities social and historical constructs or merely architectural entities? Chandigarh represents a political dilemma of urban planners to create something that is modern but non-western. It is a post-colonial and deconstructive dilemma. How to claim Chandigarh as a mark of Indian history when all its elements reflect western aesthetic norms (number 13 was inauspicious and was given a miss

in the sectoral plan). Therefore, cities without history can ensure comfort, but do not contribute to the enrichment of competitive identity to claim and achieve excellence.

Why do common citizens remain on the margins? After more than five decades of the establishment of Chandigarh, the regulated land use and maintenance of exclusive preserves of the elite in the foothills of the Shivaliks (with density of 6 persons per acre), demarcated and differentiated from the southern sectors (112 persons per acre) of the service class, with a periphery infested by margins, have become a symbol of inequality and injustice. The utopia of urban excellence has not only failed to cultivate cohesive and well-meaning social environs but has given rise to a sharply demarcated mainstream and periphery with a wide range of variable access to urban resources and infrastructure.

Galbraith's description of cities as places of "private affluence and public squalor", accentuated by the automobile revolution, holds good even for Chandigarh. There is no organic stimulus to preserve and enhance the city, as highly bureaucratized and centralised state apparatus drives it. Moreover, the inhabitants and the bureaucratic setup have neither a sense of belonging to the city nor ownership of sacred planning.

There is a need to rethink on governance model and to make conscious efforts to cope with both 'innovation and decay'. In the Capitol Complex, a People's Knowledge Centre with a museum may be established to preserve culture and a Vigyan Bhavan (as in Delhi) may be set up for holding international and national events for encouraging dialogical tradition of lokayata.

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PRAMOD KUMAR

BACK TO THE STATE

A lesson from Punjab: High-command politics is past its sell-by date

PUNJAB'S ELECTORAL POLITICS has undergone a qualitative shift. The election signalled the move away from a two-party rotational system to multi-party contests, leading to the crowding of the electoral space. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) talked about change without providing any content for it. The contest was reduced to a battle of false claims and promises and presented to the people in the heady cocktail of three Ds — *deras*, doles and drugs — garnished with choicest abuse. Change the present incumbents and bring us in to do the same — voters have rejected this definition of change and reposed their faith in the tried and tested Amarinder Singh. The Congress has won the Punjab assembly elections with a thumping majority and 38 per cent vote share, followed by the Akali-BJP combine with 30 per cent and the AAP with 23 per cent.

If political leaders are to be believed, elections are a matter of doling out *atta-dal*, utensils, smart phones, government jobs, debt relief and so on. Each party tried to outdo the other on this front and no attempt has been made to find ways to raise the purchasing capacity of the poor or understand how the pauperisation of farmers has become endemic or why the demand for drugs and alcohol multiplied amongst the youth. *Deras*, which have been a symbol of religious tolerance and diversity, have been used by vested interests to issue diktats to their followers to vote according to their faith rather than their conscience.

There are lessons of national significance

Punjab is one of the few platforms for the Congress to remain in circulation until the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. On the other hand, the defeat of AAP has dashed Arvind Kejriwal's ambition to emerge as an alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And for the Akalis, it is an early warning: They must amend their politics to emerge as a pan-Punjab party. The lesson to be learnt is that the high-command remote controls do not deliver. The Congress's timely correction — giving autonomy to the regional leadership — led to their spectacular victory.

from the Punjab polls. Punjab is one of the few platforms for the Congress to remain in circulation until the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. On the other hand, the defeat of the AAP has dashed Arvind Kejriwal's ambition to emerge as an alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And for the Akalis, it is an early warning: They must amend their politics ideologically and organisationally to emerge as a pan-Punjab party. Further, the lesson to be learnt by political parties is that the high-command remote controls do not deliver. The Congress's timely correction — giving autonomy to the regional leadership — led to their spectacular victory. The AAP high command took all the decisions and did not give autonomy to the local leadership. The main dictum from this election: Go back to the regions.

Another lesson is that electoral mobilisations based on catch-all categories make parties oblivious to religion, caste and class faultlines. For example, the AAP raised issues such as corruption and drug abuse and defined citizens as farmers, youth, traders etc., to co-opt them into the electoral discourse. They issued separate menu cards, or manifestos, rather than a manifesto. This undoubtedly gave them an advantage to cash in on the Akali-BJP anti-incumbency, but blurred existing faultlines.

Punjab politics can be located across three axes. The first is the stunted identity assertion ranging across religious, communal and secular Punjabi identities. The second is a unique feature of both a majoritarian arro-

gance and minority persecution complex in both the major communities — Hindus and Sikhs. The Sikhs are a majority in Punjab and minority in India and the Hindus are a minority in Punjab and majority in India. The third axis is the intermeshed religio-caste categories as caste is not a category in itself for electoral mobilisations in Punjab.

The faultline between the institutionalised fundamental Sikh religion and the *dera* has been a dominant feature of Punjab politics. The radical Sikh elements within the AAP alleged that the Akalis were responsible for patronising these *deras* for electoral gains. This culminated in the formation of the Sarbat Khalsa by the protagonists of a separate Sikh state and the alleged support by the AAP to this group led to the alienation of *dera* followers and urban, liberal Hindus and Sikhs. The move gave the AAP an advantage among the traditional Akali support base, but it alienated them from other sections of society.

Punjab needs a paradigm shift. All parties have rained sops rather than initiating a debate on policies to diversify the Punjab economy to generate employment and augment the income of the farmers, building a political consensus against drug abuse, suggesting policies for productive engagement of the youth and the empowerment of women.

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क्या आने वाली नई सरकार रोक पाएगी पंजाब में नशा नशे से ज्यादा गंभीर हुई इस पर हो रही सियासत

पंजाब विधानसभा चुनावों के दौरान हरेक राजनीतिक दल ने पंजाब में नशा का मुद्दा उठाया और 4 सप्ताह में प्रदेश में नशा खत्म करने का दावा किया। यह मुद्दा 2014 के लोकसभा चुनावों में उठा था और इन चुनावों में नशा के मुद्दे पर ही प्रदेश में पहली बार लोकसभा चुनाव लड़ी आम आदमी पार्टी 4 सीटों पर जीतकर अपने 4 सांसद लोकसभा में भेजने में सफल हो पाई थी। इन चुनावों के बाद प्रदेश में सत्तासीन शिअद-भाजपा गठबंधन ने कुछ समय के लिए काफी सरखी दिखाई। नशा करने वाले और नशा बेचने वाले युवकों की धरपकड़ हुई। कई युवकों को नशा छुड़ाओ केंद्रों में इलाज भी करवाया गया लेकिन 2017 के विधानसभा चुनावों में नशा का मुद्दा फिर छाया रहा। पंजाब केसरी की तरफ से अपने जागरूक पाठकों के लिए नशा पर अब तक हुई स्टडी रिपोर्ट्स का अध्ययन कर इस विषय के माहिरों से बात की गई कि आखिर राज्य में नशा क्यों नहीं रुका और इसका सॉल्यूशन क्या है? माहिरों और बुद्धिजीवियों के अनुसार कोई भी सरकार तभी सफल हो पाएगी यदि उसके अंदर नशा को खत्म करने की इच्छा शक्ति होगी। इसके बाद इस पर प्लानिंग और एक्शन होना जरूरी है।

पहले चुनावों में नशा बांटा अब सियासी दल दे रहे दुहाई

इस्टीमेट फार डिबैलमेट एंड कम्प्युनिकेशन (आईडीसी) चंडीगढ़ की अध्ययन रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक 3 दशकों से नशा का प्रचलन बढ़ा है वहीं माहिरों के अनुसार करीब 3 दशक से राजनीतिक दल मतदाताओं को लुभाने के लिए किसी न किसी माध्यम से नशा पहुंचाते रहे हैं। अब जबकि नशा की जड़ गहरी हो गई है। तो यही राजनीतिक दल नशा के नाम पर राजनीति करने लगे हैं। सरकार की इच्छा शक्ति के बिना इस पर रोक लगा पाना मुश्किल ही नहीं असम्भव भी है। सरकार के तीनों अंग टीक से काम करें तो ही नशा के इस कोढ़ का खात्मा संभव है। सबसे पहले बात लैजिस्लेटिव पर आती है। माहिरों के अनुसार ब्यूरोक्रेसी वही काम करती है जो लैजिस्लेटिव करेगी। जितनी देर तक लैजिस्लेटिव करेगी नहीं ब्यूरोक्रेसी करेगी नहीं। चुनावों के दौरान पंजाब में बड़े स्तर पर नशा की धरपकड़ हुई लेकिन मतदान के बाद से ही यह धरपकड़ कम हो गई है। इसके पीछे लैजिस्लेटिव ने कहा नहीं और ब्यूरोक्रेसी ने किया नहीं।

1980 के बाद मजबूत हुई नशा की जड़ें

नशा की जड़ें बहुत गहरी हैं। 1978 में आई.जी. भगवान सिंह दानेवालिया ने अध्ययन कर पाया कि पंजाब में नशा की जड़ें फैल रही हैं, जो कि पंजाब को खोखला कर रही हैं। भविष्य में पंजाब को इस कोढ़ से बचाने के लिए उन्होंने तत्कालीन सरकार से सी.आई.ए. में डिटेक्टिव विंग बनाने की अनुमति ली। यह विंग मात्र 3 साल ही पूरी शिदत के साथ काम कर सका। सरकार बदलने के साथ ही 1980 में भगवान सिंह दानेवालिया ने अपने पद से इस्तीफा दे दिया। तब से डिटेक्टिव विंग का अस्तित्व तो है मगर एक्टिविटी जीरो है।

पंजाब में 1.23 लाख युवक हैरोइन ड्रिपेंडेंट

समय-समय पर हुई स्टडी के आधार पर पाया गया है कि पंजाब में 1.23 लाख युवक हैरोइन ड्रिपेंडेंट हैं। एवरेंज पंजाब में 20 करोड़ की रोजाना ड्रग्स की खस होती है।

कौन से नशा सबसे ज्यादा प्रचलन में अध्ययन रिपोर्टों के अनुसार 2 तरह के नशा किए जाते हैं। एक प्राकृतिक नशा और दूसरा मैडिकेटिड नशा। दोनों ही जानलेवा हैं और दोनों से ही घर उजड़ते हैं। प्राकृतिक नशा में शराब, अफीम, भुक्की, चरस आदि का प्रचलन है। इन नशों से शरीर को नुकसान तो होता है मगर धीरे-धीरे, जबकि हैरोइन, ब्राऊन शुगर, कोकोन और मैडिकेटिड नशा जीवन के लिए सबसे ज्यादा खतरनाक है, जो जीवन को जल्द खत्म करता है। हैरोइन, ब्राऊन शुगर, कोकोन और मैडिकेटिड नशा सीधे दिल और दिमाग पर असर करता है।

33 प्रतिशत नशेड़ी लगाते हैं नशीले टीके

अध्ययन में पाया गया है कि 33 प्रतिशत नशेड़ी नशीले टीके लगाते हैं। हालांकि सेहत विभाग दावे करता है कि कैमिस्ट शॉप्स से नशीले टीके नहीं मिलते लेकिन तस्करी के माध्यम से इन युवकों के पास टीके पहुंच जाते हैं। नशा लेने वाले युवक बताते हैं कि 10 रुपए में कैप्सूल और 40 रुपए में नशा का टीका आम मिल जाता है। यह नशा ऑन डिमांड है।

53 फीसदी हैरोइन के आदी

अफगानिस्तान में पैदा होकर पंजाब के मार्ग से होते हुए अमरीका, यूरोप और कनाडा जाने वाली हैरोइन ने पंजाब को भी अपनी चपेट में ले लिया है। डि-एडिक्ट सेंटर्स से प्राप्त आंकड़ों के अनुसार युवक सिथेटिक ड्रग्स की बजाय हैरोइन का इस्तेमाल ज्यादा कर रहे हैं। कुछ समय के लिए पंजाब में आइस ने भी पांव पसारने शुरू किए थे लेकिन अब यह दिल्ली, मुम्बई जैसे बड़े शहरों में चली गई है। थोड़ी-बहुत पंजाब में अभी भी बिकती है।

साल भर में 14,000 करोड़ का नशा लेते युवक



डि-एडिक्टन सेंटर तत्पत्तरन में मतदान के बाद बंदी मरीजों की संख्या

स्टडी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार हर साल 7,500 करोड़ रुपए की सिथेटिक ड्रग्स का युवा सेवन करते हैं जबकि वे 6,500 करोड़ की हैरोइन का सेवन कर जाते हैं। स्टडी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार एक नशेड़ी 1,400 रुपए तक रोजाना ड्रग्स पर खर्च करता है।

वायदा ऐसा जैसे सभी के पास हो 'जादू की छड़ी'

नशा को राजनीतिक दल एक-दूसरे पर मढ़ने का खेल खेल रहे हैं और इसके खतमे का वादा कर रहे हैं। जैसे कि उनके पास जादू की कोई छड़ी हो। राजनीति में ड्रग्स अन्य मुद्दों से अधिक गंभीर मुद्दा बन गई है। अगर शोधकर्ताओं की बात करें तो 70 प्रतिशत युवा नशा के आदी हैं। वहीं राजनीतिज्ञों का कहना है कि पंजाब के 70 प्रतिशत लोग ड्रग्स लेते हैं। डा. नीरजा और डा. वासुदेव गोयल (इस्टीमेट फॉर डिबैलमेट एंड कम्प्युनिकेशन) की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 2001 में पंजाब भर में 4,335 लोग ड्रग एडिक्टिड थे जिनमें से 79 प्रतिशत नशा करने वाले नवयुवक थे। वहीं डॉ. एस. वर्मा के अनुसार वर्ष 2010 में 1,527 और आर.एस. संघ के अनुसार वर्ष 2013 में 600 युवा ड्रग एडिक्टिड थे जिनमें से 73 प्रतिशत युवा थे। ड्रग्स का व्यापार अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर ही नहीं बल्कि यह देश, राज्य व स्थानीय स्तर पर भी एक गंभीर मुद्दा बन गया है। इतना ही नहीं, इसकी खपत व प्रसार के लिए पंजाब एक प्रमुख व पसंदीदा स्थल बन गया है। हैरोइन व अन्य नशीले पदार्थों की तस्करी के लिए

89 प्रतिशत पढ़े-लिखे लेते हैं ड्रग्स

स्टडी रिपोर्ट्स बताती हैं कि नशा लेने वालों में 99 प्रतिशत मर्द हैं जबकि 1 प्रतिशत महिलाएं भी पंजाब में नशा की आदी हैं। इनमें 89 प्रतिशत पढ़े-लिखे और 83 प्रतिशत नौकरीपेशा तक पहुंच चुकी हैं नशा की जड़ें।

चुनाव आचार संहिता के बाद अब एकाएक नशा के मरेजों की संख्या करीब 20 से 25 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ गई है क्योंकि चुनाव के समय नशेड़ियों की ओर से शराब का खुलकर इस्तेमाल किया गया है। चुनाव आचार संहिता दौरान 30 प्रतिशत तक नशा छुड़ाओ केंद्रों में ओ.पी.डी. कम रही क्योंकि नशेड़ियों में शराब के लालच में नशा छुड़ाओ केंद्र में जाना सही नहीं समझा। ओ.एस.टी. सेंट्रों में रोजाना 600 से अधिक मरीज दवाई सिर्फ तत्पत्तरन में लेने के लिए आते हैं। तड़कसार से ही कतारें लगनी आरंभ हो जाती हैं।

सबसे अधिक बरामदगी

शराब : 10,000 पेटी (1 लाख बोटलें)
पी.एम.एल. : 5,355 पेटी
आई.एम.एफ.एल. : 1,306 पेटी
रीयर : 3,480 पेटी
5 खिरितारियों पर लगी रोक

चुनावों के दौरान बरामदगी

सामग्री	विस चुनाव 2012	लोस चुनाव 2014	विस चुनाव 2017
शराब	32,977.932 लीटर	2,78,453 लीटर	10,353.456 लीटर
लाहन	2,28,083 किलो	2,21,256 किलो	2,06,808 किलो
भुक्की पोस्त	2707.6 किलो	17,606.924 किलो	2,342.310 किलो
अफीम	99.919 किलो	97.202 किलो	132.605 किलो
हैरोइन	23.548 किलो	155.754 किलो	11.927 किलो
स्पैक	3.793 किलो	2.544 किलो	339 ग्राम
ड्रग पाऊडर	18.312 किलो	43.506 किलो	7.759 किलो
कैप्सूल	88,296	1,31,537	2,311
नशीली गोलियां	9,94,075	2,21,416	6,88,962
सिरप	4,362 बोटलें	4,281 बोटलें	1,137 बोटलें
चरस	0	21.478 किलो	14.486 किलो
गांजा	0	51.35 किलो	122.965 किलो
भांग	0	0	1.00 किलो
इंजैक्शन	0	0	1,733
कोकोन	0	0	0
सुल्फा	0	0	8.071 किलो
हथियार	84	93	421

चरस, गांजा, भांग, इंजैक्शन और सुल्फे का बढ़ा रुझान

पिछले चुनाव की तुलना करें तो बेशक शराब जैसे नशों की पहले के मुकाबले कम बरामदगी हुई है, परंतु नए-नए धातक नशों का रुझान बढ़ा है। इनमें चरस, गांजा, भांग, नशा के इंजैक्शन व सुल्फा उल्लेखनीय हैं। वर्ष 2012 के विधानसभा चुनाव में इनकी कोई बरामदगी नहीं हुई थी। यही स्थिति वर्ष 2014 के चुनाव में थी परंतु 2017 के चुनाव दौरान नशों की बरामदगी के आंकड़ों के अनुसार 14.486 किलो चरस, 122.965 किलो गांजा, 1 किलो भांग, 1,733 नशीले इंजैक्शन, 8.071 किलो सुल्फा बरामद हुआ है।

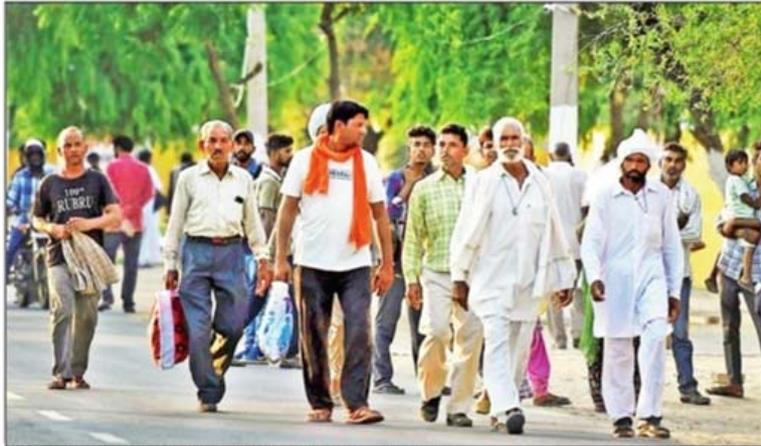
Messengers of God: Decoding how deras effect politics in Punjab

Pramod Kumar

Deras in north-western India are the poor cousins of institutionalized religion. These deras are the product of liberal cultural tradition and have been symbol of existence of plurality and diversification of religious spectrum. Historically, their evolution has been intermeshed with the evolution of Sikh religion. The prominent deras which evolved in response to the consolidation of Sikh religion were Nanakpanthis, Sewapanthis, Nirmalas, Udasis, etc. The contemporary deras, however, are not the offshoot of Sikhism. These are congregation of followers transcending religious, caste and class divisions and reverence for the living Guru.

These deras have represented the marginalized sections, but have also put into question the monolithic articulations of Sikhism leading to discrimination against the lower castes. It has led to the conflict with the institutionalized religion. There have been incidents of violence involving various dera followers with sections of Sikhs, such as, Dera Nirankari in 1978, Dera Bhaniarwala in 2001, Dera Sacha Sauda in 2008-09, Dera Nurmahal in 2002, and Dera Sachkhand Ballan in 2009-10.

The causes or the immediate provocation for this conflict are rooted in various practices and rituals of the deras, such as, the notion of living Guru which is strictly opposed in the institutionalized Sikhism, the imitation of the imagery of the Sikh Gurus by the dera heads and the replication of the style of the Sikh holy bo-



Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh's followers leave Sirsa on Sunday

ok by these sects.

There are six major deras in Punjab including Radha Soami, Namdhari, Dera Sacha Sauda, Nurmahal, Nirankari and Dera Sachkhand Ballan. They draw their discourses from multiple traditions like Islam, Sufism, Kabir, Christianity, and Sikhism and couch them in regional dialects, myths and symbols. Dera "babas" (self-appointed godmen) excessively rely on oral discourses. In this region, oral tradition is dominant and text reading is not very popular. Therefore, these "babas" become the sole mediators between the God and the devotees for imparting holistic knowledge and guidance.

These "Babas" liberate people from vices like drugs, drunkenness, wife-beating, fulfil their basic survival needs, ensure security and dignified existence. Having experienced indignities, indifference and neglect from the institutions of the state, these followers repose greater faith in the institution of the dera and babas.

As a consequence, even if these self-styled godmen are convicted by the Courts, they consider them innocent and victims of political conspiracy.

The storm and fury of the followers of the Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda can be understood in this background. These Deras use the political space so acquired to get state patronage and, coupled with the blind faith of their followers, even subvert the rule of law. Blind faith perpetuates ignorance and garnish it with moral arrogance thereby making it convenient to overlook the misdeeds of these powerful "babas."

Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim, head of Sirsa-based Sacha Sauda, was facing a case of rape of two sadhvis. He is still facing charges of murder of dera follower Ranjit Singh and journalist Ram Chander Chattarpati, and castration of the followers. The storm and fury of these followers is being demonstrated to pressurize even the judicial pronouncements. The institutions of the state

were also pushed into the compromised position.

The Dera Sacha Sauda sect was founded by Shah Mastana of Baluchistan in 1948. Gurmeet Ram Rahim took charge at the age of 23 in the year 1990. This young Dera Sacha Sauda chief in a way reinvented deras in this region. He evolved from a simple preacher to Rock Star Baba, shrewd power broker, techno-savvy media manager, and appropriator of commodity market. He traded, with the blind support of more than one million followers, in retail commodity market, power politics and entertainment industry.

He used cinema to build larger than life image of himself and reinforced reactionary views. He also started online business with more than 150 products to enrich dera coffers.

From cultural adaptation to formation of exclusive socio-religious sites, politics continue to provide bargaining space to these deras. For instance, deras including Sacha Sauda could not carve out an exclusi-

ve space for its lower caste followers to emerge as dominant factor in the electoral politics. These deras together have influence in around 56 constituencies. The Radha Soami in 19, Dera Sacha Sauda in 27, Dera Nurmahal in 8, Dera Nirankari in 4, Dera Ballan in 8 and Dera Namdhari in 2 constituencies.

Not all the Deras actively engage in politics. However, Sacha Sauda came into prominence in 2007 elections when it openly supported the Congress. As a consequence, the Akalis suffered a loss in around 21 assembly constituencies. In subsequent elections in 2012, they supported Akali Dal. All the political parties try to out-compete each other to woo deras. To invoke their authority is to violate the secular principles of the Constitution. But, political parties are actively engaged in appropriating religious symbols with impunity and deras are issuing the diktat to induce people to vote according to their faith rather than their conscience.

Why political parties patronize deras and followers submit to their diktats? Deras use their appeal to make the conditions of exploitation bearable by preaching morality of austerity, thrift and healthy life for the poor and sap their will to transform the system. The government instead of changing conditions responsible for people's misery finds it convenient to blur them and use these deras to garner support in elections. How long the state shall continue to fiddle with the rule of law to flatter the babas and their followers?

Author is director of Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh

Shackled universities can't pursue excellence

GUEST COLUMN



PROF PRAMOD KUMAR

The crisis in higher education and our public universities has reached a new high. There are noises that research in these institutes lacks creativity and innovation, and hence they should be mandated to provide education that is linked with the industry and commercial economy.

This crisis is attributed to the neo-liberal path of development, and therefore it's imperative to go in for structural transformation. This in essence is no choice. On the other hand, we look for practical solutions, such as fee hike or vocationalisation of the varsities to meet the deficits and pay salaries to the teachers. This, of course, is a trap leading to virtually no choice.

To put it in the words of our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru: 'Over-theorisation is alienating and excessive reliance on practical knowledge produces tragedies.' As such, the need is to apply correctives to these rather extreme remedies. These correctives must be competent enough to moderate the opposing claims of market efficiency with those of social equity and justice.

The universities are set up through legislations. So, it is fairly clear that educational innovation and excellent standards are inextricably linked to equity of access and democratisation of the university structure. However, there have been thoughtless attempts to erode the autonomy of universities, and the grants to these institutes have been tied to a number of conditionalities.

TIED GRANTS THE BANE

The universities have to raise a specific percentage of funds from their own sources to become eligible for sanctioned grants. They have to either raise the fee or start vocational courses or

implement teaching and non-teaching staff ratios as prescribed by the University Grants Commission.

To tie the grants with such conditions defeats the very purpose for which universities have been created, i.e. to achieve excellence and nurture creativity and innovation. The constitution-framers desired that higher education must play a pivotal role in social transformation. Rather than making students pay to sustain the university, it should pay and provide for the financially weaker students. This principle should continue to be the guiding policy on fees, scholarships and cost of living on the campuses. The need, therefore, is to enlarge the scope of merit-cum-means scholarships. The enlarged pool of students will lay the foundation of innovation and creativity.

To raise financial resources, universities should not be coerced into running skill-based courses rather than promoting research. The job that can be performed by IITs, ITIs or polytechnics must not be assigned to the universities. The worst-hit have been the departments of social sciences and humanities. Already, the students in social sciences opting for PhD have reduced to merely 2.3% as compared to 22% in agriculture and 11.7% in engineering.

The grants have also been tied with the teaching and non-teaching staff ratios. The Panjab University (PU) vice-chancellor has rightly pointed out that it would be difficult to bring down the ratio, as it has to cater to the requirements of the colleges in terms of affiliation, conduct of examination and other related issues.

AUTONOMY AT STAKE

All these foisted conditionalities seem to have been evaluated by the single-minded obsession towards sustainability of the efficiency of financial allocations. These violate and erode the autonomy of the universities, vitiate the student-teacher relations and 'activate partisan pressures which stifle intellectual creativity'.

The need, therefore, is to move away from the tied

grants to autonomous grants.

ONE SIZE CAN'T FIT ALL

Each university has its own set of problems. Attempts to standardise their functioning in terms of financial allocations are likely to prove counterproductive.

The peculiar circumstances prevailing in this region have adversely affected the functioning of PU, which was set up in Lahore in 1882. Two important accidents of history, i.e. the Partition of India in 1947, and the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, are largely responsible for the present crisis.

Non-resolution of the conflict arising out of the reorganisation has adversely affected PU's sustainability. The Haryana government stopped funding the varsity and ordered affiliation of its colleges with its own universities. On the other hand, the Punjab government contributes merely 8% of the budget. And now the Centre has also made its grants conditional.

The debate on whether PU should be a central university or funded by the Centre or by both the Centre and state has to be located in the unresolved issues between the Centre and the states of Punjab and Haryana. For a long-term solution, it would be desirable that the PU chancellor, vice-president Hamid Ansari, takes the lead and brings all stakeholders on board. It is fairly well known that fragmented diagnosis produces tunnel vision, which is further constrained by what Churchill had said: 'We will do the right things having exhausted all other possibilities.'

In this context, enough damage has already been done by various misadventures, including politically partisan interventions, fee hike and legal remedies. Before it becomes irreparable, right kind of solutions may be initiated.

The tendency towards centralisation and standardisation must be abandoned. The university has efficient teachers, board of studies, academic council and senate and other associated distinguished educationists, and therefore, is fully equipped to tell what is needed rather than face 'some dead bureaucratic attempt to tame the university autonomy'.

Letter to: schd@hindustantimes.com
(The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication, and member of the Panjab University Senate)

TO RAISE FINANCIAL RESOURCES, UNIVERSITIES SHOULD NOT BE COERCED INTO RUNNING SKILL-BASED COURSES RATHER THAN PROMOTING RESEARCH. THE JOB THAT CAN BE PERFORMED BY IITs, ITIs OR POLYTECHNICS MUST NOT BE ASSIGNED TO THE UNIVERSITIES

AGENDA FOR PUNJAB-4

Shift focus from input to outcome



GOVERNANCE

A qualitative change in the approach to governance is required to ensure public funding is not merely turned into dole; rather it should promote equity, productivity and competitiveness.



10 steps to get all board

- ✓ Enhance productivity of wheat and paddy, and release land for commercial crops.
- ✓ Double the income of small farmers through technology upgrade, improvement in soil health, quality seeds and integrated water use.
- ✓ Restoration of biodiversity through crop varieties, expand forest cover and gene banks.
- ✓ Policies for small-scale traditional industries like agro, food, textile, dairy products, knitted/crocheted fabrics and hosiery.
- ✓ Agriculture subsidies (or any subsidy) should not be given as doles, instead these should enable the citizen to become self-reliant
- ✓ Strengthen public-sector education and health system.
- ✓ Improve quality primary education in public sector.
- ✓ Structure public-sector health institutions into three categories: Primary health care centres, first referral units at the block level, and hospitals or multi-specialty hospitals.
- ✓ In at least 15 hospitals in different parts of Punjab, emergency services should be on a par with the PGI, Chandigarh.
- ✓ Act to regulate private hospitals and to bring down catastrophic health expenses.

PRAMOD KUMAR

PUNJAB'S economy is on the brink. Its leadership is caught in a bind. The state is on a suicidal path. All observations are being made without question marks and substantiated with selective facts. Undoubtedly, Punjab is in debt, its agricultural growth rate is stagnant, and its per capita income has been declining. It has been unable to diversify agriculture, with farmers' suicides as a visible indicator of distress farming. Even the social development index is dismal with low quality human development marked with widespread female foeticide, drug abuse and alcoholism. These selective facts do not help to make an assessment of current well-being and sustainability aspects of growth trajectory and leads to wrong policy decisions.

Governance is the rule of the game. The problem within governance is that the rules are archaic. Metaphorically speaking, the game of basketball is being played with 'kabaddi' rules. Consequently, rules have been overtly violated and the system has been rendered non-functional. However, we are consistent with our prescriptions even at the expense of being redundant.

EQUITY OVER GROWTH

In Punjab, the Green Revolution was marketed as a powerful engine of growth and two decades later the champions of the revolution discovered that it has led to environmental disaster; their prescription was crop diversification. Thereafter, they remained consistent with prescription of diversification of crops. Much has happened – the country has moved away from command economy to market economy, from food as a dole to right to food, local to global – but these policy planners

remained virtuously consistent. As of now, Punjab could not diversify to cash crops and become globally competitive by specialising in food grains.

The need was rather to diversify the economy by a large inter-sectoral shift to high productivity flexible agriculture, to move away from anti-grain policies and promote a decentralised modern small-scale industrial complex.

BOOST SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRY

Punjab has a historical advantage in terms of small-scale industries in places such as Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Mandi Gobindgarh and Batala. It is unfortunate that public policy has not paid much attention to these traditional industries in terms of technology transfer, skill upgrade, marketing and maintenance of environmental standards. If "Lijjat Papad" can have a high turnover, why "Amritsari Papad" (a known brand) has not been able to capture the market? Punjab should concentrate on industries where it has comparative advantage, i.e., agro foods, textile, automobile, leather and hand tools.

FISCAL HEALTH HANG-UP

Similarly, the role of the government is tied down to the fiscal health of the state. To formulate policies by using fiscal deficit as a main guiding principle distorts the vision and leads to a drift from peoples' welfare needs. Interestingly, as part of the fetish to cut fiscal deficit in 2004-05, the government came out with a scheme to contract untrained teachers from the same village to reduce government expenditure on schoolteachers' salary. As a consequence, quality of teaching deteriorated further. While the education system was required to impart quality education, the policy planners focused on fiscal health.

Another example of fiscal mismanage-

ment is power subsidy to farmers. It is argued that this is not productive for the fiscal health of the state. Undoubtedly, there is a need to rationalise these subsidies in the background of the environmental challenges from the rice-wheat crop cycles. Needless to mention, the agriculture sector needs support, but is power subsidy the best way to support it. That is a question that needs to be answered transparently. Subsidies are given as doles instead of promoting equity, productivity and competitiveness. It is more of a governance issue.

FROM ECONOMIC GAIN TO SOCIAL

There is gap between economic gains and social outcomes. Punjab could not transform its vast enterprising human resource into an asset, with decline in education expenditure from 23 per cent in the early Eighties to 16 per cent (2012-13).

EDUCATION QUALITY

On access to primary education, Punjab was ranked 18th, and on teachers at 15th position among states. Its performance on educational outcomes was ranked 19th out of 35 states and Union Territories.

Yet, the cost of education is higher as compared to other states. In government schools in rural areas, it is Rs 2,413 and in urban it is Rs 6,559, while the all-India average is Rs 1,037 in rural and Rs 3,473 in urban areas. Private education is exorbitantly priced too. In private-aided schools, the average total per head expenses in rural areas is Rs 18,135 and in urban Rs 15,717. Whereas, the all-India average in rural areas is Rs 4,001 and in urban Rs 7,504.

Consequently, the quality of education has deteriorated and most of the educated youth, particularly rural, have remained unemployable in Punjab. They do not prefer to revert to farming and, consequently,

drift towards drug addiction or attempt immigration abroad, even if illegally.

NOTHING WITHOUT HEALTH

In the health sector, Punjab ranked 12th in terms of per capita government expenditure (Rs 259) during 2012, but the per capita expenditure on public health, i.e., water and sanitation, is low. Health outcomes in terms of disease prevalence is high as compared to the national average. This requires a strategy to re-orient public health priorities with a focus on sanitation, cleanliness and better waste and garbage management strategies.

The government caters to only 18 per cent of household expenditure on health. For the poor, the unregulated private sector is financially debilitating, unreliable in cost, and the service is provided for profit rather than care as the guiding factor. There are a range of service providers from quacks to private hospitals, but there are no norms to measure good quality medical services and minimum standards and requirements of hospitals, nursing homes and multi-specialty health care units. There is a need to bring in a "health care regulatory Act" to make registration of private medical establishments compulsory; to make public charges payable for different medical treatments and services; to list with a committee the names of the government doctors and paramedical staff working in private establishments; and to maintain and open for inspection clinical records relating to treatment and procedures for patients.

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

There is a need to evolve innovative modes to make the Scheduled Castes part of the socio-economic and political mainstream. The traditional skills of plumbing, carpentry, masonry, etc., need to be upgraded with modern technical

education. A large population engaged in these occupations can be integrated into formal technical diploma and degree courses to upgrade their skills and social status enhancement.

ENGAGING CITIZEN

With new policy perspective, a number of process and procedural changes have to be incorporated in governance reforms. Performance audit has to be loaded in favour of citizen-centric engaged governance. The postings and transfers have become a kind of industry to share spoils and to wield extra-constitutional powers. There is an urgent need to have a 'placement policy' instead of a 'transfer policy'. Not only this, the government employees have to bribe their own colleagues to get medical reimbursement, pensionary benefits, ex-India leave, etc. There is a need to change procedures and rules to liberate employees from their own shackles.

From a citizen's perspective, there is a need for major reforms to make the police SHO, patwari, tehsildar, or the district transport officer accountable. Because of their collusion with politicians, they have risen above the law. It is high time that ad-hoc prescriptions like farmer debt redemption, compensation for committing suicides; free drug de-addiction treatment, etc, should be replaced by making farming profitable, and productive engagement of youth to wean them away from drug addiction, etc. Political parties should stop playing politics with issues like farmer suicides, drug addiction, unemployment, poor health and education facilities and build political consensus to eradicate these evils.

The writer is Director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

ਅੱਲੇ ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਾਬ ਤੇ ਦਿਖਾਵੇ ਦੀ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ, ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਦਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੀ ਰਾਹ - ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ

ਡਾ. ਪ੍ਰਮੋਦ ਕੁਮਾਰ

ਸਿਆਸੀ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਕਾਰ

8 ਜੂਨ 2018



RAVINDER SINGH ROBIN/BBC

ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲਾਂ ਝੱਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਹੰਢਾਇਆ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦਾ ਘਟਨਾਮਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਵੀ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਦਰਦਨਾਕ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਹਿੰਸਾ, ਦੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਕੁੱਝਤਣ ਛੱਡ ਗਿਆ। ਹੁਣ ਸਮਾਂ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਸ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੇ ਸਹਾਰੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕ ਕਦਮ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਜਾਣ।

ਤਿੰਨ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਬੀਤਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਭੇਦਭਾਵ, ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਬੇਲਬਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧਤਾ ਦੁਹਰਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

- ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਦੀ ਬਰਸੀ ਮੌਕੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਖ਼ੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ
- ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਂਕ ਭੇਜਣ ਦਾ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਕਿਸ ਦਾ ਸੀ?
- 'ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਕੰਨਾਂ 'ਚ ਗੂੰਜਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਵਾਜ਼ਾਂ'

ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਿਰਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਬਦਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਨਗਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਥਾਨ ਹਜ਼ਰਤਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਏ ਕੱਟੜਪੰਥੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟਣ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਬਰੀ ਮਸਜਿਦ ਢਾਹੇ ਜਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਆਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ, ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਦਾ ਕਤਲ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਜਾਮ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਖ਼ਤਰਨਾਕ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਨਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ 1985 ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਅੱਤਵਾਦ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਅਸਰ

ਸਿਆਸਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਵਲ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਿੰਨ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੰਥਨ ਹੀ ਚੱਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਦਰਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ, ਉਸਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਅੱਜ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।



RAVINDER SINGH ROBIN/BBC

ਇਹ ਦਰਦ ਧਰਮ, ਖੇਤਰ, ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਲੰਘ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜੀਵ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੱਦ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਜਰਨੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਿੰਡਰਾਂਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੈਰਵਿਵਾਦਤ ਆਗੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣ ਸਕੇ, ਤਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵੀ ਸਾਲ 1984 ਦੇ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੇਰਹਿਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰਿਕ ਤਾਣੇਬਾਣੇ ਦੇ ਹਾਸ਼ੀਏ 'ਤੇ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ।

ਹੁਣ ਅੱਗੇ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇ?

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਦੀ ਨੌਬਤ ਆਈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਤੈਅ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕਤਰਾਉਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਲਟ ਉਹ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਤੈਅ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਮਾਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਣ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ।

ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੀਡਰ ਆਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਾਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਤੈਅ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਲਟਕਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਰੂਪ 'ਚ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ।



SATPAL DANISH/BBC

ਹੁਣ ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਦੀ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਣ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਦੁਖ ਹੰਢਾਇਆ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੇਲਣਾ ਬੇਅਰਥ ਹੈ।

ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ 1984 ਵਿੱਚ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਰਗ ਕਾਰਨ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਦੀ ਨੌਬਤ ਆਈ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਹੋਇਆ, ਉਹ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਮਾਫ਼ੀ ਮੰਗਣ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੱਗੇ ਰਹੇ।

ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਰਹੇ ਕਈ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਤਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਅੱਤਵਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਪੀੜਤ ਰਹੇ, ਜਦਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੱਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਣੇ ਰਹੇ।

ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਦਾ ਮਾੜਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਰਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਭੜਕੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਦਾ ਕਤਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਐਨਾ ਖੂਨ ਖ਼ਰਾਬਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਲੋਕ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕਤੇਲਾਅ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਗੁਆ ਬੈਠੇ।

ਜਾਂਚ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ

ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਆਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਤੱਕ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਨਾਕਾਮ ਰਹੀਆਂ।

ਜਾਂਚ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਨਿਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਿਆ। ਇਹ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਵੇਦ ਮਰਵਾਹ ਜਾਂਚ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ 1985 ਵਿੱਚ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸੇ ਸਾਲ ਢਿੱਲੋਂ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਗਈ।



EPA

ਫਰਵਰੀ 1987 ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹੂਜਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਫਰਵਰੀ 1987 ਵਿੱਚ ਜੈਨ-ਬੈਨਰਜੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਦਸੰਬਰ 1990 ਵਿੱਚ ਜੈਨ ਅਗਰਵਾਲ ਕਮੇਟੀ, 1993 ਵਿੱਚ ਨਰੂਲਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਮਈ 1985 ਵਿੱਚ ਰੰਗਾ ਨਾਥ ਮਿਸ਼ਰਾ ਆਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਮਈ 2000 ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਨਾਵਤੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਜਾਂਚ ਆਯੋਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਦਫ਼ਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਚੋਣਾਂ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ

ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਕਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਸਰਕਾਰ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਗੈਰ-ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਸੰਗਠਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੀੜਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਦਦ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਵਾਈ।

ਇੱਕ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਖਾੜਕੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਿਸ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ 11 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 2001 ਨੂੰ ਕੋਐਫਸੀ ਦੇ ਵੱਸਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਫ਼ਰਵਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਵਿੱਟਜ਼ਰਲੈਂਡ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੋ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਜ਼ਮਾਨਤ 'ਤੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕੱਢੀ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਜਗਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਹਾਨ 2001 ਵਿੱਚ 25 ਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨਿਕਾਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪਰਤੇ।

ਇੱਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਵੱਖਵਾਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋਈ ਪਰ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਬੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਕੱਟੜਪੰਥੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਲੰਬੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ।



GETTY IMAGES

ਕੱਟੜਪੰਥੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਦਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨੇ ਸਾਲ 1985 ਅਤੇ 2002 ਵਿੱਚ ਅਪੀਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਰਕ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਵਾਰ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ 2014 'ਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ 19 ਸਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਭਿੰਡਰਾਂਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਨਾ ਭੜਕਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹੋਇਆ। ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਯਾਨਿ ਪਾਰਦਰਸ਼ਤਾ, ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਵੱਲ ਪੂਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਮਾਰਕ

ਨਿਪਟਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਬਦਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਇਹ ਸਾਬਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ 'ਮੈਂ ਜੇ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਉਹ ਸਹੀ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਲਾਗੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ।

ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਕਿ ਨੌਨ ਸਟੇਟ ਐਕਟਸ (ਖਾੜਕੂਆਂ) ਦੀਆਂ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਵਾਰਦਾਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਫ਼ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਮਸ਼ੀਨਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਲਟਕਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਸਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਮਾਮਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਪਟਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਨਿਪਟਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਕਿ ਕੀ-ਕੀ ਜੁਲਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ, ਅਤੇ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਡਾਕੂਮੈਂਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਸੈਂਟਰ, ਹੋਲੋਕੌਸਟ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਯਾਦ 'ਚ ਸਮਾਰਕ ਆਦਿ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।



THINKSTOCK

ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਸਮਝ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਦੇਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਇਹ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਮਾਰਕ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਸਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਹੁ-ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਬਹੁ-ਧਾਰਮਿਕਤਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦੀ ਝਲਕ ਪਵੇ।

ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਮਾਰਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਾਡੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਿਸਾਬ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ, ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਸਾਂਝ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਸਾਂਝੀਆਂ ਉਮੀਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਇਹ ਬਦਲੇ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਅਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਦਿੱਕਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਬਣਾਏਗਾ। ਇਸ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀਪੂਰਨ ਸਹਿ-ਹੋਂਦ ਦੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲਣਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।



GETTY IMAGES

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੱਕ ਚੱਲੇ ਖੌਫ਼ ਅਤੇ ਦਰਦ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੇ ਦੌਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੀੜਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਮਾਰਕ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੱਚ, ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਜਾਂ ਪੀਪਲਜ਼ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ

ਅੱਜ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਪੀਪਲਜ਼ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ। ਇਹ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਿਆਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ, ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ, ਜਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਉਸ 'ਚ ਪਾਰਦਰਸ਼ਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਇਹ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਖਾਲਿਸਤਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਰ ਵੀ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਖਾਲਿਸਤਾਨੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਗੁਣਾ ਵਧਿਆ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੀ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਹੀ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਗੁਆਇਆ। ਅਜਿਹੇ 'ਚ ਇਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ 'ਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀਪੂਰਨ ਨਿਪਟਾਰੇ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਾਬਤਾ ਕੋਡ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ।

- **ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ: ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ 'ਚ ਕੀ-ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ**
- **ਕਲਮਾਂ ਛੱਡ ਖਾੜਕੂ ਲਹਿਰ 'ਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੁਝ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ**

ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਆਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਤੈਅ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਗੈਰ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਬੇਗੁਨਾਹਾਂ, ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਮੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਕਾਰਕੁਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ

ਮੌਤਾਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਬਲੂ ਸਟਾਰ, ਨਵੰਬਰ 1984 ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਤਲੇਆਮ ਅਤੇ ਝੂਠੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਹੋਏ।

ਮਸਲੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਪਟਾਰਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰਨਾ, ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਲ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾਂ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

(ਲੇਖਕ ਦੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਮੀਡੀਆ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਸ਼ਰ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਆਈਡੀਸੀ, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਹਨ।)

A spectre not yet laid to rest

Events of 1984 still scar the Punjab mindscape. A People's Commission and a Peace Memorial are needed



PRAMOD KUMAR

THE PEOPLE OF Punjab suffered indescribable hardship and trauma due to the chain of events culminating in Operation Blue Star in June 1984. The aftermath also left a trail of violence and misery, bitterness and alienation. Such periods invariably generate polarised perceptions and ideological stances.

But more than three decades later, Operation Blue Star has become a symbol of tolerance, harmony and peace-building. Its memories have introduced restraint when the state confronted similar situations later, be it when terrorists entered the shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar or when attempts were made to condone the demolition of the Babri Masjid. It can be safely inferred that had the deadlier politics manifesting in Operation Blue Star, assassination of the then prime minister and Sikh massacre, not been unleashed, terrorism may have petered out in 1985.

The churning in civil society and politics has led to a positive outcome. The hurt felt by members of the Sikh community and secularists became universal. It transcended the boundaries of religion, region, political and social affiliations. It has blemished the stature of leaders like Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. If Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale could not become an unquestioned icon of the Sikh masses, the legacy of the former Indian prime ministers responsible for Operation Blue Star and November 1984's brutal targeting of Sikhs has also been tarnished.

More than three decades later, Operation Blue Star has also outlived the relevance of superficial apologies and the documentation of painful memories. The state has been shying away from fixing responsibility for the creation of conditions leading to Operation Blue Star. It has resorted to offering apologies without accountability.

Leaders and decision-makers responsible for causing violence conveniently tender apologies and consequently cause delay in the accountability processes. Punjab has witnessed this phenomenon in an aggravated form. For example, a section of political leaders responsible for the creation of conditions leading to Operation Blue Star in 1984, and the killings of Sikhs in November 1984, indulged in the politics of apology without accountability. The state has lacked seriousness in bringing people responsible for Operation Blue Star and the violence against Sikhs to justice.

This has led to the setting up of a number of committees and commissions of inquiry without delivering justice. It started with the Ved Marwah inquiry which was

wound up without completing its report in 1985, followed by the Dhillon Committee in 1985, Ahuja Committee in February 1987, Jain-Banerjee Committee in February 1987, Jain-Aggarwal Committee in December 1990, Narula Committee in December 1993, Ranganath Mishra Commission in May 1985 and the Nanavati Commission in May 2000. The politics of inquiry commissions must be given a burial.

Elections to state assemblies and local bodies have been held. Religious, non-governmental organisations and the government have provided assistance to victims of the violence. A conducive political climate was created for the return of former militants like Wasan Singh Zaffarwal of Khalistan Commando Force from Switzerland on April 11, 2001. Jagjit Singh Chauhan returned in 2001 after 25 years of exile.

In a way, it weakened the divisive and separatist politics, but delayed initiatives for closure have provided a new lease of life to extremist and fundamentalist political tendencies. After having ignored twice the appeal of Dal Khalsa, a radical Sikh organisation, in 1985 and 2002 to raise a martyr's memorial at the Golden Temple, it was conceded by the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) in 2014.

We also witnessed the ceremonious conferment of martyrdom to Bhindranwale by the SGPC after 19 years. It is mainly because no concerted efforts were made to delegitimise violence and deliver restorative justice. The goals of closure — transparency, justice and reconciliation — were not addressed adequately.

Closure does not mean revenge. It also does not mean the registering of a claim that "my" use of violence is privileged and therefore cannot be brought to justice. The main focus of closure should be recognition of the atrocities committed and willingness to live with truth. This may involve setting up of documentation centres, museums of memories etc.

Efforts should be made to build a Peace Memorial, a monument in the memory of those who became victims of decade-long terror. The setting up of a People's Commission is the need of the hour. Justice and reconciliation cannot be delivered unless preceded by transparency. Excessive use of violence led to the defeat of Khalistanis but at the same time excesses unleashed by the state increased support for their ideology. Legitimacy of both the state also declined due to the violation of human rights and it is in its own interest to evolve codes of conduct for peaceful closure. The Commission should fix responsibility for the unleashing of a deadly politics manifesting in the killing of innocents, security personnel and political activists.

The focus of closure should be the delegitimation of violence, the reducing of incentives to violence and delivery of restorative justice and reconciliation.

The writer is director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

Capital gain? Sharing Chandigarh fiscal loss for Pb, Hry, but no one keen to seek viable solution

Prof. Pramod Kumar

It is high time that the frozen conflict between the States of Punjab and Haryana on Chandigarh is resolved constructively. And, efforts should be made to look for 'out-of-the-box' solutions to this chronic and contentious issue.

Punjab and Haryana are the only two states, or provinces, in the world that function from an out-sourced capital city, in this case Chandigarh. For a holistic understanding of this region two historical accidents have to be considered.

First is that the Partition of India in 1947 led to the division of the State of Punjab, severely affecting the Indian Punjab as its cultural and economic capital of Lahore remained with Pakistan.

Secondly, after creation of Haryana, Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab, became a Union Territory and was declared the capital of both the states. The governance model was evolved to keep these two states on the margins of their own capital.

It is an established fact that the capital cities stimulate technology, establish network of community and tap resources. For instance, the contribution of Chennai in the GSDP of Tamil Nadu is around 7 per cent, Shimla contributes

around 14 per cent to Himachal, Bhopal around 6 per cent to Madhya Pradesh, at 1999 prices, and so on. Had Chandigarh been transferred to Punjab, its contribution to the state's GSDP may have been substantial. In the absence of a capital city, both Punjab and Haryana have lost the critical space that could have acted as driver of growth in culture, human resources and economic development.

In a limited sense, the periphery of Delhi acted as a driver of economic growth for Haryana. As a matter of fact, both the states suffered a major setback due to lack of control over their capital. Punjab, particularly, suffered as it missed "information technology revolution." In other words, in the absence of their own central business capital, Punjab, to a large extent, and Haryana suffered a major setback in the neoliberal global economy even as they lost out on their legitimate share in the revenue generated in Chandigarh.

In view of the frozen nature of the conflict, I would like to propose the following remedies: Till this conflict is resolved, the Tricity — Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali — should be treated as the capital cities stimulate technology, establish network of community and tap resources. For instance, the contribution of Chennai in the GSDP of Tamil Nadu is around 7 per cent, Shimla contributes

The scope of this development



Illustration: Manish Chouh

tional Centre in New Delhi.

For these initiatives, Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula will have to pool in financial and other resources. As it is, well-established capital cities act as a major source of revenue generation. For example, the per capita revenue collection through sales tax is quite high in the capital cities in comparison to the states. In a consistent trend, per capita sales tax collection in Chandigarh is about three times of Punjab. This begs a question, as to why the per capita sales tax revenue is higher in Chandigarh. The answer lies in the structure of the economies of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. The drivers of growth of Punjab and Haryana are agriculture and industry, whereas in Chandigarh, it is the service sector and the construction activity. For instance, in the past decade, about 77 per cent growth in GSDP of Chandigarh has come from the service sector alone. The service and construction sectors together contributed about 93 per cent of growth. The growth of service and construction sectors flourishes upon the surplus created by the agricultural sector of both the states, and the same is siphoned off to Chandigarh.

Therefore, an interim practical solution, 50 per cent of the total revenue collected in Chandigarh from its own sources should be divided on a 60:40 basis between Punjab and Haryana for the development of the Tricity Capital Complex.

The ideal solution, in fact, would be to facilitate both the states to build their own capital cities and to sustain Chandigarh as a Union Territory to be developed as an international city and a knowledge hub.

And, any political solution to this frozen conflict, which of course continues to be contentious, is to give Chandigarh to Punjab as

Emerging as a satellite town of Delhi, Chandigarh has potential to develop as a global destination in terms of culture, trade and knowledge exchange. A diplomatic enclave could be set up in the city to realise this potential

per various agreements and allocate resources to Haryana for building its own capital. There appears to be a remote chance of the applicability of this as a third party to the conflict, i.e. Chandigarhians are playing the spoilsport. Interestingly, many of the decision-makers have stakes in Chandigarh and, therefore, are not invested in finding a solution to this contentious issue. These vested interests living in the urban island of Chandigarh have no stakes in the underdeveloped urban centres of both Punjab and Haryana.

[Prof. Pramod Kumar is Director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh]

council should cover aspects which have ramifications for all the three cities. For instance, if medical trauma centres are strengthened in both Mohali and Panchkula, the burden on the PGI in Chandigarh will reduce, thereby improving the delivery of quality emergency health services.

In the domain of law and order,

be it protests, sexual harassment, or even petty thefts, a common police emergency control system under number 100 should be made available to facilitate mitigation of the citizens' distress.

Emerging as a satellite town of Delhi, Chandigarh has potential to develop as a global destination in terms of culture, trade and knowl-

edge exchange. A diplomatic enclave could be set up in the city to realise this potential. The main focus should be to reach out to the people and influence policy planning institutions like CRIKC (Chandigarh Region Innovation and Knowledge Cluster) besides setting up a cultural, intellectual and social institution like the India Interna-

Capt, Khattar slug it out over capital at TOI meet

Dinesh Bhardwaj



IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE: Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal, Chandigarh administrator and Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore and Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh at the TOI summit in Hyatt Regency, Chandigarh, on Tuesday afternoon

Vinod.Kumar3
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It is not often that chief ministers of Punjab and Haryana come together under one roof to grapple with one of the most contentious and long-standing issues between the two states – the status of Chandigarh as capital city.

But that is precisely what happened when Captain Amarinder Singh and Manohar Lal Khattar shared the stage with V P Singh Badnore, Punjab Governor and administrator of Chandigarh, and Dr Pramod Kumar, eminent social scientist, at TOI's summit – It's Chandigarh's Time – on Tuesday.

Speaking at the summit moderated by Tanvi Shukla

of Mirror Now, both chief ministers decided to directly address the elephant in the room. While Khattar said he had already written to Union home minister Rajnath Singh to form a board for homogeneous development of Chandigarh as joint capital of Haryana and Punjab, Amarinder dismissed the

It's
**CHANDIGARH'S
TIME**

**Don't miss Thursday's edition
for full coverage of the summit**

idea, setting the stage for a lively debate.

The Punjab chief minister said more than one accord had given Chandigarh to Punjab as capital and no

board or authority could be set up until it was made clear who the city belonged to.

Khattar reiterated Haryana's claim on Chandigarh and asked Punjab to make New Chandigarh its capital. Dismissing Haryana's claim, Amarinder asked Khattar to make either Panchkula or Panipat Haryana's capital.

Khattar also suggested that the authorities of Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali should take up common issues like waste management and metro connectivity together and share the cost of such projects.

Dr Kumar said there was a need to find way out to the conflict, "which is frozen in history".

► Continued on P 5

Need to have more coordination, cooperation: Punjab governor

► Continued from P 1

He said that Punjab and Haryana are arguably the only states in the world which function from an outsourced capital city on which they have no control. "Both Punjab and Haryana without a capital city have lost space that could have acted as driver of growth, culture, human resource and economic development," he said.

It's CHANDIGARH'S TIME

Bandore, however, termed the current situation of Chandigarh as ideal and a workable solution. "It is a win-win situation for Chandigarh, Punjab and Haryana. The only thing we need to do is more coordination and corporation."

"Punjab used to be the number one state in the country and now is placed 19. Even



IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE: Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal, Tanvi Shukla of Mirror Now, Chandigarh administrator and Punjab governor V P Singh Badnore, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh and Institute of Development and Communication director Pramod Kumar discussing cooperation and coordination between Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali at the Hyatt Regency in Chandigarh on Tuesday afternoon

the average growth is lower than the national growth. This is what pinches me,"

Amarinder said. "We are suffering as the division that took place because of the Aka-

lis who wanted a Sikh-dominated state as their political playground."

Justice for Anissia: It must be done

Mere Statistic | The Reporting Of Crimes Against Women Continues To Suffer

Pramod Kumar



One more candlelight march for justice. The nation's conscience was again shaken. This time it was Anissia Batra. All those who met brutal end and all those who condemn this violence, all those carrying candles and demanding justice, have become mere statistics, exposing the ugly underbelly of our insensitive, indifferent and non-responsive justice-delivery system.

Anissia died under mysterious circumstances. Her father had filed a complaint at Delhi's Hauz Khas police station a couple of days before her death, alleging that she was being tortured by her husband and in-laws. In this complaint, it was mentioned that she can be harmed physically and her husband and in-laws should be held responsible if any harm came to her. But, as it happens invariably, no action was taken. As if wife-bashing and dowry harassment, if not "brutal", was an accepted practice.

Anissia's last message was to a friend, a request to call police, as her husband had locked her in a room. She was afraid of losing her life. This was a desperate appeal. She died the same day on July 13. She could not be saved by the police or the family support system. The FIR was registered a day later under Section 304(b) (dowry death) of the Indian Penal Code, despite all the demands for prompt registration of similar cases with stringent sections. The police investigation was not only sluggish but also against legal protocols. Her post-mortem examination was not videographed in spite of the family's repeated pleas to the police.

It is a case of either police indifference due to patriarchal influence or complicity with the perpetrators of the crime. The state's response to similar cases has been to make the laws on violence more stringent. Dowry laws have been bolstered, sex determination has been made an offence, and death penalty has been prescribed for rape. There is a lesson in Anissia's death, that harsh penalties are no deterrence. After a series of gang rapes shook the nation's conscience, "hang them" was the legal remedy offered by the system.

LAWS DON'T HELP

The Anissia case study shows that facts do not speak for themselves. There was no action on the complaint that was filed before the crime even happened, delayed registration after the incident, and biased investigation. Facts have been coloured, manipulated, and misrepresented by the powers that be. Therefore, stringent laws on their own cannot bring about the collapse of ideas and values that make certain acts of injustice against women invisible.

It happens before us, we see it, but we do not consider it violative. For example, bashing or torturing of the wife is taken as a private matter between the couple and, as such, outside the domain of intervention. Had the police intervened on Anissia's complaint and brought it to the public domain, her life might have been saved. When an abuse is not perceived to be an abuse, it apparently ceases to be a problem.

INSENSITIVE COUNSELLING

Thus, even if a woman reports an abuse to her friends or the community, the police in-

variably counsel the complainant to adjust and wait for some time before, finally, she is perceived to be in the wrong. In incidents where a wife is bashed and tortured, it is common on part of the police to believe that she must have provoked her husband and, therefore, she got what she deserved. Even in cases of rape or sexual harassment, the women is blamed for inviting trouble, either by dressing in a provocative manner or by moving alone in dark and lonely places. The reporting of crimes against women continues to suffer due to this perception.

Many cases are reported but not investigated. Is there a way of checking this discretion and making the system more transparent? If there is public pressure, the dropped cases are taken up but not investigated properly. It may be due to inefficiency, external stimulus, or political compulsions that stunt the justice delivery system. In many registered and investigated cases, charge sheet is delayed because the investigation is tardy, inefficient, and compromised. The process certainly questions the legitimacy of the delivery of justice, which is often termed as tardy, inefficient, and partisan, hence unjust.



SORRY, ANISSIA: We could have saved her

CHECK MINOR OFFENCES

Socialisation within the patriarchal framework makes minor crimes such as sexual harassment, dowry demand and harassment, and wife-beating normal interactive behaviour. Only extreme cases are seen as violative. For example, rape is considered an offence, molestation is not. The use of vulgar expressions is taken as harmless fun (*chalta hat*).

Dowry death is a grave violation, while dowry demand is acceptable. Wife beating is a family matter until it leads to her death. It is because of these reasons that extreme violation is multiplying.

The need is to intervene to check even minor violations. But, police, and society at large choose to ignore these. Historical adverse social positioning on gender issues cannot be resolved in a jiffy but it does not mean that we should not intervene to start to reverse the process. This is not to say that policy makers, activists, and academics are unaware of the pandemic scale of the problem. There is intense public engagement on this issue. In fact, it has generated attention across the spectrum of the "do-gooders". There is no forum where the concern has not been articulated—in education institutes, the media, cultural spaces, vernacular music, policy boardrooms, NGOs, women's organisations, legal apparatus, and orders of the clergy, but the problem has become more glaring. Change should take place, as status quo has become unsustainable. Hope that Anissia will get justice and the system will amend itself to respond to prevent the recurrence of brutal crimes.

The writer is director of the Institute for Development and Communication

Guest Column



Kartarpur Corridor opens door for peace between 2 countries

GUEST COLUMN



PRAMOD KUMAR

To embrace the army and be friends with democracy simply can't go hand in hand in Pakistan. History is witness to Pakistan army being on the wrong side of democracy, involved in harbouring terror and violating civil liberties. Peace-building is sacred and to expect actors engaged in perpetuation of violence to be torchbearers of peace is but naivety. In this context, political discourse becomes vitiating as it tends to seek simple answers to complex questions. Let me labour this issue to uncover the complexity of India and Pakistan's geo-political reality.

Two decades ago, Pakistan was ruled by a democratically elected government and a visit to Islamabad received warm Punjabi cultural hugs. It also witnessed India's defeat against Sri Lanka in the 1996 World Cup cricket final held in Lahore, manifesting in Pakistani Punjabi friends hugging Sri Lankans and giving a cold shoulder to Indian Punjabis. A decade later, the US invasion of Iraq evoked solidarity among South Asians, including Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans.

COMPLEX REALITIES

These three contextual responses are pointers towards the existence of complex realities. The first situation signifies cultural bondage and the quest for sharing the cultural reservoir and resources. Hence the cultural hugs.

The second context was an expression of Pakistanis and

Sri Lankans highlighting their perception of India being a 'hegemonic regional power'. Hence the political hugs.

The third situation exemplifies the developing countries' sense of powerlessness in the face of the US's authoritarian misadventures. Hence, the survival hugs.

Further, the complexity is reflected in politics, carefully nurtured by cultural and religious similarities that transcend territorial boundaries. In other words, political competition within the countries and identity assertions get embroiled into India-Pakistan conflicts meshed up with ultra-nationalism. In other words, Indian Punjab is on the boil. Religion is being invoked, be it the Bargari Morcha or Kartarpur Corridor. Partisan politics is competing in the religious space be it the Congress, the Akalis or the AAP to appropriate credit.

In case of the Kartarpur Corridor, Pakistan has taken a shot by giving credit to Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu and added another dimension by attempting to earn goodwill among Sikhs to provide fodder to radical elements in that country. However, Pakistan's attempt to outweigh religious interests of Sikhs over and above their nationalism and patriotism is not going to succeed.

BRIDGES AND WALLS

Congress and Akali leaders are trying to follow different routes to take credit for opening the Kartarpur Corridor. The Shiromani Akali Dal is citing continuous efforts and their proximity with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for the quick response of the central government. Sidhu, a cricketer-turned-minister is taking credit for the positive response

of the Pakistani establishment because of his friendship with former cricketer and now prime minister, Imran Khan. Another Punjab Congress minister hogged the limelight by attempting to dislodge the Badals from centre stage at a stone-laying ceremony at Dera Baba Nanak.

Vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu described the corridor as an initiative to build bridges between the people of the two countries and usher in an era of peace and prosperity in the region. "This is a corridor that connects us to the Guru we revere, to the sacred space where he spent the last 18 years of his life. This corridor is a unifier, building bridges across old chasms. It promotes deeper understanding and a new resolve to connect people of our two countries through love, empathy and invisible threads of common spiritual heritage," he said.

India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj termed this an isolated issue linked with people's faith and said it had nothing to do with India-Pakistan peace-building.

CAPT'S MATURE ROLE

In contrast, Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh gave a politically mature, culturally prudent and diplomatically profound twist to the event. He cautioned Pakistan on terror and at the same time endorsed the building of the

**PAKISTAN'S ATTEMPT TO
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Kartarpur Corridor as a promotion of people to people contact. He complimented Imran Khan for the initiative but urged him to rein in his army and its intelligence wing, the ISI, which works against us. He recalled the 26/11 Mumbai attack as a grim reminder of Pakistan-sponsored terror in India, and pointed out that the Dinanagar and Pathankot attacks also stood out as examples of terror unleashed by Pakistan in Punjab.

Amarinder's statement is comprehensive as he condemned the army and endorsed democracy. He reiterated India's commitment to peace and development. He did not go overboard to appropriate religious emotions of the Sikhs but located the Kartarpur Corridor initiative in a larger context. Khan mentioned that history is made by those who are not led by people's emotions, but lead them for humane and peaceful co-existence. This description is apt for the role played by Amarinder.

The transformation of civil society is constrained by the legacy of conflict in which sovereignty continues to be located in territorial nationalism and free market and not with citizens. No doubt, these initiatives have a potential to provide space to regional, country and multicultural groups to maximise on collateral advantages. This can happen if the hegemonic articulations of the countries are curtailed; the role of reactionary and ultra-nationalist forces is minimised; and political establishments refrain from appropriating peace-building initiatives to promote divisive politics.

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Set up Tricity Capital Development Council, suggests social scientist

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Pramod Kumar, director, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), has proposed Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali be treated as Tricity Capital Territory and a Tricity Capital Development Council be set up for administrative purposes till the conflict between Punjab and Haryana over Chandigarh is resolved.

Kumar recommended a common law and order framework for the Tricity and Institutions like Chandigarh Region Innovation and Knowledge Cluster (CRIKC) be strengthened besides setting up an Institution like India International Centre, Delhi. He was addressing a gathering at It's Chandigarh's Time summit here on Tuesday.

Kumar proposed that to start with, a common police emergency control system with dial 100 in Tricity be set up. "The administrative division between three entities affects safety and security of citizens. This division works to the advantages of violators of law, be it thefts, sexual harassment and even political protests. Within the Tricity Capital Development Council, a sub-group for maintenance of law and order be set up," suggested Kumar.



'THINK COMMON': IDC director Pramod Kumar with the Punjab CM

For setting up a Tricity Capital complex, Kumar proposed that 50% of the total revenue collected in Chandigarh from its own sources be divided on 60:40 basis between Punjab and Haryana for the development of the Tricity Capital Complex. Moreover, he has proposed that if the already existing medical trauma centres are strengthened in Mohali and Panchkula, these can share the burden of PGI to deliver quality emergency health services.

"Chandigarh is emerging as the satellite town of Delhi. It has a potential to develop as a global destination in terms of culture, trade, knowledge exchange. It can locate a diplomatic enclave to realize this potential. The main focus should be to reach out to the people and influence policy planning institutions like CRIKC (Chandigarh Region Innovation and Knowledge Cluster) be strengthened besides setting up an Institution like India In-

SUGGESTIONS

- Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali for practical purposes be treated as **Tricity Capital Territory**
- **Tricity Capital Development Council** be set up
- Within Tricity Capital Development Council, a **sub-group for maintenance of law and order** be formed
- A **common police emergency control system** with dial 100 available in Tricity be set up
- **Pool resources** for creating **communication and knowledge hub** and **common law and order framework**



ternational Centre, Delhi," said Kumar. However, Kumar said these initiatives require pooling of financial resources.

"For these initiatives, all the three entities have to pool financial and other resources. As it is, well-established capital cities act as a major source of revenue generation. For example, the per capita revenue collection through sales tax is quite high in the capital cities," said Kumar.

Tricity needs single authority to grow, prosper

Is it possible for Punjab and Haryana to forget their long history of unresolved, contentious issues and work together to make Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula into engines of growth for this region? Yes, the status of Chandigarh itself is one of those thorns on the side of both states that still hurts. But what if we found a way to work around this and created a Chandigarh Greater Metropolitan Region where the entire Tricity is seen as one unit?

It is these questions that **The Times of India** is trying to answer with a special summit on the future of the Tricity and bring together three of the biggest decision-makers in this region — V P Singh Badnore, the Governor of Punjab and administrator

TOI BRINGS TOGETHER LEADERS WHO MATTER



Chandigarh administrator **VP Singh Badnore**, Punjab chief minister **Captain Amarinder Singh**, Haryana chief minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** and **Pramod Kumar**, director of the Institute of Development and Communication, will come together at Hyatt Regency on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the issue

of Chandigarh, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Pramod Kumar, director of the Institute of Development and Communication and a classic

It's **CHANDIGARH'S** TIME

Chandigarhian has agreed to be the expert on the panel.

Look at capital cities across the world and you will see that they are the magnets for the government to attract investment and business activity. Often, they are also the pivot around which cultural and other activities revolve, in the process giving the region character and a unique identity.

Of course, as India's first planned city, Chandigarh has already created a unique identity. Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex getting the Unesco World Heritage Site status is the jewel in the crown.

But since Le Corbusier designed Chandigarh, a lot of water has turned to vapour in the Sukhna lake. The people who live here have changed. Their aspirations have changed. It is now time to find out if we can change the way we manage this unique city and its periphery and get ready for the challenges of the future.

► **Continued on P6**

We already have a precedent for what can be done if 3 govts of Tricity work together

► Continued from P1

After all, Le Corbusier created a city that was modern in 1960. Now, nearly 60 years on, we have to ask ourselves if we can redefine Chandigarh so that it can protect its status as a modern city in the 21st century as well.

Perhaps, one can start by finding ways to develop facilities that residents of all three parts of the Tricity — Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula — can use. Today, it is a strange situation where people live in Panch-

kula or Zirakpur, work in Mo-

It's CHANDIGARH'S TIME

hali and shop in Chandigarh in one day and in the process they have crossed the boundaries of three states. And we are talking about a population of barely 20 lakh people, not like in Delhi, where there are nearly 20 million people.

We already have a precedent for what can be achieved if the three governments of the Tricity work together —

the Chandigarh International Airport. The facility caters to the entire northern region and is one of the fastest growing airports in the country.

But there are so many other areas where there is a disconnect: Consider the case of schools — You don't have Class XI and XII in most schools of Mohali and Panchkula because their students want admission to colleges in Chandigarh which reserve seats for students from schools in Chandigarh.

Dial the number 100 in times of an emergency from

any peripheral area of the Tricity and you are unlikely to get to the police control room you so desperately want to reach.

From Mohali, you will be connected to the Patiala police control room. From Panchkula, you will connect to the Chandigarh police control room. From Chandigarh, to Mohali.

Instead of all this, can't we find a way of joining hands to make Tricity the capital city this region deserves? Hopefully, some answers will be found at the 'It's Chandigarh's Time' summit.