

# Socio-economic roots of communalism

**COMMUNALISM IN MODERN INDIA** by Bipan Chandra. Vikas Publishing House, Sahibabad. Pp. 363. Rs 150.

COMMUNALISM has assumed alarming proportions in contemporary Indian society. The persistence of communalism is a punishment for the failure to launch a sustained ideological and political struggle and to spread nationalism and class consciousness. What is more, errors in conception have led to a faulty understanding of the phenomenon. The task of analysing communalism has become urgent because communal ideology is being vigorously propagated and inculcated among youth. Communalism is today considered a legitimate means of articulating and realising sectional interests. It is, therefore, essential to understand the role of communal ideology and its use of religious, caste and other differentiations.

The book "Communalism in Modern India" is an attempt both to understand the phenomenon and to combat it. This brilliant and insightful work has an academic framework but should motivate and inspire well-meaning and sensitive minds to use it as an intellectual tool to counter the retrogressive tendency. The paucity of secular alternatives has been subtly highlighted. The book also aims at helping healthy sections of the population to initiate and evolve secular alternatives. Communalism is a long-term problem and requires an intense and complex struggle on the political front and in the field of ideas. "To successfully oppose

communalism is to eliminate the social conditions favouring its growth. The Indian people have to understand that without radical social changes India might not even survive as a nation and communalism and communal-type movements might succeed in destroying its unity and hampering all efforts at social and economic development."

The author routs the argument of communalists that the Indian State is synonymous with the "Hindu State". The Constitution does not discriminate on communal basis like in Lebanon or Iraq. The colonial Government might have consciously adopted a communal strategy, but the Indian State has so far not taken such a vile path. Nevertheless, some agents of the State may be using the communal ideology for their narrow gains. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish agents of the State may be using and the State from the polity of the country.

Communal elements may be pervasive in the polity but the compulsions of the secular Constitution forbid even the polity to be nakedly and explicitly communal. The author maintains that while the State policy of independent India has not been pro-communal, the logic of the socio-economic system continues to provide favourable ground for the spread of communalism.

Communalism is not a pre-capitalist notion; it is a modern ideology. India's underdeveloped capitalist economy has failed to solve the basic problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality which breed frustration and generate unhealthy competition for the inadequate social and economic opportunities available in the country.

Communalism does benefit some individuals. Consequently, communalists evolve a self-serving rationale — "a non-appointment would convince a communalist that others would not let his 'community' go ahead; an appointment would show that communalism paid. Communalism thus operates through a built-in accelerator."

Communal ideology does have social appeal and communal propaganda blurs objective reality. The so-called discriminations are not caused by religious groups but are rooted in underdevelopment.

The author points out that Congress leaders in general and Nehru and the Left in particular suffered from a certain mechanical and simplistic approach and an economic and deterministic bias in their treatment of the problem. They felt that industrialisation, modernisation or such developments would automatically erase communal and other divisive tendencies.

This led to the underplaying of subjective intervention at the level of ideology. The politics of accommodation pursued by the secular political leadership has to a great extent contributed to the present crisis. Once developed, communalism cannot be appeased; it has to be opposed.

The author attempts a critical evaluation of the very tools of analysis used by analysts. Communal categories such as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh leaders or the perception of the existence of divergent and dissimilar social, economic, cultural and political interests of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs which are used to understand and unfold the social reality result in mistaking the symptoms for the causes. The repeated assertion of such interests has distorted

the perception of a few policy makers and analysts.

Such lapses in understanding arouse expectations on communal lines which cannot be realised within the existing socio-economic structure. Non-realisation of these expectations reinforces the belief that a particular religious group is being discriminated against.

This has serious repercussions for the functioning of a democratic society. This is so because "victims of communal ideology" spurred by non-realisation of their communal demands seek alternatives in the form of theocratic or fascist States such as "Khalistan", Hindu Rashtra or Darul Haram.

It is widely believed that communalism is pervasive because of religious intolerance and differences in religious practices. This conceptual artifact does not draw a distinction between communal ideology or the ideology of religious identity, on the one hand, and religion as a belief system on the other. Religious differences are used to mask the basic economic and political issues.

This wrong diagnosis has resulted in faulty prescriptions.

Those who make emotional appeals in the name of nationalism and national interests to persons who are victims of communal ideology ignore the fact that India is yet to be a structured nation and is rather a nation in the making. Only when the people come to identify themselves with the nation an emotional appeal against communalism will bear fruit. This is so because for the victims of communal ideology nationalism means suppression or elimination of other religious groups which they consider to be anti-national or the domination of the majority religious group.

It is wrong to infer that the emerging agrarian and industrial interests will work together and build India into a structured nation. The clash of interests between the emerging agrarian bourgeoisie and the "central" bourgeoisie has added a new dimension.

The author maintains that communalism is a petty bourgeois ideology and a political struggle against communalism will tend to alienate, albeit temporarily, sections of the middle classes. In this context, it may be pointed out that communalism as an ideology is used, propagated and subsequently accepted by individuals in various sections, strata, classes in India. Therefore, any political struggle against communalism will not merely alienate middle classes but also those victims of communal ideology and vested interests from among workers, industrialists and kulaks.

The need is to differentiate — from time to time and in a specific situation — classes, strata or sections which use communalism for the promotion and maintenance of their interests and also those sections which fall prey to communal ideology. Therefore, there is need to understand the operation and use of communal ideology in its wider context.

A realistic, scientific and long-term solution must reflect the visionary idea of a future ideal society but in consonance with the logic of development.

The book provides a comprehensive and exhaustive framework to understand the problem of communalism which has blurred and distorted real national and socio-economic issues.

— Pramod Kumar

# Roots of Punjab problem

**PUNJAB. CRISIS :  
CONTEXT AND TRENDS**  
by Pramod Kumar, Man-  
mohan Sharma, Atul Sood  
and Ashwani Handa. Cen-  
tre for Research in Rural  
and Industrial Develop-  
ment, Chandigarh. Pp.  
171. Rs 116.

EVERY major crisis evokes a flood of comment, much of it illiterate and hysterical. The developing crisis in Punjab has not been an exception to this. Newspapers and political leaders, who should know better, have swung wildly between fabricating the spectre of "Khalistan" and heaping the blame on Hindus for forsaking Punjab in 1951.

Despite a few weak attempts, the need for a thorough and dispassionate analysis of the problem, placing it in the historical and cultural contexts, has been felt for a long time. The book under review — a painstaking offering by four young researchers — fills the gap to a large extent.

Here is a sincere attempt to project the problem on the vast socio-economic, religious and political canvas. The various factions and parties emerge out of the pages as rounded factors, as products of a certain historical strain, to articulate the urges of a section of the population or to fight certain tendencies which they perceive as harmful. The actors in the ongoing confrontation are no more cardboard cutouts, flat with a single facet who can be fitted into a stereotype slot. A scientific understanding of the social and economic background of the many leaders and groups is, therefore, essential even to understand the meaning of each movement of the contending factions. The book provides this in abundant measure.

The basic assumption of the authors is that communalism is a modern concept, and communalism of one set of people breeds communalism of the other. It is a continuous process and it is futile, if not some-

what disingenuous, to dub one party to the dispute, in this case the Sikhs, as communal. This is all the more so since the Akali Dal is a religion-based party, and since "the operative norms of governance (in Punjab) have been regulated by religion-based politics", as Mr Rashpal Malhotra says in his Foreword.

The Akali Dal is more than a religion-based party. It is also an agglomeration of disparate economic interests. It has rich peasants, middle farmers, sibling traders and industrialists and those who provide services. At the moment it is the rich farmers who dominate the Dal. In an illuminating chapter the authors go through the Akali Dal demands with a fine-toothed comb vis-a-vis the demands of this section and come up with revealing conclusions.

For instance, had the Union Government set up medium and large-scale industrial units (not controlled by people from outside the State) the rich peasants would have found a channel to invest their surplus. More than this, it "would create a class of local industrial elite from within this emerging agrarian section whose interest then, as a consequence of dependence through linkage, requirement for market, etc, would be in consonance with that of the national industrialists."

What makes young men flock to the fold of religious fundamentalists in both major communities? Here again there is a penetrating examination of the factors creating frustration among them. Lack of employment opportunities, the stilted education system which does not teach them to integrate themselves fully with their class, absence of idealism in political parties and such other socio-cultural distortions have disoriented young minds. This is very interesting in the sense that a systematic attempt has been made to correlate socio-cultural trends to political developments. Nothing sensational, but certainly very significant in the context of Punjab.

But the most absorbing section of the book is on communalism. It is an academic exer-

cise, subsuming both the general trends and theories and the particular situation in the State. The authors say that the coalition between the Akali Dal and the Jana Sangh in the past did not mute communal feelings but generated extremist tendencies in both parties.

Similarly, the attempts by the Congress to accommodate the so-called moderates in the Dal did not strengthen their position but that of the extremists. Even now a settlement should be used to defuse the situation, and a vigorous ideological and political struggle should be launched to confront terrorism. As the authors say, terrorism is a product of the present stalemate and a way of communication.

The history of the competitive communalism of the Dal, the Arya Samaj and the Jana Sangh shows a steadily climbing graph of suspicions, tensions and demands. The Hindu demand for Maha Punjab (to keep the Sikh community for ever in minority) and the demand by a fringe group for the creation of "Azad Punjab" did not set the fuse simply because the Congress was totally secular and had a mass base. When the popularity of the Congress started sagging, secularism took a few nasty knocks. Even the Congress began to indulge in communalism, Mr Malhotra tellingly brings this out.

It is interesting to note that Hindu communalism first surfaced way back in 1910 when urban moneylenders and traders lost sizeable chunks of land. A venomous propaganda was launched during the next few years to rally the Hindu masses round the affected Hindu urbanites.

The analysis of the religio-politics of the Sikhs takes a close look at the quality of leadership since Independence. Master Tara Singh skillfully contained the various communal trends in the Akali Dal. Sant Fateh Singh was charismatic, but could only manipulate the different factions. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal has sided with one section, leaving the fundamentalists to get busy on their own.

This explains the present rifts in the Akali Dal.

The book concentrates on the developments since 1947. This is perhaps inevitable since there has been no systematic and scientific study of the socio-political milieu in which the major communal entities — the Arya Samaj and the Akali Dal — emerged and operated before partition.

Somehow the section dealing with the Anandpur Sahib resolution is somewhat weak in its overall perspective. The point that the installation of a transmitter for the relaying of Shabad Kirtan from the Golden Temple will be tantamount to a compromise on the secular concept is not fully correct. For several years now "Suprabhatam" from the Balaji temple in Tirupati is relayed on Saturday mornings without seriously damaging the secular fabric. As the authors elsewhere observe, religious demands are not per se communal demands but tend to become so when religious symbols and gestures are allowed to invade other arenas of social activity.

I agree with the authors' view that the disowning of Punjab by Hindus in 1951 was more a political act (to stall the formation of Punjabi Suba) than a demonstration of communal hostility. That the Hindus reversed their stand in 1981 by overwhelmingly giving Punjabi as their mother tongue supports this argument.

Many complex and extremely complicated strands of social, economic, political and communal factors make up the present tangle in Punjab. It will, therefore, be illogical to expect somebody to untangle all of them in a single book. The authors realise this and are content with merely giving an overview with adequate details to help the common man understand the contours of the problem and its roots in history.

Anyone wanting to grasp the situation beyond superficialities and understand the compulsions of the parties concerned should read this book. Those who want to stick to the smug view that the Akali Dal is engaged in only a religious struggle and not a socio-political-economic one are warned to keep away from this book. It will shatter their illusion.

— T. K. Ramasamy

# Tragedy in Punjab

**W**HITHER Punjab today? It is a national tragedy that the question should be asked at all. But far more tragic it is that nobody is likely to offer an answer as long as events go as they are. The events are now known to the whole world communal strife between the Sikhs and Hindus, the reign of terror let loose by the extremists, killing of numerous innocent people, widespread looting, arson and sabotage, deployment of armed forces to flush out the extremists from the Golden Temple, spilling of blood in the Holy shrine, capture of huge quantities of sophisticated arms — mostly of foreign origin, desertions in the army, mopping up operations by the security forces and the continuing spurt of sporadic violence. These are, however, the symptoms and effects — not the cause of the problem. The symptoms can never be brought under control unless and until the causes persist. But what are the causes? Unfortunately, in an atmosphere surcharged with emotion and tension, few people care to look back upon the road that has

serving the political vested interests of the few at the cost of the rest. Although in the subsequent years, there was some rethinking and change of attitude among the Hindus in favour of the Punjabi, the damage was already done.

Another reason was that the so-called green revolution did not subsume the existing social tensions. On the contrary, it generated some more. The over-publicised prosperity of the peasantry detracted attention from the not so obvious problem of poverty and plenty. In Punjab more than 65 per cent of the operational land holdings fall below 5 acres which are not economically viable. The failure of the succeeding State Governments to help the small farm producers to become processors for the processing of raw materials and arranging for marketing outlets has further contributed to the present tensions.

Similarly, the growth of the scale sector was not accompanied by the development of medium and large scale industrial sectors. This process did not get the required push from the



Bhindranwale who operated terrorism from within the Golden Temple complex: How he was killed still remains a matter of controversy

## BOOK REVIEW

brought the situation to this woeful precipice.

Between the covers of this slim but extremely thought provoking volume, readers will traverse a hitherto unexplored area on a shoestring and will comprehend the complex "Punjab problem" in its proper perspective. The authors have analysed, with commendable clarity, the genesis and nature of the crisis as it has evolved through different stages over time. This is not a pot-pourri of piecemeal press reports, but a serious and comprehensive study of the various factors — social, economic, religious and political — that have been inter-woven to give the problem an insoluble dimension. The perspective of the study is to suggest a long-term strategy to remove the factors that have made Punjab the greatest national tragedy since independence. This makes the book compelling reading.

What are the salient factors that have contributed to the present crisis in Punjab? Apart from the religion-based politics professed both by the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh, the other reason arises from the accumulative effect of disowning of the Punjabi language by the communal Hindus in Punjab, though the Punjabi is their mother tongue. This resulted in a major set back to the development of the Punjabi language and literature and the continued growth of a composite culture. This set in motion the process of weakening the traditional socio-cultural base binding the Hindus and the Sikhs. As rightly pointed out by the noted scholar, Rashpal Malhotra, in his excellent foreword to the volume, to those whom it suited to propagate and accelerate communalism, it did

investment in public sector. No wonder, it resulted in a stagnation in the general industrial sector. Thus the industrial sector could not attract large savings as well as investment from the agrarian sector. Besides, it failed to provide opportunities of employment to the educated rural youth oriented to the pseudo westernised environments of the urban centres. The employment opportunities provided by the so-called industrialisation to the urban youth were also limited. This created a crisis for the social identity.

The authors have pointed out that communalism in Punjab today has grown because "of relative stagnation in agriculture and lopsided industrial development which provides meagre scope for expansion of investment opportunities in industry and trade." In such a situation communalism came in as a handy tool to sectional interests to exploit and mobilise the people for maintaining and enhancing their economic and political power.

At the same time, the communal elements did all they could to propagate religious intolerance so as to be able to utilise religion for the fulfilment of their political interests. Tracing the historical roots of the communal problem in the state, the authors have analysed the developments in the economy which provided the economic base to the resurgence of the scourge of communalism in recent years.

That the communal elements have often distorted issues at their convenience has been well brought out by the authors in their discussion of the issues of water distribution and the enfranchisement of migrant labour. A major theme in the present work is the political parties in Punjab and their changing social base and political fortunes. To substantiate this the authors have presented a detailed

statistical data of the votes obtained by the communal parties since 1952. To understand this aspect of the problem the serious readers will find the 20 tables invaluable.

The authors have rightly castigated the left-wing parties for their failure to grasp the communal nature of Punjab politics, thus failing to provide a left alternative to the social conditions. It will be an eye opener to many that the left parties not only refused to oppose communalism, communal ideology and communal parties, but aligned themselves with rabidly communal parties for electoral gains. Commending the authors'

conclusions, Bipan Chandra, the well-known historian, has rightly observed that to bring about normal conditions in Punjab, the social conditions which generate communalism and sectarianism have to be transformed. Communal ideology and politics have to be confronted ideologically and at the same time communal violence has to be handled firmly and decisively.

**PUNJAB CRISIS: CONTEXT AND TRENDS:** By Pramod Kumar, Manmohan Sharma, Atul Sood and Ashwani Handa (Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 1037, Sector 21 B, Chandigarh. Rs. 116).

tiveness of an organised aggregation of individuals identifying themselves with a particular group'; but we would find it difficult to accept that, 'in the present context, communalism derives its existence from the specific nature of development along capitalist lines and persists because of communal ideology'. In the kinds of communalism that the authors identify in Punjab are: 'communalism conformist', 'communalism secessionist' and 'communalism conformist and incremental'. Of these three, the authors elaborate by saying that the first, that is the 'conformist' variety, 'is fundamentalist and revivalist in its content'. The second, (secessionist), according to them, 'derives its momentum from religious fundamentalist tendencies'. The third, we are informed, 'is a shade darker than communalism conformist'. All very frightening and mystifying, but hardly illuminating.

There is then the treatment of the language issue, which is identified as, 'primarily... political question though with communal overtones'. We are informed 'that 53.6 per cent of the Punjabi Hindus mentioned their mother tongue to be Hindi in the 1971 census, but Punjabi was nevertheless in their blood.' That is surely as fine a demonstration of mixing science and emotion as one can find. As if this did not suffice, there are statistics, whereby we are informed about a castewise break up of ministers in Punjab Government, during the period 1952-80. I am sure there is a great deal to be derived from learning that Baniya/Khatri/Arora ministers numbered 12 between 1957-66, were 25 per cent of the total, and that Jat Sikhs numbered 38 in the period 1967-80. What precisely, however, I am supposed to glean from this rewarding piece of information I cannot quite fathom. Similarly, when I am informed that 'in case of the BJP the present posture is a conscious choice determined by its desire of not appearing to be blatantly communal from fear of antagonising the minorities', and when this particular opinion is further elaborated, in a foot note, by an explanation that 'a political party like the BJP aiming to capture political power in India has to adopt secular stances'; the reader is left with the impression that the authors do not somehow approve of the BJP being secular whereas they would welcome such a development elsewhere. In what purports to be an objective and reasonably scientific analysis of 'trends' in Punjab such confusing and contradictory assertions, end up by being precisely that; confusing and contradictory.

A portion on the reorganisation of Punjab, on a linguistic basis, is well stated at its beginning; 'The reorganising of the state in 1966 on a linguistic basis was primarily the result of pressure from the Akali Dal. In the given circumstances historic-

ally and politically, communalism and language had got inextricably mixed'. The authors say that these demands continued even after reorganisation and that in the resultant demographic complications, in the newly carved state of Punjab, the strategy of a green revolution contributed to its ills. Quite possibly so but a full answer does not lie in land ownership patterns alone. However, the authors, in identifying failures, quite rightly point their finger at religion, language, the very success of the green revolution creating new problems, the failure, (according to the authors), of the small scale industries in Punjab.

**T**he chapter 'Whither? Why?' identifies what are commonly called the Akali demands. There is a very adequate coverage of Anandpur Sahib Resolution though only the Talwandi group version of it is provided. There is a fair analysis of agricultu-

**The Constitution that we adopted for ourselves, provides for 'protection', not 'use' of any religion or its 'promotion' by the State. If India, in the decades of independence, had been a truly secular State, there would not have been a need for any of its constituent units to assert only their religious identity, as the Akali Dal in Punjab does. That is what lies at the heart of the present troubles in Punjab. In that state, there exists a close identification between 'Church and State', religion and politics.**

ral demands contained in that resolution. The treatment of the broader question of Centre-state relations is briefly covered as also that of what are called 'religious demands'. The economic and political implications and various aspects of the problem of migrant labour in Punjab are also tackled though overlaid with classical, Marxist, language formulations. Article 25, is reproduced with some explanations. There are informative foot notes about the various Sikh extremist groups and organisations. Perhaps the best and most informative part of this particular chapter is on the issue of river waters. The authors quite rightly point out that the 'controversy stems from the principle of considering water to be a property, relegating the claim to water on the basis of need to a secondary and subordinate level'. This need, it is the view of the authors, 'was used in a very limited and distorted fashion. No expert committee was appointed to consider the issue in a broader perspective', which the authors feel, and rightly, 'ought to be the optimum harnessing of the existing water resources'. The consequences of not doing so is best illustrated by a table, in the book which 'reveals

that Punjab and Delhi had been utilising more water than allocated to them... Moreover there was a wastage of 1.901 MAF in 1980-81 and 2.218 MAF in 1981-82... and that this total was wasted and allowed to flow to Pakistan', and that 'such wastage of water resources amounted to an average of 8.467 MAF in the decade 1971-72 to 1981-82'. There is a chapter styled 'Concluding Remarks', which is of variable content. Some recommendations are made. Some of the views expressed are quite unexceptionable, like where there is a suggestion 'to draw a distinction between State and polity' even though this distinction 'may be largely analytical in nature'; that the 'notion of minority or majority is a misnomer...not being merely a question of numbers but...rather, a psychological one'; 'that religious intolerance in Punjab has increased', and that, 'even minor variations in religious practices are treated as an unforgiv-

able sin.' Some, however, are of questionable thesis, like a suggestion about Left parties themselves even though the author themselves admit that 'Left parties and noncommunal forces have been rendered inactive for want of a clear understanding of the situation'.

It is the view of the authors that because underlying the circumstances in Punjab is an 'underdeveloped capitalist economy which has failed to solve basic problems', therefore, the Left parties ought to move towards 'mobilisation of the peasantry'. A perfectly reasonable suggestion is made about planned industrialisation, 'which may help in the accommodation of emerging dominant agrarian and trading interests'. Curiously enough it is towards the end of the preceding chapter, that which is styled as 'Whither? Why?' that two significant assertions are made by the authors: 'That this problem cannot be reduced merely to a law and order problem' and that, 'a political solution to this problem cannot be found without foregoing electorate gains for the sake of national solidarity and humanity'.

The book has informative appendixes. There is a fairly exhaustive

bibliography. The use of language novel, and as befits a book about Punjab written by natives of the land, it is innovative, sturdy and uninhibited by constraints of syntax or style.

The book is very timely, yet one is left feeling as after an unsatisfactory meal. The situation in Punjab, unlike what the authors aver, is not 'static', it is developing. To my mind, despite the employment of the army, the basic problem in Punjab still remains unanswered. There exists a very close nexus between religion and politics in Punjab. How do we 'secularise' it? I believe that the government's continued emphasis only on the so-called 'religious demands' was mistaken and consequentially destructive in effect. In Punjab, as in Assam and in the North-East, every succeeding development has been met by just two responses, more powers in the hands of the State and more laws. There is no answer to be found in more laws. 'With good governments good laws are almost superfluous. With bad, they are almost always ineffective'. Our situation is perhaps unique; we have a bad government which loads itself with more and more of bad laws. Witness what the government did in Punjab. Playing politics with fundamental issues; wrongly emphasising the religious, not accepting in time such demands as are justly the due of the state of Punjab, letting intra-party conflicts interfere with national issues, creating Frankensteins of Jarnail Singh variety (and please recollect that after 'his negotiated' arrest in 1981 he was released without any charges at the direct intervention of the prime minister), and then not content with that, condoning their activities as of 'religious leaders'; a response that was always too late, too muddled and never outside of electoral arithmetic; overcentralisation, not letting local leadership assert themselves; a disdainful attitude. When Punjab was on the boil appoint A P Sharma as governor, when it begins to actually burn then change him. It is an unending list and we would be gravely in error if we let ourselves believe that with the army's action in the Golden Temple, our problems have been resolved, hence more failures are not likely to be added to it. The real test in nation forming in Punjab is yet to come. The army will have to be withdrawn sooner rather than later. If thereafter, the attitude of the government is going to be as we have witnessed it in Assam, then the consequences will be disastrous. A dominant sector and party moved by political ambition and religious enthusiasm cannot return to the ordinary level of society and common occupations of life without feeling some discontent and enmity. That is the context in Punjab. Our attempts, within that context, will determine the trends.

been found. There is total blackout of all other kinds of news, but that of limited official handouts. Punjab continues to be bound by a state-wide curfew. It has received a body blow. Or is it Punjab alone that has been visited upon by such a staggering infliction? Is it not the whole of the country?

I find little to be satisfied about in this whole sorry chain of events. I do continue to believe that the employment of the army, in this role, was wrong and not just because it was belated. That, political decisiveness and firm action, in this land of Punjab, at the initial stages would have saved many innocent lives; that the employment of the army would have been unnecessary if other law and order agencies had received the needed political direction, in the right manner, and at the right time. That the employment of troops in putting right gross political failures is counter-productive because the services, in the process, get politicised and also because they are able to contend only with the immediate, not the basic. This is an immensely saddening development. It is also frustrating because appeals to the government to have the courage of their convictions are futile, because there are no convictions with it.

The employment of troops in the state of Punjab has a contextual and geographic relevance entirely unique in independent India's history. It would be a mistake to treat this as routine aid to civil authority. In their

very employment is implicit a most abject admission of political incompetence. We are informed that the continued role of the army in Punjab is to 'eliminate terrorism'. This would require prolonged employment of troops in a strategically sensitive border state. The means, as has repeatedly been demonstrated in the North-East, would defeat the ends, and here in Punjab, with a kind of vehemence of its own. Whatever the immediate, short term, 'law and order' outcome of this extreme venture might be, the consequential implications, for our nation, are not of the superficial kind. To my mind, all this demonstrates, yet again, that our response to the challenges of nation building continue to be pitifully short-sighted, reactive, belated, and inadequate.

What goes towards accenting the topicality of the book is the synchronous emergence of fundamentalism in our country. Wheels of governance have turgidly ground to a near halt. By and large, we have stopped expecting anything of it. The antics of the so-called ruling and governing class, indeed of politicians as such, are treated like those of some alien beings, who do what they do and perform as if out on a limb, entirely for their own benefit. Meanwhile, almost as a nation, we opt out of the system, which continues to operate in a kind of make-believe.

**W**hat constitutes the Indian nation? Our concept of 'nationhood' was, and continues to be, amorphous; an almost intangible, near philosophical, subconscious acceptance, rooted in a mythical past. Whenever an attempt has been made to give it shape, it has invariably been in the imagery of what was, a recreation and a recapturing. Some indefinable threads of barely recognised consciousness have strung all these together. Our strength and weakness, both lie precisely in this. Strength, being an all-pervading, shapeless whole, has defied definition and capture. It has, therefore, survived the many centuries of foreign domination, largely intact but also mainly in an introverted form. The ease with which we were periodically made subject was precisely because this consciousness of 'nationhood' was so loose. This was and continues to be our weakness. Because, when the central idea is cloudlike, the constituent droplets of that 'cloud', would, for sheer preservation, have to have a stronger 'cellular structure'. That cellular structure has at its 'molecular core' a reality of region, language, *jati*, caste etc'.

Whenever a large 'Indianness' is difficult to identify with, then it is the more comfortable 'cellular reality' that we seek shelter in. Our difficulties are compounded by our leadership. The obliteration of dis-

tinctions between State, Government, Party and Person having been achieved on deliberate purpose, we are now the victims of a blatant and criminal misuse of State machinery for partisan purposes. In the face of a near total moral decay of the State, law and order questions inevitably predominate. Here again our responses are of the simplistic *ad hoc* variety; not accepting that more laws do not catch more criminals and that it is not axiomatic that to have a law is to also have justice. To paraphrase a very wise Indian, there are three ancient requirements, which our history has taught us as being the absolute *sine qua non* of the Indian State: 'Iqbal, izzat and arz'. *Iqbal*, is untranslatable but its meaning is easier understood if it is used in the negative: 'This government's *iqbal* is lost'. *Izzat*, applies both ways, to the governing and to the governed. If either of them are not deserving of it or do not get it, the consequences are anarchic. *Arz* is used to denote accessibility; a citizen, freely and with dignity, being able to reach the agencies of the State, to be helped, to demand and to obtain a due redressal of his grievances.

Whilst a 'secular' India must stand for a total separation of the State from any kind of religious inclination, bias, or leaning, it ought to simultaneously denote a forward-looking, scientific spirit. What we have reduced 'secularism' to is a kind of competitive equalism, indulged in by the State, amongst the various faiths that this country abounds in. This is a gross perversion of a noble concept and if we persist with our perversions, then the consequences can only be ruinous. Even now we are paying a price for all this, by a manifestation of enhanced communalism: 'criminalisation of politics and politicisation of crime'.

In this land of five rivers, great men have done great deeds. Yet we are stymied by what we face today in Punjab. Perhaps, because we are all of so much shorter stature. Robert Lovett has, at one place, said 'good judgement is usually the result of experience and experience is frequently the result of bad judgment'. The foreword says, the 'present crisis in Punjab is complex and unprecedented. Every Indian at home and abroad, is affected by this. Some of us who have been engaged in the understanding of this phenomena, are, at times, at a loss to articulate our formulations'. I am led to believe that possibly this admission of inability is a result of vertical and horizontal transference of incapacity. Otherwise how else is one to explain a collective immobility in the face of issues that Punjab raises? It also touches upon the use of religion in Indian politics.

It quotes the late President Zakir Hussain, 'faced with one disaster, the partition of the country, because unscrupulous and not infrequently

irreligious politicians exploited the religious sentiments of simple people... we see another disaster in the offing because of the increasing disregard for human and moral values... no effort is made to distinguish between the religion that seeks to divide humanity and between what gives meaning to life and lends eternity to its moments. That is a fatal defect'. There is another aspect that is brought out that it was Mahatma Gandhi who first used religion in 'contemporary history of India', but then, 'the Mahatma tried to provide a moral basis for politics'. And that is precisely our dilemma. It is because we are unable to, in a practical manner, reconcile the contradictions between two equally valid assertions, that we fall between them. 'Morality' in India has at its foundation subscription to faith, no matter of which calling. Secularising the State was certainly not intended to turn it into an 'immoral' agency. It was to remove it as outside of preoccupations with religious observances, contributing neither to their growth, promotion, encouragement, nor to their decline. The Constitution that we adopted for ourselves, provides for 'protection', not 'use' of any religion or its 'promotion' by the State.

If India, in the decades of independence, had been a truly secular State, there would then not have been a need for any of its constituent units to assert only their religious identity, as the Akali Dal in Punjab does. I think that is what lies at the heart of our present troubles in Punjab. In that state there exists a close identification between 'Church and State', 'religion and politics'. When, therefore, in response to an assertion of 'religious demands', the government showed a willingness to 'negotiate' them, not only was a legitimacy granted, by a supposedly secular agency, to a wholly sectarian demand but there was also implicit in that action, an acceptance of a nexus between the religious and the political. All subsequent attempts to separate the two are insulting by implication. Admittedly, there is a historical background to all this. The book while discussing communalism, obviously by deliberate choice, opts not to go beyond an arbitrary date: 1920. For a more comprehensive understanding of today's Punjab, we have to at least survey that background, though very broadly.

**G**uru Nanak's inspiring pronouncements were an articulation of his search for Truth. They were unquestionably and wholly religious. The sheer requirement of a preservation of his thoughts, then new and seminal, against the wear of time and against an ever increasing presence of proselytising Islam, slowly imparted to them a political contour. By the time of Guru Arjun Dev, we witness

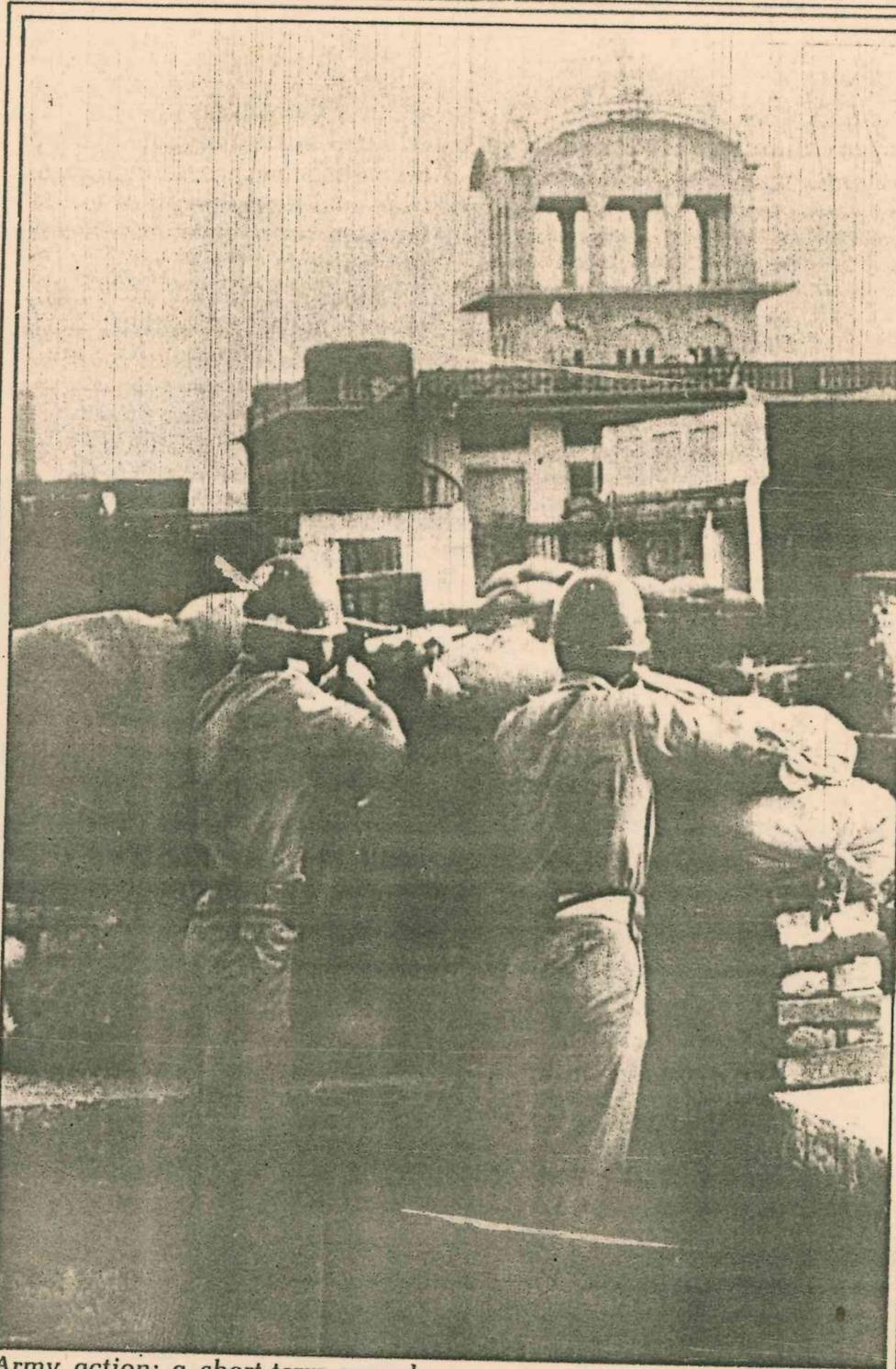


PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

of that spirit. Political assertion, in the face of implacable adversaries, had to result in militarisation though not always or inevitably in the constitution of a 'State'. 'By the energy', as Gen Sir Charles Gough says, 'of the great Guru, the Khalsa had been developed into a far from contemptible military force; differing from that of ordinary chiefs in its extraordinary recuperative capacity, since the rallying power remained so long as the Faith survived. It would be misleading to speak of a body so loosely organised as a 'State'; perhaps the most correct idea will be maintained by describing the Sikhs as forming from this time a commonwealth, military in character, and based on religion.' It is this aspect which we face even today, though admittedly in an altered form. Religion, political articulation of it, seeking a distinctly set apart platform and wanting the agency of a 'State' through which to impart legitimacy and identity to such a platform.

Hence we have a situation in which the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) becomes the religious arm of the Sikh body, its political flexion being the task of the Akali Dal. The military element is now a tradition, largely in service, often enough in frustrated violence and terrorism. After the passing away of the tenth Guru and from the crushing to death of Banda Bairagi in 1716, till almost a century later there was no effective political combination of all Sikhs. Perhaps, the first stirrings of such a Sikh commonwealth came in the wake of the battle of Panipat in 1761, which left no force in North-West India, other than Ahmed Shah Abdalee. Locally powerful *Missals* emerged. Despite this the Sikhs of Manjha seldom acted in concert with those of Malwa. In the latter the 'Phulkia Missal' dominated. North of the Sutlej the 'Ahluwalias', the 'Ramgarhahs', the 'Bhangis' gained in strength after the passing away of Ahmed Shah.

By the first decades of the 19th century, a young and dynamic Ranjit Singh, supported by the invaluable friendship of Fattah Singh Ahluwalia brought this entire body under his sway. During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time we witness the remarkable phenomenon of the rise of the Lahore Kingdom, spreading over the whole North-West, upto Kabul and having Kashmir as part of it. But as the Arabs say, 'Once the house is built, the decline starts'. That started even whilst Ranjit Singh was alive. The two Sikh wars and the annexation of Punjab by the British was complete by mid-nineteenth century. There had come into being a state; Punjab—dominated by the Sikh, but not inhabited by them alone, nor indeed having only one faith or for that matter unilingual, for even in Ranjit Singh's Punjab, Persian flourished. Now that state



Army action: a short-term remedy

had been annexed, the British ruled over it, while in Malwa, the Phulkia rulers, like their counterparts elsewhere in India, contented themselves with learning the intricacies of an alien etiquette and squabbled over gun salutes.

From the mutiny, in 1857, a new role came to be adopted by the Sikhs. The British patronised them; lands, jagirs in distant UP and enrolment in the army became the sought after symbols of it. The two great World Wars and the periods intervening saw a greater and greater assimilation of Punjab and its inhabitants. If we are to attempt to establish major landmarks of early 20th century, we would perhaps include in them the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the Colonisation of Land Bill, the Land Arbitration Act, the ghastly happenings of Jalianwalla Bagh, the Montague-Chemsford Reforms of 1919, the Gurudwara Act of 1925 and the Government of India Act of 1935. What did all this bring about? Separate electorates, communal reservations, a formalisation and a kind of a granting of state recognition to the urban-rural divide in Punjab. It is perhaps this which the authors have in mind when they assert that 'communalisation' of

politics in Punjab really begins around 1920. These three measures: the Colonisation Bill, Land Arbitration Act and the Gurudwara Act certainly achieved two purposes.

Firstly, the urban-rural divide acquired Hindu-Sikh overtones and secondly, with State sponsored elections to SGPC, the gurudwara and its control became an object to be strived for because it was the only purely Sikh political platform. Even during the Cripps Mission of 1942, Akali Dal advocated an *Azad Punjab*. It is not as if there were no other assertions. The Ghadar Party is perhaps the most outstanding example. But then simultaneously we witnessed the demonstration of strength by the Unionist Party. There were then some distinctly identifiable strands in Punjab: the Sikhs of Punjab largely rural, influenced by the Akali thought but not with any kind of unanimity because of the twin factors of seeking independence from the British and of dangers inherent to them in an impending creation of Pakistan, the Sikhs states of Malwa, largely inconsequential in influencing a fast developing situation, the urban adherents of the Congress-led struggle for independence and the follow-

ing of the Unionist party. There is then the predominating influence of Arya Samaj over the Hindus of Punjab, largely urban. Now these were by no means water-tight compartments. Yet such a delineation is essential if only to grasp the historical origins of our present day divides. It is in such a situation that Punjab was partitioned and a wholesale migration of population followed. Not at all surprisingly, the first issue that asserted itself was language; in October 1949, we had the Sachar formula. Territorial identity was next and in March 1956, we had the regional formula. Despite two immigrations from the Akali Dal to the Congress, in 1948 and 1956, their separate political assertions had to come about.

These, it cover in great detail. What it is completely and inexplicably silent about are two of the major Akali agitations of earlier years—that led by Master Tara Singh and the subsequent one by Sant Fateh Singh. Events resulting in a trifurcation of Punjab also deserved better treatment. The treatment of the historical setting is perhaps the major failing of this book. The authors are candid enough to admit it. 'This study as mentioned..., does not make an indepth analysis of the historical events that may have contributed to the contemporary crisis'. It is, however, the explanation provided by them that is unsatisfactory; 'such an analysis requires a vigorous, scientific study of historical developments'.

One would have expected that Punjab, above all, provides excellent material for an objective and empirical analysis of ruination that can be brought about by narrow, sectarian and communal politics. There is a feeling of being cheated when the authors of the book pass on by suggesting that Punjab's 'complex reality cannot be comprehended and remedied with the help of a mono-casual explanation and solution. It requires a rigorous enquiry into a formation of communal consciousness. Overall view of the political groupings, electoral politics and the economic scenario in Punjab will, however, lead us to an understanding of communalism at its operative and ideological levels'. That is precisely the point, but where is the explanation that will enable us to understand? A chapter in the book, dealing with the Punjab crisis, 'Through the Communal Prism' is perhaps the most unsatisfactory. Then the authors really tie themselves in knots when they attempt to describe what communalism is. They say various things, some of them repetitive, some not really needed, some contradictory. No one could possibly find fault with an explanation which suggests that 'communalism is the political, economic and social asser-

# Appeasement politics

**PUNJAB CRISIS:**  
Context and trends  
edited by Pramod Kumar,  
Manmohan Sharma, Atul  
Sood and Ashwani Handa  
Centre for Research in  
Rural and Industrial  
Development; Rs. 110

**B. K. CHUM**

**E**VERY crisis has its roots in historical, political and socio-economic developments and the current Punjab crisis is no exception. The border state has witnessed numerous crises since Independence. But the present crisis is qualitatively different in that it has, for the first time, introduced religious-political violence into the state.

In the past, attempts have been made to analyse the crisis through piecemeal approaches. The book under review is a major effort to treat the problem in a more comprehensive manner. It not only analyses the role of the economic, political and communal forces, but also suggests short-term and long-term strategies to meet the situation.

The study points out that communalism is not a pre-c. italist but a modern concept which incorporates some of the traditional ideological elements. But the content of present-day communalism "derives sustenance from the new system of production and ideology". Communalism in Punjab has spread fast in the past few years because of "relative stagnation in agriculture and lopsided industrial development which provides meagre scope for expansion of investment opportunities in industry and trade". The study says that communalism has been used by sectional interests "to exploit and mobilise people for maintaining and

enhancing their economic and political power".

The book holds all the political parties in Punjab responsible for aggravating the problem and adding to its complexity by using communalism. "The politics of accommodation pursued by the Congress all these years has been an ad hoc response to the various complex problems. Now there has been a shift from the accommodation of more moderates to the appeasement of extremists which has had disastrous consequences. The attempts at appeasement and efforts by the Congress to induce a sense of confidence in the extremists, were motivated by a desire to contain such elements. This, however, has not been feasible since the appeasement of demands of the extremists such as the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib resolution in toto, is not possible under the existing socio-economic and political arrangements. The raucous insistence of the extremists and the continued pampering of this section could isolate the Akali moderates. This could further strengthen the sense of discrimination prevalent among the Sikh communalists. The section of the Akalis eager to reach a negotiated settlement should not be ignored. To do so would strengthen the hands not of the Congress (I) but rather those of the extremists."

The book refers to the dilemma of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forced on them by their ideological and economic compulsions. This dilemma

has made the RSS ineffective and compelled its support base to look to the Congress (I) as the only possible integrative force. In the case of the BJP, the present posture is a conscious choice, determined by its desire of not appearing to be blatantly communal for fear of antagonising the minorities.

Tracing the trends in Akali politics, the book states that during the mid-'70s, three strong parallel trends surfaced in Sikh politics - the conformist-communalists, secessionist-communalists and incremental-communalists. After Sant Fateh Singh, the three communalist groups threw up their own respective leaders and demands. For instance, the emergence of a strong Sikh fundamentalist leadership represented by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale questioned the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee's (SGPC) established leadership. The incremental-conformist communalists advocate more autonomy for the states and greater claims over water resources, etc. This trend represents the interests of the rich Jat peasantry in particular. The Prakash Singh Badal faction within Akali politics provides it its leadership.

The secessionist-communalism trend enjoys the sympathy and support of some individuals amongst the disgruntled unemployed youths, peasantry and urban Sikh traders. They propagate and use the feeling that Sikhs are either rulers or rebels and that they are being treated as second class citizens by a "Hindu majority state".

Dealing with the role of the Left, the authors express the opinion that the Left parties and non-communal forces have been rendered ineffective for want of a clear understanding of the situation. The past alignments of the Left parties with communal elements for electoral gains have tended to legitimise the communal politics of other political groups. In the absence of a clear-cut left alternative and in the context of rising unemployment and a stagnant economy, the religious fundamentalist trend appeared to provide a psychological solution to the increasing miseries of the people.

The authors feel that a long-term strategy should be formulated even at the expense of foregoing short-term electoral or other gains. "There is a need for the left and non-communal parties to evaluate their own past or present electoral alliances". The increasing communalisation of the secular spheres makes it difficult to find a solution to the problem which otherwise can be resolved. The negotiated settlement of the demands raised by various groups, involved, they feel, may serve to alleviate the current intensity of the problem. This may, in turn, allow time for and provide an environment conducive to the organising and effective functioning of the secular forces as an alternative to the communal forces.

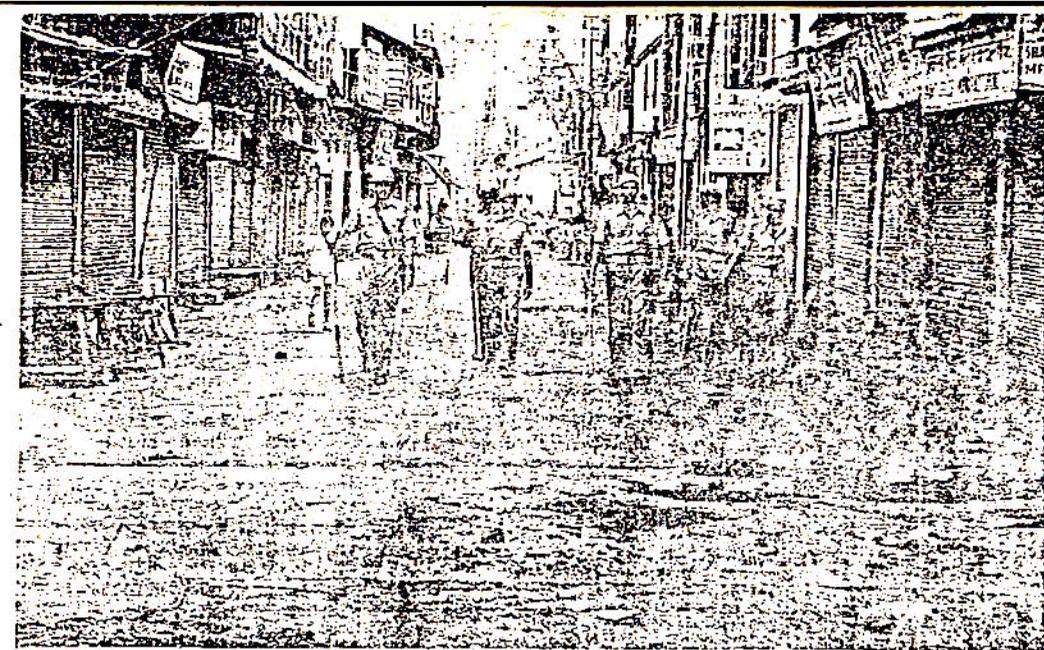
They argue that the major focus of these secular forces has to be the mobilisation of the peasantry which, so far, has refrained from participating or even sympathising with

the activities of the extremists amongst the Hindu and the Sikh communalists. Comprehension of the problem must match the understanding of the emergence of various political and economic groups. For example, the incremental-conformist communalists can perhaps be persuaded to refrain from joining the secessionist-communalist ranks. These are essentially short-term solutions.

Planned industrialisation may help in the accommodation of emerging dominant agrarian and trading interests. However, it would be wrong to infer that the emerging agrarian and well-entrenched industrial interests would work together for the formation of India into a structured nation. The projection of a clash of interests between the emerging agrarian bourgeoisie and the 'central' bourgeoisie has added a new dimension.

The need is to create a class of local industrial elite from within this emerging agrarian section, whose interests then (as a consequence of dependence through linkages, market requirements, etc.) would be in consonance with that of the national industrialists. The authors, too, admit that this question requires deeper analysis and understanding.

While the book provides a detailed analysis of some of the causes of the contemporary Punjab crisis and also dwells in detail on the role of various elements, it would have been more proper in the context of the Punjab situation if issues like Centre-state relations had been dealt with by the authors more comprehensively.



## Meerut riots: Some alarming signals

By Pramod Kumar  
and Dildar Khan

The authors have been engaged for the past six years in the study of communalism at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh, headed by Rashpal Malhotra. The Centre has provided more than 12 exhaustive studies conducted through interdisciplinary approach and selected riot-prone and riot-free districts in the states of UP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

Recent riots in Meerut cannot be merely dismissed as vandalism or anti-social elements or conspiracy of some Pakistani nationalists or handiwork of the few communal elements in the police and administration or slackness of the law and order machinery.

This is not to deny that anti-social elements, conspiracy by foreigners and communal elements in the police do have a role to play. These elements are the instruments used by vested interest and individuals or groups adhering to a normative value pattern which has its basis in communal ideology. In this context it must be understood that these elements are not used merely for incremental economic or political incentives. The motive behind using these sections as instruments for fanning communal frenzy are many and

there is something deeper in it.

The increase in duration, intensity, area coverage and participation of larger population in the recent Meerut riots has been alarming. A critical and comparative analysis of communal riots in Meerut since Independence clearly shows that the latest riots were predated with certain new and dangerous trends.

Some new trends were noticed with regard to participation of the people. For instance, the participation in previous riots used to be limited. The participants being usually hired riff-raff, delinquent youth, petty artisans and shop-keepers, unskilled workers and hawkers. But this time, perhaps for the first time in the history of communal rioting, people living in the same localities attacked each other, in connivance with riff-raffs from outside.

There were a significant number of instances when a Hindu neighbour attacked his Muslim neighbour and vice-versa. Some of the respondents interviewed by us pointed out that residents living in the same locality, instead of coming to the rescue of one's neighbours, either joined hands with the rioters and indulged in looting, arson and killing or stood apart as silent spectators. One of them, who was still under trauma, remarked: "It is a shame that one fears the man with whom one has lived all these years, with whom one has shared intimate moments. It is not the place worth living where one is scared of shadows".

This brutalisation of human psyche

is a clear indication of degeneration of human relationship. It was shocking to find that people were preparing themselves, both physically and mentally, to live and die in a violent environment. This trend is contrary to the natural human urge to strive for making society more humane.

Another new and dangerous trend noticed was the participation of people from lower middle and middle strata of population in looting, arson and killing. This new trend of unabashed and open participation in communal riots by this section of the society has much more serious country-wide repercussions than being only confined to Meerut city. In previous riots, this section of the society did nurture antagonistic feelings, but never actively participated in communal rioting.

It was also revealing that a large section of Harijans also participated in the riots and attacked localities inhabited by Muslims. So much so that in some areas the rioting appeared to be between Harijans and the Muslims. This new tendency imparted ferocity to communal rioting, and also provided the caste Hindus with a vanguard.

During the course of our survey in 1982, it was observed that the conversion of Hindus into Islam had created a new source of tension. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Arya Samaj leadership, due to their ideological and circumstantial compulsion, launched a movement to bring Harijans into the mainstream of Hinduism by highlighting the perceived negative aspects of

the Islamic culture. Mobile temples to facilitate Harijans to perform religious practices and rituals were also introduced. During the 1982 riots, a large chunk of Harijans had also participated in the orgy, as if to defend the glory of Hinduism.

This increase in participation of diverse sections of the society is symptomatic of pervasiveness and increasing extremity of communal ideology. This is also a pointer towards the trend and increasing acceptance of elements specific to communal ideology. It also signifies the legitimacy that has come to be attached with the perception which projects social relations in the form of communal cleavages.

One may therefore assert without fear of contradiction that such a situation was the direct outcome of the communal antagonism preached and practised by various political and social organizations.

The trends of increasing communalization was noticeable even during the 1982 survey. The controversies relating to cultural and religious roots were being debated in local vernacular press as well as in day-to-day

interaction among the people. For instance, an editorial in an Urdu newspaper on 22 March, 1982, tried to add to the controversy by reviving the story that when Hazrat Bale Mian Sahib reached Meerut to propagate Islam, he waged a war against the Hindu rulers of Meerut. During the war, Bale Mian lost a finger which was buried opposite the Chandi Mandir, on which the Mazar of Bale Mian was erected (it is still there). Later, it is alleged, that Chandi Devi appeared before Hazrat Bale Sahib and 'apologized' for her mistake and subsequently embraced Islam!

Not only the role of local vernacular papers, which are mostly communal in orientation, but graffiti on the walls are loaded to inflame dormant communal sentiments. A case in point was the re-appearance on the walls of Meerut of the slogan coined in Lahore after Pakistan was formed: "Has ke liya Pakistan, Larh ke lenge Hindustan" (We got Pakistan without much effort, will now conquer India through war). A Vishwa Hindu Parishad poster read "Aar Hindustan mein rehna hoga, to Vande Mataram Kahna hoga" (If you must stay in India, you will have to recite Vande Mataram). (This was actually being projected on the screen during movie shows in the theatres in 1982.)

During our recent visit we found that such communal assertions and slogans full of hatred have become more blatant and distorted. Announcements were being made even from public and religious platforms on loud-

speakers on the 'danger' to one's religious group identities and need to unite together to protect it! For instance, an announcement was being made from Imiliyan Masjid, asking the followers of the faith to join hands and defend their religion. Similarly, followers of Vishwa Hindu Parishad were spreading rumours, full of hatred towards Muslims and need for unity among the Hindus.

Religious group identities get strengthened through such propaganda. It is also argued by communalists that their co-religionists face hardships because they are unorganized, and this will cause the extinction of their religion itself. In each case identity is strongly projected to be in danger every time a religious procession is disrupted or the public performance of religious practices is infringed upon by members of the other religious group or even by miscreants. Although the blame for any untoward incident following the infringement is laid squarely on the administration, the exaggeration of religious group discrimination and a panicky appeal to co-religionists for unity is simultaneously made. Even the scale of organizing the public performance of religious rituals becomes an issue for competition among rival communalists!

Strangely, even the so-called secular political party like the Congress was polarised on communal lines. Majority of the Congress leaders who happened to be Hindus were vociferous about the damage done to the property and to the life of their co-religionists. Whereas, leaders who happened to be Muslims were highlighting the same in the case of their co-religionists. A similar trend was also noticed during 1982 riots. In order to keep its support base intact, specially when Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal were actively reinforcing and strengthening 'Hindu identity' and their increasing appeal amongst Hindus (a traditional support base of Congress), local leadership was following a policy of appeasing communalists of both the groups rather than adopting a secular approach to politics.

Here, it is relevant to point out that political groups using communalism merely as an instrument add to the legitimacy sought by political groups using and propagating communalism as an ideology. Individuals or factions within the Congress may gain in the short run, but in the long run it is the political groups ideologically committed to the communalism like the RSS, the Jamat-e-Islami, etc, will gain.

Such an opportunist use would only cause reckless acceleration towards extreme form of communalism. Nevertheless, communal politics as such remains a potent and criminal force as a propagator of communal ideology leading to communal riots.

(To be concluded)

# Commercial component as additional fuel

By Pramod Kumar  
and Dildar Khan

The authors have been engaged for the past six years in the study of communalism at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh, headed by Rashpal Malhotra. The Centre has provided more than 12 exhaustive studies conducted through interdisciplinary approach and selected riot-prone and riot-free districts in the states of UP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

This is the second part. The first part appeared on Friday last.

In all the previous riots in Meerut most of the affected localities were in the old part of city. For instance, the following mohallas were affected by communal riots up to 1982: Azad Nagar, Bhambua, Jattiwara, Prahlad Nagar, Gurdi Bazar, Islamabad, Ismile Nagar, Khair Nagar Gate, Naqarchiya, Shahghasa, Moripara, etc. Only two localities affected by rioting, namely, Gujjar Ibrahim and Brahmampur were from outer part of Meerut.

In the recent riots mainly nine localities in the old city were affected, whereas as many as 13 localities in the outskirts of Meerut city were engulfed. For instance, the localities in old city affected by recent riots were: Bhambua Pul, Gurdi Bazar, Gola Kaun, Cheepiwada, Valley Bazar and Kotla, etc. The localities in the outskirts affected were: Brahmampur, Delhi Gate, Saket, Subhash Nagar, Sadar Bazar, Lal Kurli, Naucharai, Shambu Gate, Civil Lines, Begum Sarai, Shashtri Nagar, Hapur Road, Pilokheri, Kailash, Pun, etc.

Another trend noticed this time was that the localities in locational confrontation with a locality most of whose inhabitants belong to a religious group perceived to be antagonistic were more vulnerable to communal rioting. The visual impression which one gathered in Meerut was that the Hindu majority mohallas enclose the Muslim majority ones in a shell-like formation, except in the south-western portion. For instance, Shahghasa, the site of 1982 communal riots, is Muslim majority mohalla, surrounded by Hindu majority mohallas in the south. Its boundary touches Khandaik and Cheepiwara in the north and Moripara in the west. It serves as border area for the rioters belonging to both the religious groups.

The riot-hit Muslim majority mohallas, i.e. Ismile Nagar, Gurdi

Bazar, Islamabad, are in locational confrontation with Hindu majority mohallas like Chatta Anantram, Kailashpuri, Madhunagar, Kabari Bazar, Cheepiwada and Chahmenarrah. The riot-hit Hindu majority mohallas, i.e. Prahlad Nagar, Jattiwara, Lala-kabazar, are in direct locational confrontation with Muslim majority mohallas of Azad Nagar, Kher Nagar, Kotla, etc.

In Meerut, the central business district (CBD) is located in the inner city, which is also an area where most of the riot-hit and sensitive areas are located. This CBD is the commercial centre of the city where wholesale trade in 'khadar' takes place, whereas retail business has been decentralized to areas such as Sadar Bazar and Begum Bridge. Alongside the massive transactions in the 'Khadar' trade, the traditional household industry of making scissors is also located here.

In both cases it is generally the Muslims who happen to be artisans, and majority of traders happen to be Hindus. A reasonable assumption would be that both the religious groups would prefer to avoid communal violence of any kind due to their economic inter-dependence.

The recent trend has been that some of the Muslims are also emerging as traders. The reasons for the emergence and the growing prosperity of the new traders are based on factors like Muslims traders forwarding loans to Muslim artisans and workers and buying their products. Hindu traders have started believing that if they advanced money to the Muslim artisans, the latter may instigate riots to absolve themselves of credit liability.

Such beliefs arise from actual or pre-

tended ignorance about market conditions in the household industry operating within a capitalist economy.

Trade in cloth, particularly, has a greater credit component; some of which is advanced by organized credit institutions but much more is advanced by wholesalers, middlemen and retailers.

The amount of credit varies with the market demand of commodities, i.e. higher the demand the more the likelihood of faster circulation of money leading to cash payments. Inversely, in conditions of relative depression, payments on a credit basis becomes more predominant. Such compulsions of the market are projected as benefiting only one section of traders, the Muslims. Competition arising from a clash of economic interests is thereby given the form of communal antagonism.

The tension arising from the sickness of administration and the alleged involvement of policemen, particularly personnel of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), turned large mobs into violent one, which in turn made the police force ineffective.

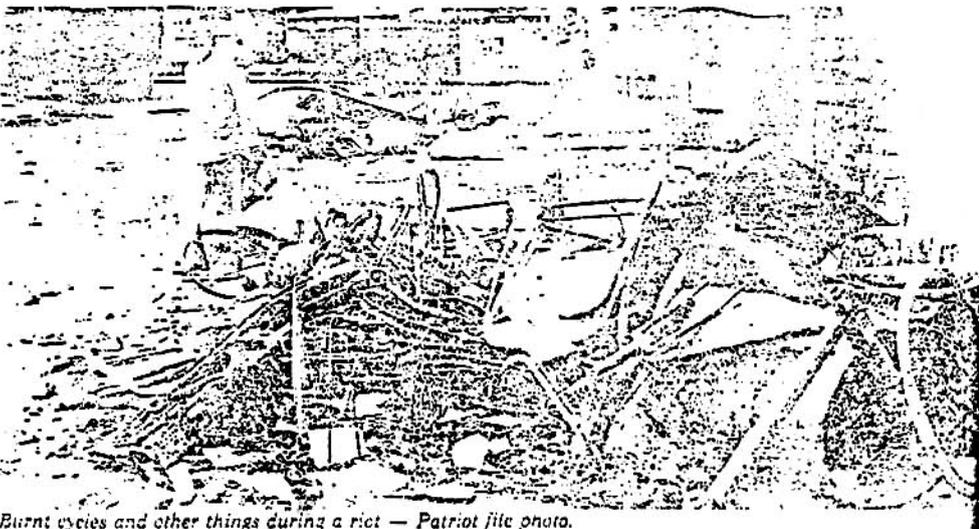
A question worth examining is why did the administration and police find it difficult to control the communal flare-up. During the 1982 survey, it was categorically known to the administration three months before hand that riots were about to erupt in Meerut. Therefore, one is perplexed, how could an administration be so insensitive unless there was political interference against taking preventive measures this time.

It was noticed that in certain cases

the administration and the police played a partisan role, which provided ferocity and longer duration to communal rioting. It was also noted that officials were demoralized due to political pressures, frequent transfers and lack of encouragement to experiment with new ideas. Ad hocism, cock-eyed perception and an indifferent attitude added fuel to the fire. No provision was made to meet retrogressive situations which are necessary consequences of development activities.

Increasing religiosity, the use of communal symbols, haphazard urbanization, fierce competition in trade and for jobs, communalized politics, non-implementation of democratic institutions and frequent misuse of military to resolve politico-economic problems, displacement and non-absorption of workers and clustering of religious or caste groups provide sufficient conditions for communal rioting. These conditions derive their life force from a non-expanding economy and operation of communal ideology.

The under-developed capitalist economy has failed to solve the basic problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality which breed frustration and generate unhealthy competition for the inadequate social and economic opportunities. In the absence of a secular and Left alternative, religious fundamentalism appears to provide a misplaced psychological solace to the increasing miseries of the people. The failure to launch correct and consistent ideological and political struggle for the spread of class consciousness has left a barren ground for communal ideologies to persist.



Burnt cycles and other things during a riot — Patriot file photo.

# Need for reposing faith in people

by Pramod Kumar

**T**HE issues relating to the progressive revival of democratic institutions and norms or continuation of "masked authoritarianism" have assumed significant importance after the 1989 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab. There has been a consistent opposition to hold elections to other democratic institutions in the state of Punjab, which has brought to the surface a larger question relating to the use of democratic methods as an antidote to terrorism. Unfortunately, the proponents of the use of the repressive police machinery to eliminate the terrorists, are guilty of the same perverse wisdom which the proponents of terrorism suffer from. The latter feel that it is necessary and desirable to use terror as a substitute for political agitation or mass mobilisation. Their rationale is that terror is the only way through which they can destroy the massive state structure and bring about the perceived social and political changes.

The Indian state also seems to be of the view that it is only with the help of excessive use of physical violence against the terrorists that it is possible to restore confidence and faith of the people in the system and also to subsume the fear generated by terrorism. It appears that both the Indian state and terrorists do not have faith in people's power and patience to mobilise masses for a long drawn political and ideological struggle.

## Analysing situation

If one tries to analyse the situation from 1980 onwards, one finds that the state and political parties have been shying away from launching an ideological and political struggle against terrorism. What in fact the state has been doing is fighting its battles with the help of the police. And it was within this limited intervention that Ribeiro's policy of bullet for bullet and now the Mufti's "Gun for Gun" was propounded and implemented. When this policy was launched, it was stated by Mr Ribeiro, the then DGP, that there were 74 terrorists, but after more than five years of its implementation the government claimed that there are more than

3000 active terrorists after killing thousands of them. In spite of these policies, the terrorists' mobility and operational activities have expanded manifold.

It is also wrong to say that only during the last four months of President's rule has the situation worsened. In fact, the situation has been deteriorating from 1981 onwards, except in the year 1985 when the Punjab Accord was signed and elections to the State Assembly were held. Terrorist killings increased to the extent of 485 per cent in the year 1986 with 1985 as base year. The killings further multiplied by 86 per cent, and 96 per cent in 1987 and 1988 respectively. The police killings increased by more than 500 per cent by the year 1987-88 with 1985 as base year.

## Repressive machinery

The excessive use of the police repressive machinery has contributed to "forced disunity, dispersion and helplessness" among the people. Had there been some serious thinking on launching a political and ideological struggle against terrorism, and not merely against the terrorist, the damage would have been much less. This error was the result of lack of appreciation of the need for liberal democratic norms and politics. It is this which has provided a basis for politics becoming deadlier in the post-1980 phase. The Indian ruling elite has been guided more by the threat perception rather than by the need for liberal democratic institutions like judiciary, press, party system and legislatures and panchayati raj.

The police has been isolated and given vast powers to perform even the functions of other democratic institutions. Policemen, like terrorists, are in a position to annihilate any attempt at opposition. They can arrest anyone they desire at any time. For instance, the incident at the house of the Deputy Commissioner, Bathinda, is an aggravated reflection of the police raj. According to a news item published in the Punjabi Tribune, a senior police officer in an evening party at the house of Deputy Commissioner got angry when some-

body questioned his thesis on the Punjab crisis. The SSP ordered a siege of the Deputy Commissioner's house and did not allow the guests to return home till the next morning and that too after the Deputy Commissioner personally requested him to lift the siege. It is this kind of exercise of limitless power which has to be curtailed and given back to the democratically elected bodies and other institutions.

It is in this context that there is a need for giving a massive dose of democracy to Punjab. Another question which has been raised in the political debate by Mr V. N. Narayanan in his rejoinder to Satyapal Dang is regarding the 1989 Lok Sabha election mandate being "perverse". It has been observed by Mr Satyapal Dang that "the Lok Sabha poll in Punjab strengthened terrorism because terrorists were given full freedom to terrorise voters especially in rural areas and thereby vitiate a really democratic electoral choice." Now the question is: who gave the terrorists the freedom to terrorise? Naturally, the Indian state. Instead of condemning the state apparatus for giving this freedom, Mr Dang has concluded that it is the election which has strengthened terrorism. One can agree with Mr Dang that elections have produced Hitlers. But it will be wrong to conclude that elections have produced only Hitlers. And that Hitlers have been produced only through elections.

## Built-in leverage

Let us assume for a while that there is a built-in leverage for the growth of terrorism in the electoral process itself. Even if it is so, one must not forget the dual role of these liberal democratic institutions and processes. It is possible to use elections to fight fear psychosis and at the same time it is also possible to generate fear and win elections. The similar duality of functions exist in the working of other liberal democratic institutions like the judiciary and the press. For instance, a court of law may release an individual whom the administration has charged with serious crimes. If the same

logic is applied one can conclude that the judiciary is strengthening terrorism and courts should be closed down. The press too performs a dual role. It is possible that a few newspapers may publish inflammatory material. The remedy for such a situation is not to clamp censorship or mark out newspapers for harsh treatment. Because it is the same press which offers a chance for secular and democratic forces to reach the people. The point is that all these democratic institutions and organs of the state apparatus offer both types opportunities i.e. to strengthen healthy tendencies (although in a limited way) as also to subvert progress.

The aim must be to enter into this historical struggle between the use and misuse of liberal democratic institutions. It is very difficult to predict who will win this struggle - forces of perversion or forces of progression. This question becomes relevant only if there is a struggle launched. But unfortunately this kind of struggle is going by default. Some political parties are shying away from the political ideological struggle with the fear that they may not lose it and others do not ideologically subscribe to these kinds of struggles.

It is, therefore, necessary to work for eliminating those conditions which create terrorism rather than merely eliminating terrorists. Unfortunately terrorism has been delinked from its social environment and ideological surroundings. This has led to the exclusion of the questioning of the conditions which have bred terrorism. The net result is that the increasing terrorism has been seen as a result of inadequacy of police apparatus and foreign hand. This has legitimated the use of "masked authoritarianism" and building up of a war hysteria with Pakistan. In fact it may be more realistic to say that retrogressive tendencies like terrorism is not a result of progressive or just system. On the contrary, it is a result of retrogressive and unjust system. The need is to reverse the trend. It can only be reversed if the existing leadership reposes its faith in people.

# Minimum Wages Act being flouted: Study

Jagtar Singh  
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
Chandigarh, Sept 21

**T**HE 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.

These 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 was completed last month. 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 labour-

ers. 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 re-rolling industries were not paying minimum wages to their workers. Interestingly, even the data supplied by the industrial establishments clearly showed that the 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 re-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 powers 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 revise 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 worker. 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 the 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.

# Whose secularism is hurt?

by Pramod Kumar

**T**HE happenings at Ayodhya have posed a challenge to the process of secularisation in India. Whose secularism has it challenged? Is it a challenge to that "secular politics" which has been practised by various political parties since 1947? The main thrust of this politics has been on the use of the slogan of secularism during political strife between discredited parties, which generally practise communal politics. During the past 45 years since Independence the concern and sensibilities of politics and society did not appropriate the secular discourse in society. In other words, the areas governed by caste or religious distortions and politics pursued by the dominant political parties have increasingly become consistent.

In the initial years after independence India's democratic polity could not find the will to fight communalism. The Hindu Code of 1956 was an admission of defeat to communal thought. The fact that the issue of the Urdu language, the AMU Bill and the establishment of Banaras Hindu University were used as political ploys indicates the level of operation of communal ideology.

During this period electoral politics was also riddled with mobilisations along caste and religious group lines with the Indian Union Muslim League, the Jana Sangh, the Shiv Sena and the Shiromani Akali Dal as the most obvious examples. However, even the known non-communal and secular parties have aligned themselves with communal parties and organisations to form governments or fight elections. This was mainly confined to the electoral arithmetic.

After the eighties communal politics not only appropriated localised communalism on an all-India scale but also initiated a process of communal redefinition of boundaries between the various religious and caste groups. For example, the caste bias of the Mandal Commission report and its use by politics by multiplying caste cleavages have provided a continuity to the caste system. Further, the collective response of the upper castes to the Mandal Commission report was equally casteist. This resulted in the formation of new caste alliances.

Similarly, the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue and its appropriation at the national level by mainstream politics streng-

thened communalism and resulted in communal polarisation. For example, the use of the notion of Ram Rajya by Gandhiji was against colonial domination. The use of Ram Rajya was also as a reference to the country's civilisation, and it transcended the boundaries of caste and religion. It was not to reinforce religious monolithism. In no way did it propagate and project Ram Rajya as synonymous with the Hindu identity. On the contrary, the recent use of the notion of Ram Rajya was antithetical to the Gandhian use of it. The

samaaj. This distorted cultural stream has become part of the dominant culture of politics.

These distortions have been present in society in the past also. But the political space it occupied was limited. The constant reinforcement and sharpening of these discourses in society and its appropriation in politics has made it functional.

Have the incidents that occurred at Ayodhya hurt this kind of "secular politics"?

Have the Ayodhya happenings posed a

**Have the happenings at Ayodhya outraged the secularism of Hinduism? Such oft-repeated assertions present Hinduism and its followers as tolerant and secular. The inference drawn is that other religions and their followers are not tolerant and secular. Not only this, the believers of other religions are projected as culturally inferior and politically and socially alien. The assumption that Hinduism is by nature plural and democratic has provided justification to the assertions that Muslims continue to live in India even after Pakistan has been granted to them, whereas in Pakistan "Hindus" have been virtually eliminated. Have the Ayodhya incidents hurt this kind of secularism? The answer to all this is a resounding No.**

meaning of the term Indian civilisation is distorted to mean "Hindu" civilisation. Ram Rajya is used to mean Hindu Rajya and Muslims are projected as enemies and are threatened for their non-compliance with this world-view. The central thrust of this point is to bring to the foreground the need for establishing a monolithic Hindu identity. Once this identity gets recognised and established - as propagated by the VHP - it will make a crucial difference in determining the personal, social and institutional relationships to the benefit of the so-called Hindu

challenge to that kind of secularism which has been offering apologies on behalf of one kind of communalism or the other? Such assertions have categorised communalism in terms of minority and majority and assumed that majority communalism is more dangerous than minority communalism. Therefore, they end up in protecting minority communalism from "majoritarianism" and, on the other hand, the proponents of majority communalism consider their assertions as a backlash of the appeasement of the minorities. This conceptual error has been part of our policy since

Independence. To S. Gopal:

"Nehru and Gandhiji... the line that it was for the Hindus as the majority community to make concessions while the communal problem lasted. This, in itself, despite the call to magnanimity, assumes a communal approach, however, sub-conscious. The argument is based on the belief that the majority community is a privileged one and the minority community has a reason to be communal."

The Gandhi-Nehru approach takes religion as synonymous with communalism. Antagonism constitutes a crucial element of communalism and in given the moral garb of religion to justify human acts like looting, rioting, arson, killing and plundering or demolishing religious places. As W.C. Smith has rightly pointed out: "History has shown many a times that religion is ready to excuse atrocities which decent men would hesitate to commit under any other name. Moreover, once a conflict has started for economic or other reasons, and then, when it assumes a communalism guise, it tends to expand to include innocent co-religionists of the real enemies. Also it tends to colour the thinking of the persons involved for all the other issues." Therefore, to expect communalism to be humane and generous is wrong.

Granting special privilege to the communalism of the minorities or the majority is counter-productive because communalism revolves around fear, insecurity and suspicion not generosity. Therefore, any policy of appeasing communalism and giving concessions to a religious group is doomed to failure. Concessions sought or demands raised on communal lines will not eliminate, rather strengthen communalism.

Have the happenings at Ayodhya outraged the secularism of Hinduism? Such oft-repeated assertions present Hinduism and its followers as tolerant and secular. The inference drawn is that other religions and their followers are not tolerant and secular. Not only this, the believers of other religions are projected as culturally inferior and politically and socially alien. The assumption that Hinduism is by nature plural and democratic has provided justification to the assertions that Muslims continue to live in India even after Pakistan has been granted to them, whereas in Pakistan "Hindus" have been virtually eliminated. Have the Ayodhya incidents hurt this kind of secularism? The answer to all this is a resounding No.

The happenings at Ayodhya have exposed the shallowness of the above mentioned understanding and practice in the name of secularism. It is an accumulated response to the opportunist and deadlier politics, and the paucity of theory and practice of secular democratic politics.

It has posed a challenge to secular and democratic pretensions of the practitioners of Indian politics, propagators of communalism under the garb of secularism and pseudo-Hindus presenting themselves as protectors of the secular traditions of Hinduism.

The operative reality of communalism and increasing intolerance within Indian society of diverse religious and cultural streams have necessitated the need for the renewal of India, rather revival of India. The questioning of the very basis of some of the realities like communalism will make the civilisation survive.

We are only a step away from fascism. "Anti-Semitism, which began as a racial prejudice, exploited as a demagogic trick, ended in the most abominable genocide of all times." Fascism in Germany first chose Jews as its target of attack and promised socialism after exterminating them for being usurers. Communalism has also chosen its targets.

# Conscience on the streets

Gurcharan Singh Chani's latest street play, revolving around Punjabi poetry in the past 20 years, boldly mirrors the scarred psyche of a brutalised society, says Pramod Kumar in Chandigarh.



CHANDIGARH RECENTLY WITNESSED Gurcharan Singh Chani's latest iconoclastic offering, the street-play *Akh Di Dehleez* (Threshold of Perception). Always in the dangerous forefront of protest theatre in the state, Chani has made the play revolve around Punjabi poetry written in the last two decades. It depicts the inhuman face of the state, the indifference of the community and the resulting dehumanisation. The poets passionately plead for the return of compassion in a brutalised society.

The universal and human aspects of these poems transcend religions, caste and even class barriers. The poets warn that the cost of ignoring the brutal violence of our times would be very high:

*Sao ton khatarnak hundai hai  
Murda shanti nal bhar jana,  
Na hona tarap da, sab sehen kar jana.  
Gharan ton nikalna kam te,  
te kam ton ghar jana.*

"The most dangerous thing of all is not to protest and to keep on doing mundane things."

*Akh Di Dehleez* starts by reminding the viewers of the productive past they once shared, and of the cruel present and faceless future that seems to be their fate as of today. Harbhajan Halwar's metaphor is pregnant with meaning:

*Khetan wich kujh si,  
sari di puni andagi,  
Khetan wich siyarah san,  
Siyaranan wich bej see....  
Khetan wich habut kujh hai, sog  
hai santap hai....*

("In the fields where there was

life, food, creation—now there is death, sorrow and tragedy").

To lay bare the complex social and ideological processes which have distorted social reality for the common people, Kumar Vikal's forceful and logical poem *Pehchaan* has been relied upon. The message is clear—inhumanity has no religion, blood has only one colour. And it is the class which eyes to offend that bears all the violence:

*Eh lahu libre kapre us jatti de ne,  
jo ghar te daftar vichkar eyie  
chalandi hai  
te jis de sapne di umar fillan  
wich beet handi hai.*

Sukhechan Mistry, in his poem *Punjab*, echoes the wounded cry of the people of Punjab when he asks for an end to the dance of death, for he wants to live and have a home where he can live in peace:



Scenes from the play: fusing poetry and stylised body movements to speak against violence as the basic idiom of social dialogue in society

*Meinun nahin chahida eh nafrat da jungle,  
Sarda shehar te maat da mangal.*

*Mein apne ghar de vohre wich ik nanha munha rukh chahunda han.*

*Akh Di Dehleez* condemns all those forces which celebrate their 'victories' over the heaps of corpses. At the same time, it also shows the servility and lack of courage of the common man. It wonders how, after all the indignities they have been made to suffer, the people are still not rising to confront the forces of

destruction. And even Engels' popular saying, "And we men and women are unfortunately so stupid that we never pluck up courage for real progress unless urged to it by sufferings that seem almost out of proportion," does not seem to be coming true.

THE PEOPLE FEAR the police and the terrorists. Even the intellectuals dare not speak out, says Surjit Patar who, perhaps, speaks for most poets when he says:

*Mein pahali satar likhda han te dar janda han,  
Raja de sipahyan ton,  
Mein dooji satar likhda han te dar janda han,  
Gurle bagian ton.*

To the few individuals who have taken up arms and are claiming to fight injustice, Surjit Patar says:

*Mein kad kahinda insaaf na mang,  
Jan eh ki haque lei cher na jang,  
par dushman di pehchaan tan kar,  
Evein na kat apne hi ang.*

"Fight for your rights and for justice. Know your enemy well. Don't cut off your own limbs".

It is imperative to identify the real reasons for the madness as well as the targets. A fragmentary diagnosis is bound to produce a tunnel vision and this is what has happened in Punjab. An absence of violence does not mean peace. The elimination of individuals involved in violent acts is just tackling the symptoms while letting the disease grow. The peace advocated in this manner is only a mirage. Avtar Pash defines peace thus:

*Shanti dukhan te sukhan wich bani sarhad utte santri di rafal hai.*

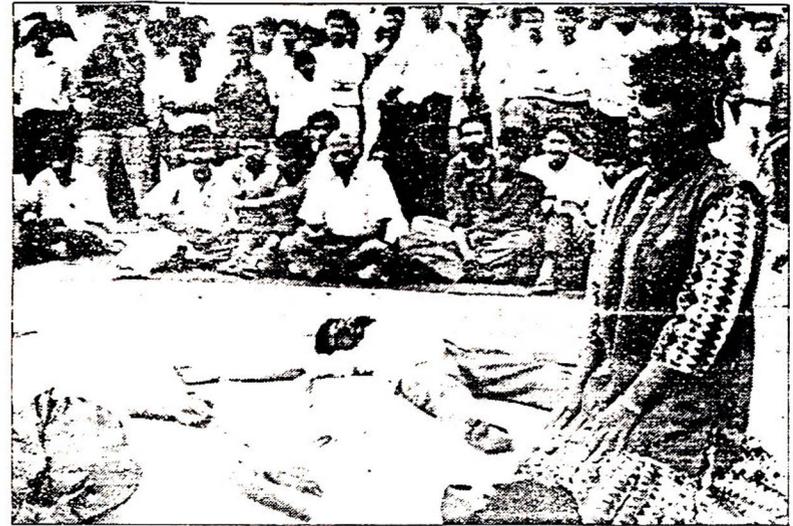
*Shanti changle hoe vidwana de  
mushan ton digdi hoe raal hai,  
Shanti puruskar iendi hor ka  
vian dhan vadyan hoyyan  
Eahan da tund hai,  
Shanti vajeeran de pahene hoe  
khadar di chamak hai,  
Eor shanti kujh bi nahin hai.*

"Peace is a constable's rifle who stands between our joys and sorrows. Peace is the saliva dribbling from the jaws of intellectuals. It is the handicap of the poets hankering for awards. It is the shining white khadi of the ministers. Peace is this and nothing else".

Peace is the absence of those conditions which produce violence. Any serious effort must try to moderate or eliminate those conditions which produce exploitation and degeneration. Therefore, the people's struggle must perpetuate conditions for peace and confront exploitative forces:

*Mere vaaton mere pichean,  
Kewal Bhi na naik tan ban jana,  
Dronacharya dhai na ban jana,  
Mere vaaton mere pichean....  
Last ek jagan ka na us mitti da,  
jo peesey manusman wich katai to ke ?  
Jan andar sada mehloos ra hinda  
di hai.  
Na mardi hai na mitti hai, sirf  
shaxian badaati hai.*

This last poem of the play is Wasijay ji Jagar. He exhorts towns,



the symbol of life, trust:

*My Friends, after my death become the leader of the downtrodden Bhisla,  
But do not become the shield of Dronchara.*

*My friends, after my death, celebrate the benediction of the Mother Earth*

*which gives us strength and life during bad times  
And which never dies.*

The play directs people's imagination towards those factors which are dormant and exhorts them not to be carried away by the ad hoc and superficial appearances. Miracles do take place, but in qualitative

terms, the processes of history remain unaffected by them. Ten years of bloodshed and, all of a sudden, peace is no doubt intriguing but revealing. Was it not a war, in which a force having greater capacity for violence has won? Is peace the victory of violence over violence? Is peace the victory of one exploiter over another?

## Montage of body language, sounds and images of the dispossessed

GURCHARAN SINGH CHANI created a sensation—at least in northern India—when he produced his first Hindi street play, *Datta 144* in 1977. It brought the attention to the people when the people were reluctant to go to theatre. Structurally, his street play production was anything but rigid. Any character could extemporise along with his speech as long as it did not conflict with the total atmosphere it was to help to build.

But more than all this, it was a democratic form which was enjoyed by the elite and the commoners casting away all the differences based on class or privilege. But more than anything else, it was based upon collective experiences and responses to the suppression of fundamental rights of meeting and speaking freely, the very basis of a democratic society.

Chani followed the success of this production with another street play, *Disturbed Area*, in 1977. The production was based upon the temporary addition of democracy known as the declaration of emergency. The play brought into bold relief the totalitarian tendencies in the ruling class which abolished even the right to life itself.

In essence, *Disturbed Area* was prophetic in that it revealed the truth behind police enforc-

ers and the killings in custody which were to become the order of the day in a decade or so in several parts of India.

Essentially a disturbed soul, Chani has kept alive his sensitivity as a human being and sensibility as a creative artist. His latest production, *Akh Di Dehleez* (Threshold of Perception), is not just another experiment in street plays. It is a montage of two forms of creative expression: modern Punjabi poetry and sound, images and body language.

It is neither a verse play nor an opera. The poetry, as such, is more in the nature of a form to be realised as an act of individual study. Not many modernist poets are able to sustain an open audience beyond a recitation or two. In *Akh Di Dehleez*, the producer-director has managed the delivery of 19 poems, 100 lines, 100 poems deriving from the most distressing times in Punjab.

Therefore, these poems as a theatre, for Chani has managed to do this, are the consciousness of a to live in torture, the strangulation of human protest, the ultimate necessity of man reduced to the level of animals, subjected to sadistic cruelty of the custodians of law and order, on the one hand, and the senseless killings of innocent people by militants and ter-



Gurcharan Singh: street-smart

rists, in the other.

In fact, the advent of violence as the basic idiom of social dialogue between one group and another, or between the state and the subjects, is in itself dehumanising. As noted Sartre, "Violence turns both who use it for silencing dissent and the victims into animals. It is the final failure of language as a means of communication. The bullet takes over and the human society is broken up into dead and dumb spectators who try to manage to survive at the cost of their basic humanity."

Body language and sound images are the most evocative manifestations of the apathetic and the victims alike. The ultimate help-

lessness and the degradation of man by bringing the abstract but most universal expressions of a dehumanised society and the fine art of poetic creation—Chani has been able to provide both these perspectives, lost at that time. Poetry gets lack its historical context and sound images and body languages their human meaning.

I was witness to one of the performances of this bold and deeply moving production which has left an indelible impress. The poems by some of the most talented devotees of the muse, and the collecting scenes of body, speech and sound images by a disciplined group of actors with quicksilver responses and shifts, generated awe, empathy, pathos and, most valuable of all, hope.

Every shift in the sound images or the body speech and every turn of the phrase and the twist of image in the poetic renderings evoked admiration bordering, and sometimes overlapping, the active participation of the audience in the performance.

This may be so because of the shared awareness of the events and incidents, but the greater success of the performance lay in its cathartic effect. One could visibly see the process of the triumph of art over tragic circumstance, and the release (which is the real hall-

mark of the function of art).

What was only coincidental in the choice of poems appeared to be part of a grand design. There was no letting of the interest of the audience most probably because the charged atmosphere of the performance revealed hidden meanings and nuances which one had missed in just reading the poems. But apart from the purifying and revealing, the montage was indicative of the immense possibilities of Punjabi language as a means of finer communication and of Punjabi theatre in articulating the most intricate of human drives and passions.

Equally remarkable was the fact of this montage being an open form rather than the closed forms of individual poems and the ordinary theatre experience. One could change the sequence, make additions and alterations, extend the experience into subtler lines and bylanes by bringing opposite or even conflicting pieces of verses from neighbouring languages like Urdu and Hindi. It will not be far from the truth to say that this montage proved to be at once a great new discovery of an art form and its equally thrilling realisation, all in the very first attempt.

# Towards neo-statism

by Pramod Kumar

in the case of resistance indulged in arm-twisting tactics. To illustrate the point, the BJP government took the following initiatives: The support price on apples was withdrawn; ad-hoc employees were retrenched; the fees on the medical card for government hospitals was raised four times, power tariff was raised; and privatisation of power generation was initiated.

When these measures were resisted by the people, the government used the repressive state apparatus. The resistance was natural. During the past four decades a large section of the people has been alienated from the state, and the notion that common people must make sacrifices to enrich the state is detested. This is logical because the rulers, including the BJP politicians, have failed to present an austere way of living and, on the contrary, people perceive them as the misappropriators or even looters of the state.

Then the resistance to the harsh economic measures was countered by using force. For instance, the movement launched against the withdrawal of the support price for apples was suppressed by using force and, consequently, three persons were killed and many injured.

Similarly, when the employees resorted to strike, first it was repressed by using all kinds of methods, and later they were made to suffer under the pseudo-moralist stance of "no work, no pay". This is so because the question of work ethics and ethos is a larger one, relating to distortions like corruption to which the BJP government's performance matched with that of the Congress. Further, it was a pseudo-moralist stance because it was confined only to the strike period. To deny people the right to protest in a peaceful manner and punish them for the same has the following implications:

(a) It encourages authoritarian forms of politics. To physically suppress strikes is to negate the democratic forms of grievance redressal. It is possible that people resorting to strike may or may not have genuine demands, but it is within their democratic right to resort to such measures. That is why it is accepted that democracy is the costliest form of government.

(b) These aggressive initiatives in the name of "good governance" provide impetus to violent forms of protest.

The election results have resolved the BJP's paradox between the denial of democratic rights and seeking a democratic mandate for the same. The populist or status-quoist thrust of politics represented by Congress could sweep the elections. This thrust occupied a large space in the political campaign of the Congress. It promised people to make Himachal the "fruit bowl of India and Switzerland of the Himalayas...." All those daily wage employees/casual labourers retrenched by the BJP government would be re-employed. The rights of employees as per trade union practices and the Industrial Disputes Act should be protected.... The dismissed employees who became victims of the BJP apathy and discrimination would be reinstated immediately.

These promises provided continuity to the politics of populism but with a difference. Until the eighties slogans like "Garibi Hatao", "Land to the tillers" and "Social justice for all" had been raised from time to time. All these slogans, along with the promise of building up a socialist society remained the hallmark of Indian politics.

However, after mid-eighties the slogan of "Justice for all" was replaced by "Justice for the backward castes". In the Himachal elections, this acquired an interesting dimension. The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government strengthened its

politics of neo-statism and alienated a large section of the population. Lower Himachal having a 20 to 40 per cent OBC population has been the traditional stronghold of the BJP. For instance, in Kangra district in the last elections the BJP secured 12 of the 16 seats, while the Congress got only one. In the 1993 poll the BJP could secure only three seats while the Congress won 12.

So strong was the feeling among the people against the BJP that Mr Vidya Sagar, a former BJP minister and popular OBC leader lost the election. Caste-based factionalism within the BJP also worked to its disadvantage. The growing feeling among the Rajputs that they were not being given their due place by the Brahmins proved fatal even for Mr Shanta Kumar. One of the reasons for the defeat of the former Chief Minister was this. In his constituency there are 16,000 Rajputs, 14,000 Chaudharis (a backward caste), 6,000 Harijans and 12,000 Brahmins. It was the Rajput-Chaudhari alliance that contributed to Mr Shanta Kumar's defeat.

The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government provided the Congress an opportunity to use this as a strategy to coopt a sizable section of the OBC's. This became easier in the absence of the Janata Dal from the scene. The Congress's election campaign emphasised that it would reverse the policies of the BJP. This was more a negative campaign and the issues relating to social justice found articulation in an indirect manner. This, in a limited way, provided expression to the populist rhetoric of the pre-1966 phase.

Both the BJP and the Congress reinforced the Himachali identity. The emphasis of the BJP campaign was not on issues relating to social justice, but on "self-reliant Himachal Pradesh" and Hindutva. Even sants and sadhus were pushed into the election campaign, of course without much success. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad mobilised sants and sadhus to hold congregations at about 800 places. Moving away from people's politics inevitably pushed the BJP into the lap of Hindutva and regional chauvinism.

The politics of religious revivalism was brought to the level of gimmickry to garner votes of women. In Himachal Pradesh, the number of women voters is higher than that of men voters. There are 1,29,855 women voters and 1,15,458 men voters. In around 26 constituencies women voters could have played a decisive role. It is in this context that even the observance of fast for the longevity of their husbands by women (Karva Chauth) was made an election issue. Advertisements congratulating women on Karva Chauth were issued by Mr Shanta Kumar. The women were asked to protest against the ban on the people for visiting The Ridge on the fasting day to see the moon.

The politics of neo-statism and the autocratic functioning of a leader reinforced each other. Interestingly, even many of the beneficiaries of the Antyodaya scheme initiated by the BJP voted against the party. This was made mainly due to the excessive reliance on the bureaucracy rather than the party or non-governmental organisations to implement welfare programmes. The beneficiaries identified themselves with the bureaucracy rather than with the party. The government employees were unhappy with the BJP and so were these beneficiaries.

The Himachal elections have shown that there is a visible absence of those forces which do not subscribe to neo-statism and status-quoism or populism. This, in fact is a serious pointer and even a challenge to all those who are committed to social justice, equality and, above all, to a genuine and vibrant movement to nurture and shape alternative social forces to transform the

GOOD governance is unpopular, thus spoke Mr L.K. Advani. Does good governance mean mobilising resources for the state without giving adequate emphasis on issues relating to unemployment, social justice, etc.? The sole aim of this resource mobilisation is to come out of the debt trap. This is a vicious circle. The real purpose of governance gets defeated - to provide social justice to the people. This kind of politics enriches the state and makes people poorer. That is why the President of Brazil, in response to a question on how his state was doing, said his state was doing very well but people were not.

The then BJP government in Himachal Pradesh religiously followed the dictates of the new economic policy, which even Mr Maamohan Singh is constrained to follow in totality. It is this approach to politics which had a bearing on the recent elections along with the other factors like the increasing dominance of the organised interest groups on electoral politics, autocratic functioning of a leader, caste polarisation, etc. In other words, the hope that the Ram Mandir slogan and premature dismissal of the government would be able to neutralise the caste differentiation, the autocratic functioning of a leader and the harsh economic measures initiated, was belied.

The 1993 election results have shown that the legitimacy of the government in power declines faster due to the mismatch between the electoral promises and the stark realities of the new economic policies. In the 1990 poll the BJP secured 44 seats with 41.2 per cent of the votes and the Congress eight seats with 37.01 per cent of the votes polled in Himachal Pradesh. The total votes polled were 67.62 per cent. In the 1993 elections the BJP got eight seats and there was a swing of 6.78 per cent votes against it. Besides this the decline in the percentage of votes polled in the constituencies the BJP contested in 1990 was around 18. This decline in legitimacy is symptomatic of the discourse initiated by the new economic policy and the electoral promises made by the competing political parties.

With the changes in the global economy and the shift in the national priorities, a new role is being attributed to the state. In the recent elections this was witnessed as a competition between the forces of neo-statism represented by the BJP, the status-quoism or populism articulated by the Congress and transformational politics going by default. The logic of the new economic policy will make the political party in power more vulnerable to pressures of new-statism and compel it away from populism and negate the forces of transformational politics. This is what happened in Himachal Pradesh.

Neo-statism became a dominant form of political functioning in Himachal Pradesh, which is being seen and described as "good governance" and, therefore, "unpopular". The inevitable logic of neo-statism is (a) aggrandisement of the state and pauperisation of the people, and (b) excessive reliance on the bureaucratic apparatus rather than on party cadres and non-government organisations to launch welfare programmes like Antyodaya or Water for Each Household.

The shift from the earlier form of statism - in which the emphasis used to be on nationalisation, the administering of prices, the control of wages, etc - to neo-statism with a veneer of the liberal non-regulatory state had a bearing on the elections. The BJP government in Himachal became an aggressive articulator of neo-statism. No doubt, the Himachal regime like the central government was faced with a financial crunch with an estimated annual income of Rs 299 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 722 crore. The interest on the outstanding debt has been Rs 293 crore (1993-94). To come out of this crisis, the BJP government started mobilising resources, and

# A ramp for fashion and trends

By Pramod Kumar

Independent India has created islands of development in various fields and also segregated sanctuaries of privileges and facilities. For example, in order to achieve academic excellence, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was created. To accelerate industrial growth, industrial estates were established. To produce technical manpower, IITs were set up. And the city of Chandigarh was built as a model of urban development. But these have come into being at a cost. For instance, JNU drained talent from regional universities; IITs achieved excellence while a vast network of technical institutions stagnated; industrial estates received incentives, while traditional industry in the towns was neglected in terms of technology transfer, environment protection etc.

Similarly, Chandigarh was allocated huge resources when other urban centres decayed. This island model of development created differentiated opportunities for a privileged few and as a result experienced increased pressure on its resources from migrants living in backward regions. Its modern facilities, enviable environments for the retired, young students and children, however, provided ample opportunities for the privileged few to withdraw from the communi-

ty, to make the maximum use of their limited individual space and enjoy their private comforts. It has the highest number of per capita automobiles in the country and has, in fact, become a ramp for fashion and trends.

The culture of self-centred living has created anonymous neighbourhoods, which are becoming increasingly vulnerable to crime. Individual vested interests, compounded by an apathetic administration and opportunistic politics, has allowed encroachments to flourish and mafia-induced human settlements to function as convenient vote banks. Moreover, the inhabitants have neither a sense of belonging to the city nor to fellow beings. Hence the available amenities are recklessly used, and the absence of civic sense is perpetuated.

As an island model, Chandigarh is a unique experiment in urban governance where the bureaucracy, without any stakes, roots or much political interference, has been given unquestioned powers and sufficient resources. It has produced all kinds of distortions, such as encroachments, which are generally attributed to the much maligned politicians, pollution, traffic and parking congestion, and the decreasing quality of core services like sanitation, electricity, water drainage etc.

People's participation is discouraged by the bureaucratic set-up, which describes it as interference.

But it has a desire to maintain a facade of community involvement, so it hails the Kar Seva at the Sukhna. A peculiar prescription of enforcing voluntary participation.

Chandigarh has become a symbol of inequality and injustice perpetuated by a regulated pattern of land use, with the elite in the foothills of the Shivaliks, well demarcated from the southern sectors of the service class, and a periphery that remains neglected.

This sectoral differentiation is being perpetuated in the name of maintaining the original plan of Chandigarh as conceived by its architects. As if cities are not social constructs, just architectural entities.

Chandigarh could not transcend the Le Corbusier architectural genius to become a 'city' as a social construct or a civilisation.

It also could not become even what it should not have, i.e. city as an investment. It has been reduced to a tourist resort for the affluent and a refuge for hopeless migrants and helpless retired persons. Indeed Chandigarh has started decaying before it could bloom.

The need is to reorient the existing plans based on land use which are turning out to be a source of profit to a flexible land-use policy which allows scope for organic growth. The slums have to be transformed from mafia-driven land grabbing mechanisms to spaces for providing services. It is also necessary to break the

## Highlights

- Chandigarh has to transcend Le-Corbusier genius to become a city
- Cities are not architectural entities, but social constructs
- It represents a unique experiment of urban governance, where a bureaucracy without any stakes and roots rules
- It has become a tourist resort for the affluent, a refuge for hopeless migrants and helpless retired persons

demarcation between the migrants, the slum dwellers and the residents of the core city through recreational activities and cross-cultural interactions.

The Chandigarh carnival has to transform the city from a cultural wasteland to a cultural nerve centre reflecting the sensitivity of its diverse inhabitants, even slum dwellers and migrants.

The pattern of governance has to change from bureaucratic control to empowerment of the representatives of various professions dominant in the city and which have a stake in making the city a civilisation.

There is also need to strengthen the network of self-sustaining institutions.

*The author is Director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh*

**CHANDIGARH  
OFF-TRACK**

# Diversification is not the answer

By Pramod Kumar

**Chandigarh:** Agriculture in Punjab is witnessing a multiple crisis - a market crisis for its main crops of wheat and rice, rising debt burden of farmers due to indiscriminate borrowing and spending, and environmental degradation as a fallout of the green revolution. Policy planners say: Diversify. The solution, they claim, was offered as early as 1986 in what is popularly known as the Johl Committee report.

In 1986, US agriculture secretary John Block had, at the start of negotiations known as the Uruguay Round, said: "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 are available in most cases at much lower costs. These countries can, therefore, utilise their land and resources for growing other crops."

Diversification, like the green revolution, has the force of ideology. West is best. But, why is it proving so difficult to convince the peasantry, especially when foodgrains are rotting in warehouses? The farmers are looking for an escape route. The system of minimum support prices is in place to provide price support to alternatives to wheat and rice. Policy planners of Punjab have once again borrowed the US and Canadian model in stopping food production in exchange for subsidies. A 'crop adjustment programme' has been proposed under which a compensation of Rs 12,500 per hectare will be paid to farmers for low income and risk involved in growing alternative crops.

These proposals are simple but behind them lies a tremendous political will that will allow free play of market forces and thereby allow food to be destroyed or not grown so that prices do

not fall.

The task of pro-people politics is to moderate the callousness of the market and to provide food to the needy. Policy planners tend to be impatient with the clogged market and alleged surpluses. For them those who cannot pay for their food have no right to survive.

It is a politically motivated diagnosis which has yielded an anti-people prescription. Food is in abundance, therefore do not grow food. And, if people are starving, let them. According to the Human Development Report 2002, India is ahead even of Sri Lanka in number of people suffering from starvation. Further, 23 per cent of India's population is suffering from undernourishment which is higher than what it is in China and Pakistan. And planners still say we have more than enough foodgrains.

The demand for food is there but there is no purchasing power. This should have moved the policy planners to work for generating purchasing capacity among the poor, rather than to stop the growing of food.

Before the green revolution strategy, agriculture in Punjab was diversified. The green revolution was introduced as a grain producing machine. Then in the early nineties, proponents of the green revolution realised the need for diversifying agriculture in Punjab. Diversification was propagated not in response to the negative effects of the green revolution ie environmental degradation, increasing social and economic inequalities, failure to build forward and backward economic linkages, but as an answer to its only positive outcome ie production of food. It had its politics. In the words of a former US secretary of agriculture, Butz: "Food as a weapon is a powerful tool in our negotiating kit."

But what are our politics? To characterise the crisis of agriculture as food-

## 'Focus on flexibility'

- Crisis in agriculture — wheat-rice glut, debt, environmental hazards
- Diversification proposed by policy makers
- Proposal anti-people, impatient with the needy
- Stopping food production no answer
- Agriculture needs to be made flexible, food must be grown

grains not finding a market or as avenues of disposal is naive reductionism. The crisis is much deeper.

Instead of diversification, the focus should be on making agriculture flexible — so that it can adapt itself to market demands with the underlying thrust that food must be grown because the political and economic cost of importing foodgrains is enormous. According to well-known US economist, Susan George: "The import of foodgrains by under developed countries (UDC's) could reach a staggering 85 million tonnes in 1985 and could cost the UDC's \$ 18 billion in hard cash. In case of exceptionally poor harvests in the world at large, the figure might, according to the UN, reach 180 million tonnes of grain imports at a cost no one has had the courage to calculate."

The focus needs to be on increasing productivity, generating employment in the rural sector; promoting research and development — particularly for adapting technological innovations with indigenous traditional elements, providing productive subsidies and ensuring food security.

*(The author is Director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*

JUNE 22, 2002

## COMMENT

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

## War talk and reality

By PRAMOD KUMAR

**W**AR-MONGERING has become integral to the political culture of both India and Pakistan. Political establishments in both the countries consider tough posturing as a symbol of "statesmanship". Their domestic political compulsions find an easy escape in sentiments of ultra-nationalism. In the present military stand-off, both India and Pakistan have once again provided their own meanings to "national interest", "threat" and "security". For them national interest means protecting the "territory" and not political and economic sovereignty of the people. And "threat" is perceived from each other and not from the powerful regimes that keep the developing countries on the margins of politics and economy. And, "security" is to be sought from military deployment rather than strengthening democracy.

The Indian political establishment is using the war threat to put pressure on Pakistan to check cross-border terrorism. And Pakistan, with its nuclear rhetoric, aims at disengaging the war threat, while continuing to support terrorism in Kashmir. The post-September 11 world finds Pakistan a convenient instrument in the war against terrorism.

### Ineffective alliance

According to Rumsfeld, "We could be getting a lot more help from Pakistanis... They have forces along the Indian borders that we could use along the Afghan border," emphasising their pragmatic need to de-escalate the eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between India and Pakistan. The error is that the global alliance for war against terrorism continues to rely on those who have been providing support to all kinds of ter-

rorist outfits. Terrorism does not consist merely of possessing a gun.

If the system or any target of the gun wants to silence the gun forever, it has to confront the politics and ideology of terrorism. Therefore, an alliance with those who have been harbouring terrorism in the guise of providing "moral and political support to freedom fighters or jihadis", has neither resolved the conflict nor delegitimised violence.

### Reductionism

In the midst of escalation of the conflict and its possible degeneration into a nuclear war, there is a widespread belief among the common people both in India and Pakistan that the possibility of a full-scale war, more so a nuclear war, is minimal. In this sense there is a disconnect between what is reported in the Western media and what is perceived in the sub-continent. The response of the Western world to the existing crisis and its possible degeneration in a nuclear war has been termed as exaggerated by many policy experts in India. This response, no doubt, highlights the fear of mass destruction that a nuclear war can cause. A full-scale nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan has been estimated by the US Defence intelligence agency to cost 12 million lives.

But there is a belief that an added, albeit concealed, threat, i.e. the use of nuclear arsenal stunts the market for conventional weapons, is contributing to much propagated fears. This can be illustrated by referring to the US proposal that if these countries accept the plan of regional denuclearisation, they shall be compensated

with sophisticated conventional weapons.

History shows that the danger of using the nuclear option exists with whosoever is in possession of these weapons, whether in the "civilised" or "uncivilised" world. Therefore, it would be innocent reductionism to conclude that the Indians and the Pakistanis are not capable of realising the dangers of a nuclear war. As if they have not learnt from the destruction caused when US nuked Hiroshima in Japan during the Second World War. It would, therefore, be prudent to shift the global concern from selective disarmament and regional denuclearisation to global denuclearisation and end of militarisation of the region.

Further, the disconnect is also due to the fact that the common people in India believe that geographical proximity between India and Pakistan will make it difficult for Pakistan's military establishment to protect their own troops and people from their tactical nuclear strikes. Even the Indian army strategists have been quoted in the press saying that Pakistan will avoid a nuclear strike unless pushed to the wall. They have also ruled out an all-out war which carries the risk of degenerating into a nuclear conflict.

### Logic of globalisation

Another reason for the unlikelihood of the South Asian region resorting to nuclear warfare is that it is increasingly becoming a part of the global system. Consequently, its ability to take a political decision to press the nuclear button or to initiate a war, has been greatly reduced. The maintenance of domestic peace has also come within the realm of

global political decision-making and diktats. Both are seeking protection from the powerful coalition to settle petty disputes. Perhaps this is the logic of globalisation. In this scheme, superior position and knowledge to resolve conflicts have been attributed to the external "interventionist".

### Averting holocaust

In fact, the impact of global political trends and assertions within South Asia has a direct bearing on the peace process in both India and Pakistan. It has contributed to the escalation of a low-cost proxy war in Kashmir; provided a setback to the resolution of the conflict through the process of peace with the active involvement of the people particularly in Kashmir; rationalised the use of excessive force to suppress dissent even in other spheres; promoted ultra-nationalism as an instrument to strengthen forces of religious fundamentalism; and detracted the process of decentralisation of power to provinces as it is believed that a strong centre is essential to defend the country.

The global concern is to avert a nuclear holocaust rather than delegitimise the culture of violence. Is human destruction caused by nuclear weapons more tragic than the same number of humans beings killed in other forms of violent upsurges? Are India and Pakistan adventurous enough to destroy themselves or seek destruction of the evil "outside" through global bombing as has been done by the developed world? Is it possible to endorse war in Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia and deny war in South Asia?

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

AUGUST 19, 2002

# Good governance empowers the poor

By Pramod Kumar

Chandigarh: Punjab's budget for the year 2002 has been described as a bold attempt to restore the fiscal health of the state. The budget has attempted to curb non-recurring expenditure and resisted dole-oriented governance. It has initiated the process of disinvestment in state public enterprises.

A similar effort was made in Himachal Pradesh by former chief minister Shanta Kumar. To mobilise the resources, the BJP Government took several bold measures which included retrenchment of ad-hoc employees, a four-fold increase of fees on medical cards, privatisation of power generation and increase in power tariff. The BJP suffered a major defeat in the subsequent 1993 elections.

Good governance is unpopular. That is the dictum of the supporters of economic reforms. Why are people so unfair to these advocates of reforms and do not respond positively to the 'goodness' entailed in this kind of governance?

The main focus of 'good governance' is on improving the fiscal health of the state. Fiscal management is being interpreted as governance without owning responsibility for the poor. Whereas, fiscal mismanagement has become an instru-

ment of politics of expediency to govern without accountability.

Bad fiscal health is a symptom; a symptom of mismanagement of state resources, a symptom of the dole-giver dole-receiver syndrome or patronage-oriented politics, a symptom of utter neglect of the transformational form of governance.

The sole aim of the fiscal health management project is to come out of the debt trap, enthusiastically and willingly weaved in the past by economists of repute, a committed bureaucracy and professional politicians. Successive governments have taken 'soft loans' from the World Bank, the IMF and others and pushed the state into this trap. To quote, from Punjab finance minister's budget speech: "The financial position of the state is so unsustainable that it requires to raise a loan of Rs 3.5 to fund a plan of Re 1.... Debt servicing ratio has also sharply increased from 15.52 per cent in 1991-92 to 44.01 per cent in 2001-2002."

This has become a vicious circle. The logic of the situation and the so-called economic reforms make the political party in power more vulnerable to pressures of maintaining the fiscal health of the state and compel it to move away from

the politics of populism and to neglect the process of providing social justice to the people. It is because of these pressures that there are no concrete proposals in the budget to reduce unemployment, making agriculture a source of livelihood, activating social security and safety net.

These signposts are pointers that it is the market which will govern and not the government. "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."

Good governance will be seen as doing good if it attempts to moderate the market forces for those who are without means. It should, therefore, try to resolve issues like the challenge posed by the WTO agreement to the small and marginal farmers, decline in the social development index with the status of women being the lowest in India, increasing productivity of the youth, increasing purchasing power through income augmentation and curbing distortions like drug addiction. To expect people to make sac-

## To sum up

- Fiscal mismanagement is a governance without accountability
- Fiscal management is interpreted as a governance without responsibility
- When market is allowed to govern, governments become powerless
- The challenge is to activate people centred politics and productive processes

rifices to improve the fiscal health of the state, to be misappropriated by the successive governments, may prove to be counter-productive.

There is an urgent need for overcoming the temptation to be populist and also be over obsessed with 'balanced' fiscal management.

The challenge before the governments are to accelerate the productive processes with social justice. It is hoped that they will not follow what Winston Churchill once said, "We will do the right thing, having exhausted all the other possibilities."

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

# Checking caste antagonism to prevent violence

RECENT CASTE violence in Punjab is a pointer to the fact that certain factors that caused turmoil in the state continue to persist. There is a danger that Punjab could witness another spell of violence - this time based on caste antagonism.

Is there any relationship between the earlier agitations, including the Khalistan movement, and the caste violence in Punjab? On surface, it appears that there is no linkage between these visibly diverse phenomena, particularly between caste violence and religion-based linguistic and nationality assertions. All these assertions have been shaped by communally divisive politics and socially exclusive identity assertions in negation of the composite Punjabi identity. The recent caste violence should also be seen in the background of dwarfed articulations of Punjabi ethos. Unfortunately, these articulations could not surface forcefully enough and allowed retrogressive religious and caste-based violence to erupt.

In the Fifties and the Sixties, language was mixed with religion, which led to the Hindi agitation and the Punjabi Suba movement. This resulted in restricting Punjabi language and culture to religious groups. The underlying assumption was that the Sikhs and the Hindus had distinct interests and identities, which further degenerated into

**From Hindu to Sikh and now to Dalit identity, a weak Punjabi faces another challenge in the crisis-ridden Punjab politics. Now would Punjab witness a decade of caste-based violence?**

**Much depends on choices exercised by dominant political parties**

assertion for Khalistan in the mid-Eighties. Not only this, the process of defining identities made caste subservient to the hegemonic interests of the 'upper castes'. Attempts to co-opt the Scheduled Castes into the religious domain, while maintaining and reinforcing their subordinate social position, strengthened their exclusiveness to be appropriated by politics as a distinct Dalit identity.

Punjab has been known for its liberal ritualistic religious practices in relation to caste. Both Sikhism and the Arya Samaj have liberated the Dalits from the stringent purity-pollution based behavioral patterns. For instance, equality in religious gatherings, establishment of common kitchen and the institution of langar were initiated to overcome caste-based superior and inferior relationship. Not only this, offering of 'karah prasad' by any one irrespective of his caste was a symbolic departure from the notion that forbade food sharing by the upper and lower castes. These holy injunctions were, no doubt, clear but with the passage of time, differentiating ritual practices continued. The interactive social practices between the up-

per and lower castes continued to be imbued with the notion of purity-pollution, which co-existed with symbolic religious rituals like langar, sangat and pangat. To illustrate, Mahila Mandals were created to uplift women and a scheme for income generation through renting out tent and utensils for celebrations was launched. Assertions for maintenance of exclusiveness excluded the Scheduled Castes from using these utensils as the non-SC castes would not like to reuse these utensils. This led to formation of parallel Mahila Mandals by the Scheduled Castes. The formation of separate Mahila Mandals, gurdwaras, dharamshalas reflect the intense desire among Dalits to establish their exclusive identity emerging from political consciousness.

Another factor that contributed to the process of social tensions has been the specific nature of socio-economic development. Some of the traditional occupations in which the Scheduled Castes were engaged such as blacksmith work, carpentry and leather trade became upwardly mobile in the social ladder. Reservations in educational institutions and also jobs brought them

into the larger occupational canvas.

Further, the crisis in agriculture and the influx of migrant labour reduced the inter-dependence of the upper castes and the Scheduled Castes. These factors weakened the hegemonic control of the upper castes and also provided a life force to the Dalits' assertive attitude in political, economic and social spheres. This process contributed to the acceleration of the formation of an exclusive Dalit identity. Religious reforms and occupational mobility could not transform the inferior hierarchical social placement of the Dalits. They continue to live on the margins of society. However, political mobilisation for nurturing the exclusive Dalit identity has challenged the social exploitative relations and transformed these into caste violence.

Interestingly, Dalit assertion has usurped the idea of purity to present itself as a competing identity. Notions of honour, revenge and levirate marriages ('chaddar' system) that were considered exclusive to peasant groups are now being adopted by Dalits. The underlying assumption is that women are to be pro-

tected as they reflect the social status of the family. Historically, SC women have been treated as part and parcel of 'mai baap' feud-ed perks. Prior to these identity assertions, such violative practices were condoned but now these are resented. However, village panchayats continue to impose upper caste hegemony by dispensing discriminatory justice. If there is a perceived abuse, the panchayat brings about a compromise. Very few cases are registered. However, with the political mobilisation of SCs, sexual liaison by the Jat landowner is seen as sexual abuse. For the Dalits, it meant preventing 'pollution' of their exclusive identity. At the individual level, the Dalits are resentful of being unable to protect their women from what they now perceive as transgression of their manhood and identity.

These religion and caste-based violent assertions have serious ramifications for the secular, democratic policy and emergence of a Punjabi cultural identity. To undermine violent assertions like the Hindi agitation, Khalistan, caste violence, institutionalised primordial hierarchies need to be dismantled. Politics has to articulate the Punjabi secular ethos and negate socially divisive religion and caste based mobilization.

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



GUEST COLUMN | Pramod Kumar

# Paradigm shift in 'good governance' needed

IS GOOD governance really unpopular, as made out to be? The aim of 'good governance' these days appears to reduce employment in the public sector without creating employment in the private sector. Besides, it is to encourage people to participate in self-help groups and launch small businesses in the face of intense global competition. 'Good governance' is also to tell people to mind their own health and give subsidies to private hospitals; and to teach them to pay for life-saving services even if they do not have the opportunities to earn a livelihood.

No wonder, people do not respond positively to the 'goodness' entailed in this kind of governance. It's another matter that this phenomenon is beyond the understanding of the well-educated planners.

However, it is not without reason that the government is working overtime to disinvest. And an inefficient state apparatus is efficiently trying to eliminate itself. It is because they have once again resolved to remove poverty and inequalities. Earlier, at the time of Independence, the government committed itself to eradicating poverty, unemployment, and inequalities through public sector investment. Now it is in the process of privatising the public

*State govt in the region have the responsibility of evolving a positive agenda i.e. productive investment instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of expenditure in place of expenditure reduction. Similarly, they need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at predecessor regimes for corruption-free governance.*

domain. And the public interest is to be protected, promoted and sustained by private initiatives. It is for the people to appreciate the government's commitment to 'good governance' and make sacrifices to ensure the privileges of the few with the hope that they may find a place among them in the near future.

It is with this expectation from the people that the policy planners have initiated market reforms through certain negatives i.e. disinvestment, retrenchment, reduction in expenditure and anti-corruption. Through these negative initiatives, it is hoped that something positive shall emerge. Such is the faith in the fundamentals and tenets of market that even well-educated persons have succumbed to the glamour attached to this doctrine. They assert that even a competitive, efficient, em-

ployment-oriented and profit-making public sector unit has to be disinvested as per the tenets of market fundamentalism. Is this market fundamentalism any different from religious or caste fundamentalism? Isn't it equally dangerous?

Market-oriented reforms are called good and state-controlled development is considered evil. Everybody is being coerced to make a choice. The argument advanced is that the state-led mixed economy is nothing but 'common good as interpreted by self-seeking politicians and civil servants'. And in favour of market-led reforms is the argument that 'self-seeking actions of a multitude of individuals would lead to common good'.

Both are flawed.

Instead of reforming and rejuvenating governance, the thrust is

to replace an evil with another evil. Incidentally, all the dominant political parties have ideologically evolved an agreement around this philosophy. And consequently, successive governments have been enslaved by market-led reforms. In Punjab, it was the Akali government which constituted the disinvestment commission and the Congress government is taking it to its logical conclusion. Fiscal management is being presented as a model having these four negatives with a signpost that 'it is the market and not the government which will govern'.

And the market has no plan for the poor. In the pre-reform period, i.e. 1983-93, rural Punjab recorded a 7.09 per cent growth in unemployment and in the post-reform period i.e. between 1993 and 2000, rural Punjab experienced a 7.43 per cent growth in unemployment. A similar trend has been noticed in urban Punjab. From a 2.62 per cent growth in urban employment, it changed to 6.18 per cent growth in unemployment in the post-reform period.

It is, therefore, not without reason that all the dominant political parties have approved economic reforms in principle, but they have made electoral promises against these reforms. Consequently, the anti-incumbency factor provides an honourable exit to

a political party to be replaced by another with a similar track record.

All states in the region need to bring about a paradigm shift in governance. In Punjab, for example, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has distanced his government from a fundamentalist form of World Bank agenda by rolling back fees hike in educational institutions, mobilising private enterprises for generation of employment, rationalisation of reduction of government expenditure and also by devolution of powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). But he (and other state governments in the region) has a responsibility to evolve a positive agenda i.e. productive investment, instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of expenditure rather than expenditure reduction.

Similarly, they need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at their predecessor regimes in order to provide corruption-free governance. This agenda must be implemented within the broader framework of putting in place social security and safety nets.

*(The writer is Director of the Chandigarh-based Institute for Development and Communication)*

GUEST COLUMN | Dr Pramod Kumar

# Gauging 2004 polls through previous tie-ups

PUNJAB HAS a history of mergers, post-election coalitions and electoral alliances of political parties. Only recently Punjab saw pre-election electoral alliances, occasional seat adjustments notwithstanding. There are two main groupings. These are led by the Congress and the Communists on the one hand and the Shiromani Akali Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the other. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has moulded itself to joining any grouping as per its needs. Fringe groups that sprout from time to time, position themselves vis-à-vis the main groupings to play the spoiler's role in the elections.

These groupings are formed around common minimum programmes which have been used mainly to defend the alliances rather than nurture the ideological basis. For instance, the BJP, in alliance with the Akali Dal, finds it difficult to make the anti-terrorist Act POTA a main election issue, since the Akalis had been at the receiving end of state repression in the early 90s. The Akalis, in alliance with the BJP, cannot revive their anti-Centre political plank. And the Congress finds it difficult to talk about economic liberalisation, as it has to take into account the sensitivities of its main ally, the CPI, which has campaigned against the WTO regime. The implications of this situation can be better understood by referring to the politics that has led to these alliances. This process can be studied in three distinct contexts. The first is the merger of Akali Dal with the Congress in 1948 and then in 1956.

The second context is post-election coalitions. These coalition governments were formed with the sole object of preventing the dominance of the Congress. Historically, the Akalis formed three coalition governments with the support of other parties. Their main coalition partner was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

*Like in other states, poll alliances have a major bearing on election results in Punjab. Precious alliances are good indicators to the future, provided the changed scenario is accounted for*

The first coalition was formed after the fourth general election in 1967. In this election, the Congress won 47 seats in an 104-member State Legislative Assembly. The Akali Dal (Sant Fateh Singh) secured 24 seats, the Jana Sangh 9, the Communist Party of India 5, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) 3, the Republican Party 3, the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh) 2. A united front of all parties was formed with Gurnam Singh as the leader. It was a combination of divergent ideological groups with the sole purpose of keeping Congress out of power.

The second coalition was formed after the mid-term elections in February, 1969, in which the Akali Dal won 43 seats and the Jana Sangh 8. The coalition government was headed by Gurnam Singh. Differences among the coalition partners arose over issues like language, Centre-state relations and the status of Chandigarh.

The third coalition came into being after the removal of Gurnam Singh as chief minister. Prakash Singh Badal was sworn in chief minister on March 27, 1970, with a new agenda of the coalition government. The Jana Sangh withdrew from the coalition in June, 1970, on the question of the jurisdiction of Guru Nanak Dev University. However, the main differences were on issues relating to the transfer of certain Panjabi-speaking areas to Punjab.

The third context is electoral alliances between competing political parties. The question arises why post-election coalitions did not find favour with political parties?

■ Political parties remain under pressure from their support base for implementation

of their politico-ideological agenda as articulated during the elections.

■ Post-election coalitions are seen as marriages of convenience involving the leadership, while their ranks hold each other with deep suspicion.

■ These coalitions, no-doubt, can reach the magic number, but are tedious to sustain and relatively unstable.

In view of these problems, political parties discovered the convenient practice of entering into pre-election coalitions. An undercurrent of these alliances was the lessons learnt from the decade of terrorism and issues emerging from it.

In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Akali Dal entered into an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party and seat adjustment with the Bharatiya Janata Party. The alliance adversely affected the Congress Party's performance and resulted in an erosion of the support base of the Congress among the Scheduled Castes. Of the 13 parliamentary seats, the SAD won 8 and the BSP 3.

In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the Akali Dal entered into an alliance with the BJP. The Shiromani Akali Dal won the largest number of seats i.e. 8 and polled 33 per cent of the votes. The Bharatiya Janata Party won 3 seats and polled 12 per cent of the votes. The Congress, the BSP, and the communists entered into a pre-election alliance and could not win even a single seat. The Akali Dal-BJP alliance performed better because it provided the Akali Dal with the much needed political space at the national level to shed its anti-national image, and to the BJP it gave a political plank to counter

the Congress and the Left propaganda that its politics is anti-minorities.

In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the pre-election alliance of SAD-BJP failed miserably with the Congress-CPI alliance winning nine seats. This election witnessed the role of spoilers i.e. the BSP and the Akali Dal (Tohra). The SAD (B) secured 28.5 per cent of the votes and the Akali Dal (Tohra) got 4.6 per cent. If we add these, the total votes polled are equal to the votes polled in the 1998 elections i.e. 32 per cent. The BSP acted as a spoiler against the Congress in nearly 27 Assembly segments in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections.

If the 2002 Assembly results are analysed in terms of Parliament seats, the following trends emerge:

(a) If the percentage of votes of the BJP, the Akali Dal (B) and Akali Dal (Tohra) is added and converted into seats, then the Congress can win only 5 out of the 13 seats. And with the BSP votes, this alliance will leave the Congress with only one seat.

(b) The Congress led alliance can win 8 seats, if BSP votes are added to it.

(c) And if the BSP decides to go it alone, the Congress led alliance may be left with only 5 seats. It can lose seats like Hoshiarpur, Patiala and Ferozepur.

However, the electoral arithmetic may not reflect the 2002 Assembly election results because of the qualitative shift in the political scenario. The run-up to the 2004 polls see a much more confident and united Akali Dal, though it remains to be seen if its alliance partner, the BJP, has recovered any lost ground in urban areas. On the other hand, not only is the Congress debilitated by infighting, its alliance has reluctant Communists' support.

*(The writer is the Director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*

GUEST COLUMN | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Leveraging public funds



## Punjab Budget

BUDGET IS a weak instrument with strong statements of intent. Punjab's Budget for 2005-2006 is no exception. However, the present Budget is candid enough to admit that;

(a) Punjab is most globalised and Punjab's economy is least globalised. This is mirrored by a nominal FDI of 0.7 per cent as mentioned by a World Bank report.

(b) There has been a slow-down of the economy and it has the third lowest growth rate among the major states. Much of the slow-down is in agriculture i.e. 2.6 per cent per annum lower than the all-India average of 3.2 per cent. It has had an industrial growth rate between 5 and 7.5 per cent during the past 15 years.

(c) Services provided by the government are 'prohibitively costly with a sharp decline in quality'. A survey conducted by the Public Affairs Centre places Punjab 11th in the quality of services among 16 major Indian states. However, the 10 states above Punjab could provide quality services even without public-private partnership.

(d) Bad fiscal health has brought the 'development process to a virtual standstill'. In the fourth year of governance, the Finance Minister was concerned and announced that the fiscal health was showing signs of improvement. Time has come now to spell out the strategy for the major sectors of the state's economy.

It is naïve to expect that budgetary exercises can resolve paradoxes of development. The present Budget has taken adequate measures to restore the fiscal health of the state. It has reduced expenditure on salaries from 118.24 per cent (2001-2002) to 84.39 during 2004-2005. It could reduce interest payment of Rs 339 crore per annum by swapping high cost debt. However, it is not clear why the state's own tax revenue has decreased to the extent of 22 per cent.

For the first time, a substantial allocation has been made for the maintenance of general infrastructure like roads, bridges, etc. The municipalities and panchayats have been assigned the task of generating financial resources for the maintenance of infrastructure for ensuring quality water supply, sanitation and drainage. One hopes that the people will understand the 'goodness' entailed in these bold initiatives.

Budget has claimed to have reinvented the government by 'leveraging public funds for attracting private capital' and evolving a healthy partnership between private capital driven by profit and public funds which are spent for ensuring social equity.

This has been termed as a 'new paradigm'. This so-called 'new paradigm' has to be monitored as it may be hijacked by profiteers in the name of quality service. Politics has to ensure that the government does not become oblivious to the presence of those lesser mortals who are without means. The effort should be to introduce competition. As we have seen that even government model schools, medical institutions (PGIs), IITs could compete with other institutions and have set the standards for excellence.

The Budget has also created dedicated funds to avoid indulgences of successive governments leading to a diversion of funds. It has created a dedicated fund of Rs 450 crore for timely payment of pensions, an Agricultural Diversification Research and Development Fund of Rs 120 crore, a Municipal Development Fund of Rs 900 crore and a Village Development Fund of Rs 600 crore.

These dedicated funds have been adequately capitalised.

The creation of dedicated funds is a clear statement of the government's intent. But it is not clear why the government has not created dedicated funds for rural indebtedness, for the unemployed youth, for the generation of employment and fighting drug abuse among the youth.

Further, the allocation for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes has remained stagnant i.e. a nominal Rs 98 crore. For medical and public health, it has decreased from Rs 690 crore to Rs 652 crore, for other rural development programmes from Rs 97.6 crore to Rs 54.1 crore and on animal husbandry there is a nominal increase. The Budget has mentioned a cess of Re 1 per litre on diesel and 50 paise per litre on petrol, but it has not made clear the increase in the receipt of more than Rs 600 crore from stamps and registration and electricity duty and land revenue to the extent of Rs 250 crore. Are these to be taken as hidden taxes to be imposed at the appropriate time?

Notwithstanding these important initiatives, allocations for the agriculture sector should have been increased to raise the real incomes on a sustainable basis. To generate employment, there is need for allocating resources for the creation of an institutional mechanism for building linkages of agriculture with industry. Similarly, in education and health sectors, the guiding principle should have been to incur high costs in the short run to get high returns in the long run. There is an urgent need for shedding the obsession with 'balanced fiscal management', as the Budget has successfully overcome the temptation to be populist.

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# **LEVERAGING PUBLIC FUNDS TO ATTRACT PRIVATE CAPITAL**

BY DR PRAMOD KUMAR

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



**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Punjab: Learning from history

*The relevant proposition is that history should be used to learn lessons rather than to 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 subscribes to a rationality that 'privatisation 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 Nihaal', raising of separatist slogans at the anniversary function of Operation Bluestar, 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 Bluestar, 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 fallout have become feeble and apologetic.

The assertions of radicals notwithstanding,

Operation Bluestar has become a marker symbolising the need for respecting religious symbols and recognising 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 Bluestar 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 organisation, has ap-

pealed to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) to raise a martyrs' memorial at Harmandir Sahib 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 Bluestar 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 dehumanised, 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 Bluestar 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, the 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.

*(The writer is the Director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*



**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Requiem for commissions

THE PUNJAB crisis continues to be well on the way to setting chilling landmarks, landmarks the nation can do very nicely without. The first tragic mark was the intensity of violence, which was so blood splattered that at least 30,000 persons perished — felled by bullets in Punjab or killed in Delhi, Kanpur and Bokaro riots.

Another chilling landmark was the unleashing of Operation Bluestar, assassination of Indira Gandhi and the brutal riots of November, 1984. These events provided in the post-1984 the much needed legitimacy and justification to the decade-long use of violence phase. With the advantage of hindsight, it can be said that if the deadlier politics manifesting in Operation Bluestar and 1984 riots 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 1984 riots. This was the turning point. Because of these political interventions, the people of Punjab were pushed into a decade-long period of terror, trauma and torture. Therefore, it would have been more prudent not to be merely politically apologetic, but also to be politically accountable.

Successive governments seemed to have lacked the necessary sensitivity and urgency. This led to the setting up of another chilling landmark of government's reluctance to take action against persons indicted for their role in November, 1984, riots even after 21 years. The report of Justice G.T. Nanavati Commission and Action Taken Report of the government seem to have settled down on the long highway of throttling the justice system. This purblind policy is bound to leave a sickening mark all along the way.

It can be safely inferred that inaction in November, 1984, snowballed into legitimising riots at various places as a reaction to some brutal acts. Had the persons responsible for instigating of violent reaction and active participation in riots been brought to justice, the Gujarat riots may not have been unleashed. This kind of political compromise has set into motion a vicious circle of riots which if not dismantled is sure to bring about the collapse of India's secular fabric and justice system.

**The politics of enquiry commissions must be given a burial. Conversely, it is proving to be the surest way to fan popular misgivings and popular opposition into popular militancy. A system of setting up a People's Commission with powers to investigate within a stipulated time-frame may have to be started.**

The delayed justice, that too vague and ambivalent, has sent the signals that the Indian state is not equipped to respond to the people's need for justice. And the Action Taken Report has further exposed political insensitivity and 'bureaucratic responsiveness' of this government. For instance, the Commission observed that "Hoshiar Singh and his men did not take effective steps to protect the Gurdwara and to disperse the mob which had gathered there..." The Action Taken Report says that "there are legal difficulties in initiating departmental proceedings at this point of time. Hoshiar Singh, Sub-Inspector, has retired from service and two constables who were on duty with him have also retired". Therefore, no disciplinary action can be taken against them and action under Pension Rules is possible only in respect of an event which took place within four years. Similar responses have been rendered in other cases also.

These bureaucratic responses bring to the surface the 'commitment' of the present leadership that rules and regulations are cardinal principles to be preserved at any cost even at the expense of justice and human values. Rules must not be infringed, the rights of people may be. These tragic events require a justice-oriented political response. On the contrary, they are taking refuge under the rulebook to defend criminal acts of

people in high positions. The lesson is that the destiny of the people is not safe in the hands of a leadership which is bureaucratic in its approach, dogmatic and status quo-ist in its commitment.

The Congress leadership has a history of missing opportunities to rectify its blunders. For instance, immediately after the Lok Sabha elections in 1984, the Congress party signed the Rajiv-Longowal Accord. The belief behind signing of the accord was that backlash of the November, 1984, riots, would be contained. Subsequently, the non-implementation of the accord and the dismissal of the Barnala ministry pushed Punjab into the fold of militancy and made liberal politics ineffective.

In the same manner, the Congress government's reluctance to punish the criminals of November, 1984, has made even Sonia Gandhi's apology for Operation Bluestar and November, 84, riots look farcical. Further, bold initiatives like the legislation on sharing river waters taken by the Congress government led by Captain Amarinder Singh, which increased its acceptability among the rural Sikhs, have been negated. It has also provided moral hegemony to anti-Congressism in the state much to the advantage of the Akali Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The implications of such kind of politics are serious as it makes extremist and violent politics relevant and liberal secular democratic politics helpless. However, there is a silver lining: notwithstanding the Congress party's blunders, the people of Punjab and elsewhere have condemned the report and demanded action against the criminals.

The politics of enquiry commissions must be given a burial. Conversely, it is proving to be the surest way to fan popular misgivings and popular opposition into popular militancy. A system of setting up a People's Commission with powers to investigate within a stipulated time-frame may have to be introduced. Give the will of the people free play rather than that of a chosen few, and the best liberal democratic remedy will be available.

*(The writer is the Director of Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*

# Plan may bloat, but skill lies in spending

**B**UDGET has become a potent instrument for politics to mediate between aam admi and needs of the market and globalisation. The budget presented in Punjab has attempted to provide subsidies to the extent of around Rs 3,000 crore for poverty alleviation, debt redemption and social security.

The finance minister of Punjab has come out with a welcome claim that adequate measures shall be taken to implement the Plan size of Rs 4,000 crore in 2006-2007. However, 2005-

## Govts have escalated Plan size, but performance on expenditure stays dismal

2006 the Plan size was Rs 3,550 crore and expenditure was around 60%. The successive governments have been indulging in the practice of escalating the Plan size, whereas performance on the expenditure side has been quite dismal. This practice makes it difficult to capture gov-

ernment's priorities and fix consequent accountability. It is desirable that the political leadership in this election year prioritizes its expenditure by applying ideological filters at the level of policies and its implementation to cater to the needs of aam admi. Further, the planned capital expenditure of government in Rs 2,376 crore, whereas revenue expenditure is Rs 21,429 crore. It means capital expenditure is only 11% of the revenue expenditure. There is less rather decreasing emphasis on building capital assets in the state which are essential for accelerating the sustainable development.

However, the budget has successfully reduced expenditure on salaries from 118% of revenue receipts (2001-2002) to 84.39% (2004-2005) to 73.91% in 2006-2007. This means employ-



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ment in government sector has substantially reduced. It has promised to create employment to 10 lakh skilled persons in Punjab with an projected investment of Rs 56,000 crore with Rs 4,000 crore having already been invested. If this happens, this will be a panacea for other Congress-ruled states to overcome anti-incumbency and fulfill its promise of addressing the needs of aam admi.

The dedicated social security fund of Rs 450 crore promised in the last budget for timely payment of pension, aged, destitutes and handicapped persons has been implemented effectively. Whereas, Agriculture Diversification Research and Development fund of Rs 120 crore, a Municipal Development Fund of Rs 900 crore and Village Development Fund of Rs 600 crore, could not be implemented as effectively as the



Social Security Fund. The budget speech is quite candid about this. It says for Agriculture Diversification Research and Development Fund, an amount of Rs 10 crore

## Expenditure on salaries has reduced from 118% of revenue receipts to 73.91%

released. However, the budget statement has overlooked the fact that India's granaries are empty. As per reports, there is only 4.5 million tonnes of stock left to meet the exigencies. The anti-grain policies have been responsible for this. Punjab budget in its Agriculture Renewal Programme should have announced incentives and even wheat procurement bonus of minimum Rs 50 per quintal to give the farmers appropriate productivity signals. And also that diversification does not mean anti-grain.

There is also a need to introduce a support programme for Hybrid Paddy seeds to reduce water consumption.



**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Taking quota debate ahead

RESERVATION HAS proved to be a strength of Indian democracy. A large section of the middle class, which took to non-political, consumer-oriented, individualistic living, has realised that politics is not a non-serious affair. It can change the course of events and also the lives of the citizens. The opportunistic character of politics acted as a pollutant in the ongoing dialogue between competing views and opinions. The right to have access to quality education has become a contentious issue among the creamy layers of Dalits, OBCs and other castes. The voice of the underprivileged is literally inaudible in the noisy scenes created by these three competing groups.

The arguments advanced by these competing groups are erroneous and, therefore, there are sufficient reasons for their rejection. The events which followed the announcement raised some fundamental issues. Is there a trade-off between equity and merit? Are both merit and reservation not merely elimination criteria? A large group of Dalits and OBCs claim caste-based reservation as a matter of right rather than opportunity. The opponents of this view emphasize merit as the basis of selection. They present merit as universal rather than conditional. Merit is bestowed on those who have easy access to public school education, can afford private tuitions and get benefit of the law of inheritance. Merit is used as a potent instrument for eliminating those who are otherwise capable but to whom opportunities are not available. Hence the need for equity. Should the agenda not be to raise the competence levels of the underprivileged and create more choices for all to attain quality education and employment?

Politics has responded to this agenda in a variety of ways since independence. For India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, it was social justice for all expressed through initiatives like land to the tiller, which found continuity under Indira Gandhi, expressed through the slogan 'garibi hatao' (poverty eradication). However, after the mid-Eighties, the dominant political agenda shifted from justice for all to justice for the Backward Castes, Dalits and minorities. This agenda had more to do with the strategy of co-opting by multiplying caste cleavages, and attempt-

**Though the agitating doctors have called off the strike following the intervention of the Supreme Court, the issue not only remains, but has in fact got further exacerbated. In tackling this issue, the major emphasis should be on increasing the size of the cake by creating more opportunities of having access to higher education**

ing to achieve a balance of group interests.

The principle of equality of opportunity through reservation is being marketed as a vehicle to provide upward mobility to children of low social origin. It has been proved that reservations in its present form failed to achieve this. The Mandal Commission itself acknowledged it. To quote: "When a backward class candidate becomes a Collector or a Superintendent of Police, the material benefits accruing from his position are limited to the members of his family only. But the psychological spin-off of this phenomenon is tremendous, the entire community of that backward class candidate feels socially elevated."

The Commission when confronted with the question that it is only helping the privileged among the under-privileged, retorts by saying: "Is it not a universal phenomenon? This is an honest confession offered by the Commission that equality of opportunity can be promised and of course, not equal conditions."

This is like an experiment conducted by the 'godman' called Mahesh Yogi. This Yogi has been credited with having trained his disciples in the art of flying without wings. They were pushed into the air from a height. They all fell to the ground and broke their limbs. When the Yogi was asked to explain this bizarre experiment, he accused his disciples of lack of concentration. The Yogi ought to have known that in the case of physical objects, the power of earth's gravitational pull is stronger than the power of meditation.

Similarly, the political leadership should know that access to higher education in institutions of excellence cannot be through reservation alone. To acquire such knowledge, certain minimum levels of competence have to be ensured among the backward and underprivileged sections through ensuring their education in public schools and schemes of additional coaching.

To sum up, reservation on the basis of caste has become a political tool to be used in electoral politics. Merit has emerged as a potent instrument of the privileged few to capture opportunities. And reservation has thrown up a class of stakeholders, the so-called creamy layer among the backward and Dalit castes.

Even in the face of these distortions, one would still plead in favour of reservation. But with a difference. Only the socially stigmatised Dalit castes and Scheduled Tribes should be considered for reservation. There should not be any reservation for OBCs. There should be affirmative action of granting additional percentage for backward regions and candidates belonging to families living below the poverty line.

Though the agitating doctors have called off the strike following the intervention of the Supreme Court, the issue not only remains, but has in fact got further exacerbated. In tackling this issue, the major emphasis should be on increasing the size of the cake by creating more opportunities of having access to higher education. There are two ways of doing it. First, through the introduction of quality education in a number of medical/engineering and other higher educational institutions which are churning out thousands of low-quality products. A special package needs to be prepared to improve their infrastructure and the quality of their teaching. Secondly, increasing the number of seats and introducing a minimum qualifying criteria and thereafter, introducing merit-based selections for the reserved and non-reserved categories separately. Above all, it is time to have an institutional agenda for a long-drawn struggle against casteism, communalism and such other retrogressive tendencies.

*(The writer is the Director, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*



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Guest Column **PRAMOD KUMAR**

# Skewed GROWTH

High on income, low on growth, Punjab will have to go for a paradigm shift in its development strategy if it wants inclusive growth



**P**unjab needs to rechart the course of its development and rearrange its policies and politics. It represents peculiar development paradoxes. Though Punjab is the most globalised of all communities, Punjab is the least globalised. This is reflected in a foreign direct investment (FDI) of 0.7 per cent (World Bank Report 2004). It has a highly developed agricultural sector, but without much direct linkages with industrial development. Thus, agriculture contributes 47 per cent of the state's GDP as compared to 30 per cent in the rest of the country and its industry employs less than five persons per 1,000 as compared to seven in the country.

Punjab has a high per capita income, but a dismal social development index. It has the country's most adverse child sex ratio (793), high rate of female foeticide, farmers' suicides, substance abuse and a large percentage of educated unemployed youth. The state has a highly developed infrastructure, but the quality of public services is poor and costly. Punjab is highly prosperous but one of the most indebted states in the country—the per capita state debt being Rs 13,029. All other states, including Bihar, have a lower per capita debt (World Bank Report 2004).

There has also been a slowdown in the economy which has led to its third lowest growth rate among all major states. Agriculture, which has been the mainstay of its economy, is experiencing a massive slowdown. It has had an industrial growth rate between 5 and 7.5 per cent during the past 15 years, far lower than the national average.

This crisis has been the result of the nature of develop-

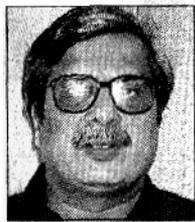
ment and excessive reliance on reductionist and short-sighted policy interventions. The policy planners, in view of the stagnant agriculture, rising debt burden of the farmers and environment degradation, offered solutions in diversification of crops from the wheat-paddy rotation, fiscal management and corporatisation of agriculture. Diversification of crops was propagated not in response to the negative effects of the Green Revolution like environmental degradation, increasing social and economic inequalities, failure to build forward and backward economic linkages, but because it had a positive outcome i.e. it led to production of foodgrain. There was politics in this anti-grain policy.

Another policy initiative has been towards the corporatisation of agriculture and shifting small and marginal farmers from 'unviable economic activity'. Through this policy, agriculture may thrive but small agriculturists will not. The so-called new paradigm, 'leveraging public funds and assets to attract private capital', is being implemented without building adequate safeguards to protect the interests of farmers. No doubt, the government should create enabling conditions for agribusiness, but the farmers have to be empowered too. Another much propagated policy in the realm of fiscal management is being implemented without owning responsibility for the poor. The emphasis is on negatives i.e. disinvestment, reduction in expenditure, privatisation of services and an anti-corruption drive. However, in its fourth year the government has resorted to politics of populism by announcing free electricity to farmers. It is high time that the government sheds its obsession with fiscal management and the temptation to be populist.

Punjab needs a paradigm shift. The economy needs to be diversified and to create productive avenues in other sectors for the population dependent on agriculture. In agriculture, the focus has to be on increasing the productivity and moving away from anti-grain policies to the production of a crop basket. In education and health sectors, the guiding principle should be to incur high costs in the short run to get high returns in the long run rather than privatisation of essential services. In governance, the need is to shift from disinvestment to productive investment, from retrenchment to employment generation, from expenditure reduction to rationalisation of expenditure and from anti-corruption drives to corruption-free governance.



*The author is the Director of the Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh.*



**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 advertisements 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 are 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 politics, 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 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 seems 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, the 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 does 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 and transportation without providing them with the 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 the 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.

*(The writer is a Chandigarh-based political analyst)*

# Institutionalising farm policies

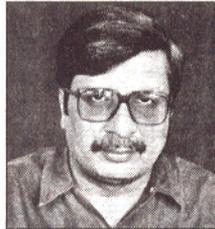
THE DEBT relief package of Rs 60,000 crore is India's largest ever dole given to farmers by India's renowned economists. The economist wobblers have been preaching that 'power subsidy' to the farmers is disastrous for the fiscal health and therefore, should be withdrawn. But now they have termed this 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 growing more foodgrains.

It is unfortunate that due to 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



## Guest Column

Dr Pramod Kumar

**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 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 pauperised. 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 has an effort 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.

# 1984, later chapters

## Back To Future

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 the 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

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 a 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 the 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 deadlier politics manifesting in Bluestar and riots not been unleashed, terrorism 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 violent 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 Congress to take political mileage out of it makes one fearful of the outcome. The danger is that if factors leading to

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 Sikh masses, the former Indian Prime Ministers responsible for Bluestar and anti-Sikh riots have been marginalised 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 dehumanised, 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 state politics and extremist politics.

(Dr Pramod Kumar is a political analyst)

# Fear of terror, societal divisions haunt Punjab

Rajeev Ranjan Roy  
Chandigarh

The shadow of terror and divisiveness in the social order are haunting Punjab more than anything else today. If the arrest of two Khalistani militants with arms, ammunition and explosives has raised the people's anxiety, widening societal chasms along religious and caste lines has come as a major challenge to all stakeholders.

The arrest, which took place on Saturday evening, has left the top brass of

Punjab police, pondering how to thwart any attempts to revive militancy in the State. The arrest of Harjant Singh and Jasvir Singh, said to be linked with Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) and Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), coincided with the visit of Home Minister P Chidambaram to lay the foundation of an integrated check-post at Attari in Amritsar.

According to Paramjeet Singh Gill, IGR Patiala range, the arrested terrorists were in close contacts with top KLF Bakhshish Singh alias Baba, who is absconding since the

bomb attack on Dera Sacha Sauda chief in Karnal two years back.

In his media interaction, Chidambaram ruled out the revival of militancy in Punjab, saying that Punjab Government had successfully controlled all such things well in time, and the State was by and large peaceful. "We look for Punjab's bright future," said he when asked to comment on the issue.

Chidambaram's optimism is rooted in the fact that the people of Punjab are not ready to see those violent days returning at all. The only but major

concern, which promises elbow room to vested interests to thrive, is the state's sensitive social fabric, which erupts on the spur of the moment in matters of religion and faith.

Agreed Dr Pramod Kumar, a social scientist: "What really concerns me and should others too are growing tendencies of divisiveness among different communities in the name Deras, caste and other flimsy grounds. It is a serious matter and needs effective action plan to deal with."

Sporadic incidents of violence, some of them of felt at

a large scale in Ludhiana and Jalandhar recently, and currently being seen in Batala in Gurdaspur, are a case in point. Ludhiana burnt for days when a group of Sikhs clashed with the followers of Ashutosh Maharaj.

"If we are not able to check such social malaise on time, Punjab will certainly be in for more troubles in days to come. These troubles might transform into terrorism too. The need is nip these forces in the bud, and not keep harping that militancy may return to Punjab, which is absolutely irrelevant," added

Dr Kumar, a social scientist and director of the city-based social think-tank Institute for Development and Communication (IDC).

In May last year, the entire Doaba region stayed under the grip of violence following the death of Sant Ramanand, deputy chief of a Sikh sect called Dera Sachkhand Ballan, in an attack by a rival group in Vienna in Austria.

The Doaha region of Punjab, which falls between Beas and Sutlej rivers, with a significant Dalit presence,

*Continued on Page 4*

## Fear of terror, societal divisions haunt Punjab

From Page 1

was the most hit, with Jalandhar being the epicentre of violence. "Such situations certainly come as an opportunity for the vested interests to realise their nefarious motives," admitted a senior official of Punjab Police.

Punjab DGP PS Gill in his maiden media interaction after he took over the charge in December last year had admitted that Pakistan's ISI has always been active, and was making desperate attempts to revive terrorism in Punjab. "ISI motivates youth, especially the unemployed, through various incentives including sending them abroad to Malaysia," Gill had said.

Alive to the fact that terrorism can raise its ugly head anytime, the State police have made efforts to create highly trained and specially equipped special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams in each of the six police ranges of Ludhiana, Faridkot, Ferozepur, Patiala, Jalandhar and Amritsar.

In 2009, according to Gill, Punjab police had busted nine terrorist modules with the arrest of 46 terrorists. "However, there still are embers of terrorism, which need to be kept under watch. This requires upgradation of all types of intelligence efforts, co-ordination at various levels and proper equipment," reads Punjab police's Strategy 2009 document.

The document also says that "intercaste conflicts is other sensitive issues, which need to be taken care diligently. In particular, Doaba region of Punjab has faced number of such conflicts. To maintain law and order in the state, Punjab police needs to develop new strategies to defuse such situation before these aggravate."

# Correcting distortions in governance

The ultimate aim is to ensure that it is the citizens who shall govern and not the administration, with due focus on accountability

By Pramod Kumar

**G**OVERNANCE : For whom and for what? This question normally gets lost in the processes, procedures and application of technology. To illustrate, the application of unique ID numbers, no doubt, shall provide efficiency, but only to the existing process of undignified and exploitative exchange between the citizens and the government. These rules of exchange in many spheres do not protect the rights and the entitlements of the people on the margins besides treating a fairly large section of the citizenry in an undignified manner.

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. Interestingly, 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. A clear message emerges that the system has ceased to be functional. Consequently, the Army was reportedly assigned the task of killing mosquitoes to facilitate a Dengue-free hosting of the Commonwealth Games.

The first initiative is to be taken to restore the identity of the citizens. Even after 63 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. For declarations relating to their profession, income, caste, residence proof, etc., affidavits are to be given on legal papers sworn before a Magistrate or public notary. Even to procure ration cards, electricity, sewerage and water connection, birth and death certificates, applications for admission to the educational institutions, affidavits attested by the gazetted officer or third party or public notary, or Magistrate have to be produced. The government-mentality continues to treat citizens as colonial subjects. However, most of these affidavits are local inventions and are not required by law.

However, the 'government-mentality' of mistrust has resisted any attempt to repose trust in its own citizens by accepting self-declarations as reliable and authentic. The Punjab



Government by its order discontinued the practice of submission of affidavits unless required by law.

Further, the services are rendered to the citizens not as a matter of right but as a dole. To reverse this, a legislation has been proposed by the Governance Commission to make it mandatory for administration to serve the people. The purpose is not merely to provide corruption-free and harassment-free services but to send the signal that it is citizens who shall govern and not the administration. In other words, the main focus is on accountability rather than efficiency.

The government accepted the Commission's recommendation to legislate an act to ensure delivery of services as a right to the citizen. It includes around 48 services from the Departments of Revenue, Local Self-Government, Electricity, Police, Food and Civil Supplies, Health, Transport, etc. This will transform the terms of interaction between the citizens and the administration.

Further, the administrative division of population on the basis of caste and religion has multiplied social

cleavages and led to the denial of full citizenship. The decision to conduct caste-based census is a sign of diversity insensitivity that shall only produce fractured identity as a citizen.

Recently, another initiative to protect the girl child, pregnant women was tracked to prohibit them from seeking sex selection tests to abort a female foetus. As this is violative of the citizen's privacy, it has the potential to provide license to those who treat women as commodities. The Commission has suggested that the government should enforce law on private and public sector medical practitioners and at the same time attempt to enhance the value of the girl child by ensuring tracking of the girl child through her life cycle from birth to death and interweave incentive-oriented schemes to check both female foeticide and cultural neglect.

The pervasiveness of cultural neglect of the girl child has been proved beyond doubt by the provisional census data 2011. The provisional census data have shown how

sex ratio at birth has shown some improvement, but child sex ratio (0-6 years) has shown a major decline.

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 in particular and the District Collectorate in general, is more pronounced. The visit to these spaces gives a feeling of alien space and a sense of loss of dignity and identity. And, interactions with the police and consequent loss of dignity has been described succinctly in the Fifth Report of the National Police Commission (November 1980). The Commission expressed anguish that the 1902 Fraser Commission's observation that 'people' now may not dread the police, but they certainly dread getting involved with it in any capacity, continues to be valid.

This political interference which has become an accepted part of the political culture (not only in Punjab but in many other states) has produced glaring distortions in the

practice of governance leading to dilution of hierarchy, dysfunctional internal accountability mechanisms and patronage-centric governance. To illustrate, the average tenure in 2009 of a Station House Officer is around six months, which was about seven months in 2004. In the case of a Deputy Superintendent of Police, the same is ten months and one year for the District Superintendent of Police.

Therefore, it is suggested that the tenure of the police personnel may be fixed in consonance with the Police Act and a performance audit report may be considered as the basis for transfers and postings. The language of power is different from the language of justice. The institutions of justice delivery understand with clarity the language of power and material rather than listening to the feeble voices of the dispossessed.

A third set of prerequisites relates to productivity, i.e. to engage people with the system in a productive manner and provide conducive conditions to nurture people's capacity to be productive and their ability to exercise some degree of

control over their lives.

To illustrate, in the section on Social Security and Welfare Programmes, it has been brought out how the social security programmes like Pensions and Shagun are given as doles to a large section of the ineligible population. This has become a practice with successive governments. Consequently, it leads to wastage to the tune of about Rs 220 crore and Rs 40 crore in the case of old-age pension and Shagun schemes respectively. The need is to identify the deserving beneficiaries as also to ensure that its reach is periodically evaluated.

Instead of productive engagement of the citizen, a culture of sharing of the spoils is reinforced. Subsidies directed at the poor are given as doles and subsidies directed to protect the profits are described as 'rescue' packages.

A fourth set of prerequisites relates to the allocation of roles to various institutions. Since administration is compartmentalised in the departments and each department has its own priorities, if a particular department's priorities take precedence over the other, that is likely to lead to dissonance within the system. There is no dearth of examples to demonstrate this point.

In 2004-05, the Department of Finance of Punjab, in its overactive commitment to impose fiscal management, came out with a scheme to contract untrained 'teachers' from the same village to cut government expenditure. As a result, the quality of teaching further deteriorated and, later, all the contractual 'teachers' launched protest and demanded that they should be trained as teachers and that their services be regularised. This scheme was spearheaded by fiscal management framework rather than access to equity concern in quality education.

As a result, the inability to maintain delicate functional balance between the institutions produced a major crisis in governance. The tendency to empower institutions with ad hoc license has a clear message, i.e. to kill poison with poison and letting the patient die. This has made governance less a matter of politics, more of an administrative policy and the discretionary political interference.

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# Economics of communalism

Economic Survey - Subrata Banerjee

**E**XACTLY two years ago the Akalis in Punjab had launched their "nehar roko morcha". It was a purely economic issue related to water resources. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was then only one among many minor preachers in Amritsar district. Today he seems to have emerged as the dominant force in Punjab.

Backed by his band of criminals, operating under the garb of religious fundamentalism, he has the cheek to refer to the Prime Minister of India in the most contemptuous terms and bid her come to him at his cowardly Golden Temple hideout if she wants to solve the Punjab crisis.

The manner in which these criminals are murdering individual after individual, escaping from police custody very conveniently in front of gurdwaras, it would seem to provide clear evidence of long-standing partnership in crime between these elements and sections of the police and other security forces. This partnership is grounded in the economics of smuggling across the Indo-Pak border. So powerful are these links that even the terror of the emergency days in Delhi, Bhinder seems to be ineffective. Politically these forces are so powerful that they have been able to force the secular Darbara Singh out of power.

## Futility

The release of the so-called moderates among the Akalis and indications of new moves for dialogue between them and government seem to indicate that the Centre has at last realised the futility of the policy of allowing the Bhindranwale gang to liquidate the moderates, before tackling them with repression. The time has indeed come to take certain decisions about the issues of the dispute and enforce them through a combination of political mass mobilisation and force against the criminal elements.

This would, however, be only the beginning. A real solution to the Punjab crisis would depend on positive measures based on a clear understanding of the issues involved. The crisis in Punjab is an expression of economic, social, cultural, political, religious and structural contradictions, born of our particular pattern of capitalist development. A group of young social scientists—Dr. Prasad Kumar, Manmohan Sharma,

Atul Sood and Ashwani Handa—from the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh, have addressed themselves to attempt an understanding of the complex and multidimensional aspects of the Punjab crisis. Their study, *Punjab Crisis: Context and Trends* shows how basically economic issues have been communalised for political purposes.

Much is made of the miracle of Punjab. There is no doubt that thanks to the so-called green revolution, the per capita income in Punjab is the highest in India. This picture of prosperity, however, conceals a grim reality of massive poverty. Between 1961 and 1971 the ratio of landless workers in the labour force rose from 17.3 per cent to 32.1 per cent. About 65 per cent of the operational landholdings are less than five acres and are economically unviable. Only 20 per cent of the population owns 60 per cent of the land. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that 24 per cent of the small farmers and 31 per cent of the marginal farmers should live below the poverty line. This is one aspect of the magic of the green revolution in Punjab.

Another contradiction, also arising from the exclusive reliance on the so-called green revolution strategy, is that Punjab, the richest state in India, is also among the most industrially backward. All attention of planning and development strategy has been concentrated on that small section of the farmers who already enjoy endowments which enable them to respond most favourably to modern inputs. The small farm economy has been neglected. No efforts have been made to help them augment their limited income through facilities for processing raw materials and marketing them.

## Total neglect

At the same time the industrial development of Punjab has been totally neglected. Large and medium industries in Punjab increased from 122 units in 1973 to 203 in 1980. Most of these are capital intensive. They do not provide scope for investment of the wealth generated in the hands of the capitalist farmers born of the green revolution. Small units dominate the industrial economy of Punjab. They account for more than 50 per cent of the industrial production of the state. The rapidly growing industries in the small sector—woollen textiles, hosiery, steel

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re-rolling, cycles and cycle parts, and automobile parts—are dependent on raw materials imported from other states. At the same time very few units exist to process local raw materials. Punjab accounts for 20 per cent of the cotton production of the country and 85 per cent goes out of the state for processing. Only 13.4 per cent of its sugarcane production is converted into sugar, as against the all India average of 33 per cent.

The small sector in Punjab is highly localised and is unable to compete with similar industries in other states, where the existence of big industries provide linkages so essential for improved quality and quantitative growth. Sustained through incentives and subsidies, the small industries of Punjab do not seem to be interested in expanding their markets. The woollen and hosiery industry is the second largest in the state. It depends entirely on the Soviet market. It has made no effort to establish itself in the domestic market or even to enter other overseas markets. This is despite the fact that many Indian industries, even engineering industries, have graduated from the Soviet market, a highly quality conscious market in the engineering area, into Western Europe and North America.

It must be admitted that shortage of industrial raw materials and mineral resources are a major constraint for industrial development of Punjab. This could possibly have been overcome if Central Planning

had considered the need for public sector investments in industrial units, instead of being obsessed with the so-called green revolution strategy of growth prescribed by the World Bank in the midsixties. Not enough effort has been made to draw the surplus generated by the green revolution for investment in industries. The peasant culture of easy and quick returns has hence sought investment opportunities in real estate, cold storage, public transport, and trade. The major portion of the disposable surplus has gone for conspicuous consumption, triggered by the most effective marketing and advertising of the transnational corporations and their Indian subsidiaries manufacturing consumer goods and consumer durables of a wide variety. It is significant that less than ten per cent of the bank deposits are from the rural areas. This is an area that needs some study.

Lack of industrialisation has meant lack of employment for the educated rural youth, used to the new life styles of an urban consumer society. This is true also of the urban youth. On the other hand in the limited area of trade and commerce the entry of new elements from among the rural rich has created new complications. The reorganisation of the state had already created a religion based rural-urban divide, with Sikhs in the villages and Hindus in the towns. The greatest beneficiaries of the green revolution have been the Jat Sikh big and middle farmers. As they entered the trading

field they found themselves in competition with the entrenched Hindu traders. They also perceive a conflict situation in relation to big industries outside the state, who are the producers of agricultural inputs, such as fertilisers, tractors and pumps.

## Convenient weapon

In this context, communalism has become a convenient weapon of a struggle for political power between the two communities, as in a plural society, this is perceived as the only guarantee of safeguarding sectional interests. By 1970 the big and middle Jat Sikh farmer became the dominant section among Sikh communalists. Communalism has cut across political affiliations in non-Communist parties, including Congress(I), because of the concessions made to communal forces under compulsions of electoral politics, to which the Communists have also contributed though to a lesser degree. The emerging political importance of the big farmers in Punjab is evident from the increase in the percentage of ministers from this class from 29.04 before 1966 to 51.4 between 1967 and 1980. Communalisation of economic conflicts for political gains is reflected in the demand for state autonomy and nationalisation of all industries except agro-based industries. From this the demand for a separate state by a section of the Sikh rich peasants and urban Sikh traders is just but one apparently logical step forward. This finds support among some disgruntled and frustrated unemployed youth. In such a situation it becomes very easy for all the criminal elements, particularly the smugglers, to take control of the movement.

It is significant that most of the demands of the Anandapur Sahib Resolution are in the interests of the middle and rich farmers:

- i) cheap inputs and modernisation of agriculture;
- ii) removal of restrictions on movements of foodgrains (of benefit to surplus farmers);
- iii) remunerative prices on basis of cost of production of the middle farmers (of greater benefit to the rich farmers with a bigger marketable surplus).

It is true that economic factors are basic to the situation in Punjab. Even so, as the authors of *Punjab Crisis* have so effectively brought out, there is need to look at the problem in a more comprehensive fashion. As they

have pointed out "The present crisis is the result of the competition for distributive benefits, concentration of land and other resources in the hands of fewer people, the lack of secular education and inappropriate industrialisation and urbanisation."

The Punjab situation, as perceived by the group of young scholars, clearly shows that communalism cannot be considered merely as an expression of religious differences inherited from pre-capitalist society and a feature of a transitional society. It is really a feature of capitalism as introduced by the British and sustained by the pattern of intensive and extensive capitalist development as carried out particularly during the last two decades. Given the plurality of community interests, particularly religious, this particular pattern of uneven capitalist development helps encourage fundamentalism. It cleverly uses the ethos of equality to mobilise the masses who are already conscious of inequality, for political power. Once in power it is unable to solve socio-structural problems of a fast developing modern economy. In such a situation its earlier justification of violence to defend the ethos of fundamentalism becomes an instrument for the sustenance of political power.

## Opportunities

It is in this context that the authors of *Punjab Crisis* have rightly called for a total change in the development strategy, based on economic development related to the socio-cultural realities of Punjab combined with an ideological campaign and mass mobilisation against communalism while attacking the social roots of communalism.

In this context greater attention to the industrialisation of Punjab assumes importance. If the surplus generated in agriculture can be invested in industries seeking and finding a wider market beyond the confines of the state it would possibly expand economic opportunities and help the forces of integration. This is a valid issue that demands deeper study, in view of the rising tide of regionalism that is shaking the very foundations of our federal structure and our national identity. This is a matter of great urgency because the sources of the biggest threat to our national security at this critical period in international relations are domestic. US imperialism and its allies are naturally trying to take advantage of it.

GUEST COLUMN | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Election results and lessons for Punjab

PUNJAB POLITICS is in a state of flux. Political parties are caught in their self-created crises emanating from lack of clearly defined political agenda, absence of inner party democracy and intra-party factionalism. Recent elections in four Indian states have a direct ramification on Punjab on account of forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The defeat of the Congress in its 'best governed' states has serious implications for the Congress government in Punjab. The Congress party in Punjab is facing a crisis of dissidence within its ranks. But more serious issue is, why people did not vote for the Congress in its 'best governed' states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh? Answer to this question shall have a recipe for the ruling party in Punjab to conjure the magic number in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

These states have received certificates of good performance from the World Bank, the Planning Commission and even the Central Government. Then why did people betray these governments and not consider it even worthwhile to glance at the 'good performance certificates'.

The situation changed in the Nineties. Earlier, electoral promises used to be in line with the ideological commitment of political parties. Now, with the adoption of economic reforms agenda, electoral promises are in contradiction with the governments mandate.

Votes are sought for creation of jobs, for providing subsidies for poverty alleviation, whereas the mandate of the governments is to reduce employment in public sector and eliminate subsidies. Hence, 'good governance' certificates find rejection by the people in elections. Punjab also

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has become a victim of this paradox and started the process of economic reforms leading to politics of drift.

Punjab, therefore, has to shift its agenda to productive investment instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of government's expenditure in place of expenditure reduction. There is need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at predecessor regimes for corruption-free governance.

The Congress, both at the national and the state level, is caught in a ideological flux between Nehruvian nation building project to Indira Gandhi's apologetic state welfarism to Rajiv Gandhi's market driven governance. Congress has no choice but to shed the politics of drift and reconstruct pro-people policies. Market must not be allowed to govern to produce tragedies for people. The space occupied by transformational discourse represented in slogans like Garibi Haato must be recaptured.

Another lesson is that the politics of drift has a built-in mechanism to lead to disconnect between the people, the party and the government. In Punjab, this disconnect has become more pronounced. It has to balance the compulsion of legislative politics with the necessities of good governance. The dissidence clamouring to share the spoils of power with the faction

wielding power is multiplying. For the present, chief minister an easy option is to co-opt as many aspirants as possible leading to perpetuation of corruption. This is the surest way to defeat in the forthcoming elections. It is a catch-22 situation.

Is there an escape from this situation? Particularly when candidates were selected at the time of elections based on their capacity to win. It does not matter whether a candidate has a criminal record or does not possess capacity to do pro-people work but he/she must demonstrate the capacity to manipulate votes. This is symptomatic of the erosion of ideological support base of political parties. The logical fall out is multiplication of dissidents after the elections leading to defections. And answer to this is being found in making anti-defection laws more stringent rather than selecting people on the basis of their commitment to vision and philosophy of a political party.

Consequently, elections rather than making democratic process participatory and therefore legitimate, are trying to subvert democracy itself. The votes, which decide the fate of elections, are managed through majoritarianism, casteism, bribe, rigging and fear. And performance of individual leader is linked to its capacity to

manage votes. These leaders are presented as either villains or heroes. Yesterday's heroes become today's villains by succumbing to sting operation.

To replace Amarinder Singh with Rajinder Kaur Bhattal may have saleability value, but no shelf life. The Congress will remain in doldrums with or without leadership change till it has a clearly defined pro-people politics and positive economic agenda.

The Congress needs to be governed by mass leaders, which is a surest insurance against coterie, high command dictates and disconnect between the party and the people. Leaders and party activists must follow a cardinal code of conduct to seek lease of life from their constituents and not merely manage the eye of the high command.

People oriented initiatives like devolution of powers, employment generation, agrarian reforms social transformation including drug de-addiction, combating female foeticide may help the Congress government to capture the people's imagination. To treat elections as an ultimate mission rather than pro-people politics is to get into the vicious circle of production and appeasement of dissidents.

Elections are not merely events to be managed or won. Election are used for ideological positioning rather than strategic management. They have implications for making democracy representative, participatory and distributive within the spirit of Constitution for building up a humane, secular and egalitarian society.

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# ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ

ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਹਰੇਕ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਚੇਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਪੈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ 'ਚ ਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨ ਤੇ ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਖਾੜੀ ਜੰਗ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਵਾਲ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸੱਦਾਮ ਹੁਸੈਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਥੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਸਲਕੁਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਟੋ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਮਾਰੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸਰਬ ਨਸਲਪ੍ਰਸਤਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੁਣਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਰਿਫਿਊਜ਼ੀ ਬਣੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 33 ਗੁਣਾ ਵੱਧ ਸੀ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਜਿਕਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਨਸਲਕੁਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਦਾਮ ਦੇ ਘਟੀਆ ਰਾਜ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੋਵਾਂਗੇ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਫੇਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹੀ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਮਾਰੇ ਅਫਗਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ 11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਕਤਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਹਿੰਸੇਦਾਰ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਵਾਂਗੇ।

ਇਹ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਤ ਭਾਗ-ਜਾਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਣ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੇਜ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਪਾਗਲਾਨਾ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਐਕਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਹਿੰਸਕ ਜਨਤਕ ਲਾਮਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਬਦਲ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਸਿਰੇ ਹੀ ਗਲਤ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਹ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਬਣੇ। ਜਿਸ ਕੋਲ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਉਹੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ। 11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਏ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਮਕਸਦ ਲਈ ਉਕਸਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਮੁੜ ਜਤਾ ਸਕੇ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦਾ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਮਾਇਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਿੱਛਲੰਗਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਵਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਬੇਬੰਸ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਿਰ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਤਕੜਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੋਕ ਇਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਆਖਰ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਮਸਲੇ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਦੀ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਪੁਰਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ

11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਨਚੌੜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉੱਚ-ਤਕਨੀਕ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਹਲਾ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਟਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲ ਅਤੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਫਿਤਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਅਗਵਾ ਹੋਏ ਦੂਜੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਪਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਟਾਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸੂਹੀਆ ਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਦਰਅਸਲ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਬਾਰ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ। ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਛਤਰੀ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ, ਮਾਨਵਵਾਦੀ, ਬਰਾਬਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਇਕ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ। ਇਸ ਭਰਮ-ਜਾਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਕਸਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਾਅ 'ਤੇ ਲਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਸਗੋਂ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ ਢੰਗ-ਤਰੀਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਤਿਲਾਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਖਾੜਕੂ ਮਾਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਨਿਆਂਪਾਲਿਕਾ ਨੇ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਫਸਰ ਚੁਣ ਲਏ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਹ ਮਨੋਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਪਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਕ ਦਿਮਾਗੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਰਣਨੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਿਰਫ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ 'ਚ ਬੰਦੂਕ ਹੱਟਾ ਕੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਜੇਕਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੰਦੂਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਗੋਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਕੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਨੱਪਣਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਫੇਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਜਾਂ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰਹੇਗਾ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਫੇਰ ਸਿਰ ਚੁੱਕ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਉਹ ਹੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਇਹ ਮੱਤ ਜਾਂ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਪਨਪਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਇਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਿਰਫ ਅੱਤਵਾਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ 'ਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਮੱਤ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੀ ਵਧੇਗਾ। ਹਮਲਾਵਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਵਰਤੀ ਗਈ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਦਾ ਨਿਬੇੜਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅਸਲ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਟੁੱਟਣਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਹੀ ਸੋਚ ਇਸ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗਲਤੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਮਿਥ ਲਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਗਠਜੋੜ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਖੁਦ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਨਾਹਗਰੀ ਹਨ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਪੁਰਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਛਲਾਵਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਰਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਸਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟਣ ਲਈ ਢੁੱਕਵੀਂ ਰਣਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਲਦਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ

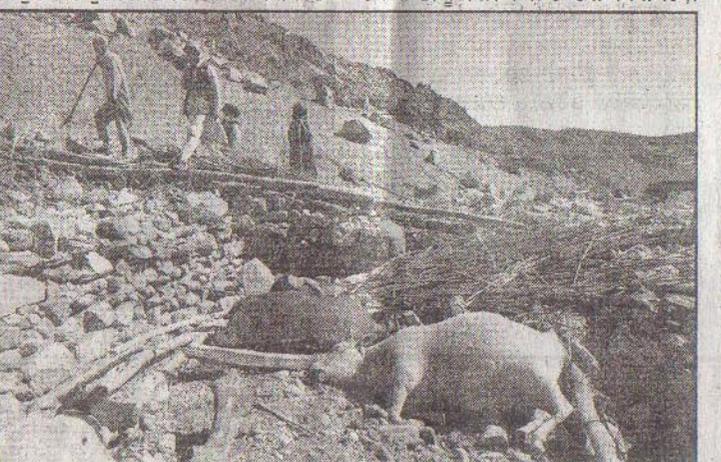
ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਦੱਸੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 'ਮਹਾਂਬਲੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਨਾਂ' 'ਤੇ ਟੋਕ ਰੱਖ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਵੱਲੋਂ 'ਅਰਥਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵੀਕਰਨ' ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਚੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ।

## ਡਾ: ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਕੁਮਾਰ

ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਤਮ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੁਣ ਚੋਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਅੱਗੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਤਮ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰੰਜੀਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵੀਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਤਰਕਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ

ਕਿੜਾਂ ਕੱਢਣ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਤਾਕਤਵਰ ਗਠਜੋੜ 'ਤੇ ਟੋਕ ਰੱਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਹਕੂਮਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫੇਰ 'ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ', 'ਖਤਰੇ' ਅਤੇ 'ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ' ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਅਰਥ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿੱਤ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਰਹੱਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ

ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾਉਣਾ। ਧਮਕੀ ਜਾਂ ਖਤਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਸਿਰਫ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ, ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਜੈਸ਼ੇ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਮਹਾਂਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਵਿਕਾਸਸ਼ੀਲ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਥਿਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਫੇਰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਸਿਰਫ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਾਇਨਾਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਰਾਜ



ਵਿਆਪਕ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੰਗ

ਲਈ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀ ਚੋਰਵਾਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਠਜੋੜ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਆਤਮ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਹੀ ਇਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ

ਨੂੰ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਅਮਨ-ਥਾਤੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਵੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਫੈਸਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਆਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਵਾਪਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਛਲਾਵੇ ਨੇ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੀ

ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਬਾਹਕਰੂ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਗੁਣਗੁਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਰਫ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਭਰਮ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਦਿਸਣ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਜ਼ਾਈਲ ਹਮਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਮਿਜ਼ਾਈਲ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਾਲਪਨਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਲਈ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਭਾਲ ਖਰਚ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਵਾਪਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਨਚੌੜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉੱਚ-ਤਕਨੀਕ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਹਲਾ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਟਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲ ਅਤੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਫਿਤਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਅਗਵਾ ਹੋਏ ਦੂਜੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਪਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਟਾਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸੂਹੀਆ ਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਦਰਅਸਲ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਬਾਰ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਛਤਰੀ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ, ਮਾਨਵਵਾਦੀ, ਬਰਾਬਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਇਕ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ। ਇਸ ਭਰਮ-ਜਾਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਕਸਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਾਅ 'ਤੇ ਲਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਸਗੋਂ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ ਢੰਗ-ਤਰੀਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਤਿਲਾਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਸੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ

ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਆਪਰਾਧੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਦੇ ਦੇਣਾ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਮਜਬੂਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਵੀ ਲੋਕ 'ਸਭਿਆਚਕ ਸਮਾਜ' ਦੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਠਹਿਰਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਸਬੂਤ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਧਰਮ, ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਥਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਸਮੂਹ ਦੇ ਤਿੱਛੇ ਤੇ ਉਲਟੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ 'ਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਤਰਕ 'ਤੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਾਫੀ ਲੋਕ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਅਰਬਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਏਸ਼ੀਆਈ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਮੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ 'ਚ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਟਿੱਕ ਲਏ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਅਫਗਾਨਿਸਤਾਨ, ਇਰਾਕ, ਈਰਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਲਾਮੀ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋਰੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਖੁਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਖੁਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਕੱਲੇ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਾਤਮਾ, ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਖਾਤਮਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਬਕ ਸਿੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ। ਜੇਕਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਪਨਾਹ ਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਲੜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵਧੇ-ਫੁੱਲੇਗਾ ਹੀ। ਕਿੰਸਾ-ਕੋੜਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਹੀ ਵਾਪਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਦੂਜਾ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਨ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਜੰਗ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜਾ ਪੱਖ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਉਹ ਮਨਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਭਿਆਚਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਖੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੋਚਣ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਤੇ ਯੂਰਪੀਅਨ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਫਿਕਰ ਕਰਨ।

ਚੌਥਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਚੋਰੀਵਾਦੀ ਮੁਲਕ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਸੰਕਲਪ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੀ 'ਆਮ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ' ਠੋਸਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਲੋਕ ਰਾਏ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ। ਇਹ ਸਬਕ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੈ। ਫੌਰੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਚੋਰੀਵਾਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਦੇ ਹਿਤਪੂਰਕ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਬਦਲਵਾਂ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਵਰਨਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਨ-ਥਾਤੀ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਕ ਮ੍ਰਿਗਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਹੀ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

-ਅਨੁਵਾਦ : ਬਲਜੀਤ ਬੱਲੀ  
ਲੇਖਕ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਖੰਜ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ੀਓਲੋਜੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਡਿਵੈਲਪਮੈਂਟ ਐਂਡ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਹਨ।

# हिंसा से समाप्त नहीं होगी हिंसा

आतंकवाद सर्वव्यापक बन चुका है। प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को यह चुनाव करने के लिए विवश होना पड़ रहा है कि वह अमरीकी सैन्य कार्रवाई के समर्थन में है या ओसामा बिन लादेन और तालिबान के। पहले भी खाड़ी जंग के समय ऐसी स्थिति उत्पन्न हुई थी, जब प्रश्न यह था कि आप सद्दाम हुसैन के साथ हैं या उसके विरुद्ध। केवल यही ही नहीं, इसी प्रकार हमें कोसावो में अमरीकी बमबारी तथा किसी जाति विशेष पर अत्याचार में से किसी एक का चुनाव करने के लिए विवश होना पड़ा था। वहां अमरीका तथा नाटो संगठन द्वारा की गई बम वर्षा से जितने व्यक्ति मरे, उनकी संख्या सर्व कट्टरवादियों द्वारा मारे गये लोगों से तीन गुणा अधिक थी। इसी प्रकार बमबारी से शरणार्थी बने लोगों की संख्या 33 गुणा अधिक थी। हमें यह कहा गया कि यदि हम अमरीकी बमबारी का समर्थन नहीं करते, तो उपरोक्त नरसंहारों तथा सद्दाम हुसैन के अत्याचारों के लिए हम ही जिम्मेदार होंगे और अब फिर हमें यही बताया गया कि यदि हमने गरीबी के मारे अफगानियों पर अमरीकी हमले का समर्थन नहीं किया, तो 11 सितम्बर को न्यूयार्क में हुई हत्याओं की जिम्मेदारी के हम भी भागीदार समझे जाएंगे।

यह एक प्रत्यक्ष भ्रमजाल है, जिसमें फंसने से परहेज करना चाहिए। सबसे अधिक खतरनाक बात यह है कि अमरीकी सैन्य कार्रवाई और आतंकवादियों के हमले दोनों ही हिंसा को राजनीतिक कार्रवाई और अहिंसक सार्वजनिक लामबंदी का विकल्प समझते हैं। ये दोनों बातें ही गलत हैं। इसके पीछे यह तर्क कार्य कर रहा है कि विश्व भर में हिंसा प्रधान व्यवहार बने। जिसके पास अधिक मारक शक्ति होगी, वही विश्व पर राज करेगा। 11 सितम्बर को हुए आतंकवादी हमलों ने अमरीका को इस उद्देश्य के लिए उकसा दिया है कि वह अपना पहला दावा पुनः जता पाए कि उसके पास हिंसा का खजाना अन्यों से कहीं अधिक है। प्रतिक्रम है कि आतंकवादियों, उनके समर्थकों पर हिंसक वार किया जाए। इसके साथ ही वे निर्दोष नागरिक भी शिकार हुए जिनकी किसी भी गुट से हमदर्दी नहीं थी। इस सारे घटनाक्रम का परिणाम आतंकवाद को शक्तिशाली बनाने के रूप में ही निकला। आतंकवाद के जिम्मेदार लोग यही तो चाहते थे कि यह सिद्ध हो कि अंततः हिंसा ही प्रत्येक मसले का समाधान है। शांति लाने के लिए मुकाबले के डर को एक ढंग के रूप में प्रयोग करने से हिंसक संस्कृति उत्पन्न होती है। दृष्टिकोण की यह धुरी हिंसा के लिए जिम्मेदार लोगों को व्यक्तिगत रूप में निशाना बनाना है। दूसरे शब्दों में पुलिस वालों ने आतंकवादी मार दिए और दूसरी ओर न्याय पालिका ने सज़ा के लिये कुछ पुलिस अधिकारी चुन लिए। यह एक रेसा सिलसिला है जिसकी कहीं समाप्ति नहीं। इसके पीछे यह उद्देश्य कार्य करता है कि आतंकवादियों की हत्या करके और कुछ चुनिंदा पुलिस वालों को सज़ा देकर आतंकवाद समाप्त हो जाएगा।

परन्तु आतंकवाद केवल एक मनःस्थिति नहीं। अपितु यह एक राजनीतिक रणनीति है। आतंकवाद का अर्थ केवल किसी हाथ में बंदूक होना नहीं है। यदि इन बंदूकों और हथियारों को स्थायी रूप में खामोश करना है, तो आतंकवाद

की राजनीति और विचारधारा से लड़ना होगा। जब तक आतंकवाद उत्पन्न होने वाला सिद्धतया कारण बरकरार रहेगा, तब तक आतंकवाद कभी भी सिर उठा सकता है। आतंकवादी वही लोग हैं, जो ऐसी विचारधारा की ओर खिंच जाते हैं, जब तक ऐसी विचारधारा पनपती रहेगी, तब तक आतंकवाद ऐसे लोगों को अपनी ओर खींचता रहेगा।

यह छलावा हिंसा तथा आतंकवादी संस्कृति के वास्तविक कारण और इनके साथ निपटने के लिए उचित रणनीति को धुंधला कर देता है। भारत की वर्तमान सरकार को इसके लिये दोषी नहीं कहा जा सकता कि यह आतंकवाद को समाप्त करने के लिए उसने अमरीका पर आश्रय रखा। वास्तव में, भारत सरकार का यह प्रतिक्रम भारतीय स्टेट द्वारा अर्थव्यवस्था के वैश्वीकरण किये जाने के लिए चुनाव का स्वाभाविक परिणाम ही था।

**सन्दर्भ**  
**डा. प्रमोद कुमार**

से है, न कि महाशक्तियों से जो कि विकासशील देशों की राजनीतिक एवं आर्थिकता को अस्थिर कर रही हैं। फिर सुरक्षा केवल सेना की तैनाती को समझा जाता है, न कि लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करने को। यहां तक कि देश में अमन-शांति कायम रखना भी विश्वव्यापी निर्णयों तथा आदेशों के घेरे में आ गया है। यह सभी कुछ घटित होने पर लोगों का कोई प्रतिक्रम नहीं हुआ। इस छलावे ने तकनीक पर बहुत अधिक निर्भर रहने वाली मानसिकता में वृद्धि की है। उदाहरण के लिए अधिक कारगर आधुनिक तकनीक वाले हथियारों के प्रदर्शन का गुणगान किया जा रहा है। तकनीक से केवल अधिक सुरक्षित होने का भ्रम ही उत्पन्न नहीं होता, अपितु दुश्मन वास्तविक रूप में भी बलशाली तथा भयानक लगने लगता है। अमरीका द्वारा अमरीकी भूमि

का ही परिणाम है। कहने का अभिप्राय यह है कि अमरीकी प्रशासन तकनीक को ही सुरक्षा छतरी बना रहा है, न कि लोकतंत्र, मानववाद, समानता पर आधारित एक धर्मनिरपेक्ष प्रबंध को। इस भ्रमजाल के कारण देश अक्सर तकनीक को बढ़ा-चढ़ा कर पेश करते हैं और आतंकवाद का सामना करने के लिए न केवल अपनी राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता को भी दांव पर लगा रहे हैं, अपितु टकराव समाप्त करने के लिए लोकतंत्र और न्यायपूर्ण ढंगों को भी तिलांजलि दे रहे हैं। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि आतंकवादी हमलों का पहले पता लगाना कठिन है, इसलिए ऐसे अपराधियों की पहचान के संबंध में पहले ही निर्णय कर लेना शासकों की राजनीतिक विवशता बन जाता है। परिणाम स्वरूप जो भी लोग सभ्य समाज के दुश्मन माने जाते हैं, वे सभी आतंकवादी कार्रवाइयों करने के लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराए जा सकते हैं, चाहे उनके विरुद्ध कोई प्रमाण न हो।

धर्म, उत्पन्न होने वाले स्थान या भौतिक रूप के आधार पर आतंकवादियों की पहचान करने का परिणाम प्रभावित हुए समूह के तीक्ष्ण प्रतिक्रम के रूप में निकलता है। केवल तर्क तथा पक्षपात हावी हो जाते हैं। काफी लोग सारा दोष अरबों, मुसलमानों और दक्षिण एशियाई-लोगों पर लगा रहे हैं। इस स्थिति में अमरीका ने अपना बदला लेने के लिए लक्ष्य निर्धारित कर लिए। आतंकवाद का मुकाबला करने के लिए अमरीका का प्रयास अफगानिस्तान, इराक, ईरान और इस्लामी जगत के उनके सहभागियों से बदला लेने का है। किसी एक बुश या बुशों द्वारा अकेले बिन लादेन या कई बिन लादेनों का सफाया हिंसक संस्कृति को समाप्त नहीं कर पाएगा। इस घटनाक्रम से कई सबक सीखने चाहिए। यदि आतंकवाद को शरण देकर भी इसके विरुद्ध लड़ा जाए, तो यह बढ़ेगा ही। कहने का अभिप्राय यह है कि यही सब कुछ इस समय हो रहा है।

दूसरा पहलू यह है कि व्यक्तिगत आतंकवाद के मुकाबले संस्थागत हिंसा को उत्पन्न करके इसे शांति के लिए की जा रही जंग के रूप में पेश किया जा रहा है। इस तरह करना हिंसा को स्थापित करना है। तीसरा पहलू यह है कि यह वह अवसर है जब सभ्य समाज विश्व के लोगों की जान की कीमत और रक्षा के संबंध में सोचे, न कि केवल अमरीकी तथा यूरोपीय लोगों की जानों की ही चिंता करे। चौथा पहलू यह है कि शक्तिशाली देश आतंकवाद के संबंध में उनके द्वारा बनाए गए संकल्प पर आधारित ही 'आम राजनीतिक सहमति' थोपने के स्थान पर आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध जनमत जुटाए। यह सबक यद्यपि स्पष्ट है, परन्तु इन्हें लागू करना या अपनाना कठिन है। आवश्यकता यह है कि प्रभुसत्ता के हित पूर्ण संकल्प के स्थान पर राजनीति का वैकल्पिक संकल्प खड़ा किया जाए, वरना हिंसा को और अधिक संस्थागत बल मिल जाएगा तथा अमन शांति केवल एक मृगतृष्णा ही बन कर रह जाएगी।

**अनुवाद : बलजीत बल्लरी**

नोट : डा. प्रमोद कुमार चण्डीगढ़ की अनुसंधान अध्ययन संस्था इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर डिवैल्यूमेंट एंड कम्प्युनिकेशन चण्डीगढ़ के निदेशक हैं।



टैंक पर सवार तालिबान सैनिकों को देखते हुए कुछ बच्चे

भारत और पाकिस्तान जैसे देश अपनी आर्थिक प्रभुसत्ता के आत्मसमर्पण के बाद अब बड़े देशों के आगे राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता का आत्मसमर्पण कर रहे हैं। शायद यह पूंजीवाद के वैश्वीकरण का ही एक तर्कपूर्ण परिणाम है। अब यह आदेश मिल रहे हैं कि राष्ट्रीय हितों के लिए राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता का समर्पण आवश्यक है।

इन दोनों देशों ने विश्व की महाशक्ति द्वारा बनाए गए गठबंधन और इसके आदेशों को मानने से बचने के स्थान पर अपने राजनीतिक स्वायत्तता का आत्मसमर्पण कर दिया है। दोनों देश ही एक-दूसरे के साथ अपनी छोटी-छोटी दुश्मनी निकालने के लिए इस शक्तिशाली गठबंधन पर आश्रय रख रहे हैं। इन दोनों देशों के राजनीतिक शासकों ने एक बार पुनः राष्ट्रीय हितों, खतरे और सुरक्षा को अपने अनुसार नये अर्थ दिये हैं। उनके लिए राष्ट्रीय हित केवल सीमाओं की रक्षा है, न कि लोगों की राजनीतिक अथवा आर्थिक प्रभुसत्ता को बचाना। धमकी या खतरे का भाव केवल कमजोर पाकिस्तान, तालिबान या जैश-ए-मोहब्बत

को मिसाइल हमले से बचाने के लिए विकसित की गई मिजाइल विरोधी राष्ट्र नीति एक ऐसे काल्पनिक दृश्य के लिए अरबों डालर खर्च करने का उदाहरण है, जो कि केवल फिल्मी दृश्य में ही घटित हो सकता है।

11 सितम्बर के सबसे महत्वपूर्ण परिणाम को पूरी तरह नज़रअंदाज़ कर दिया गया है। इस हमले ने इस धारणा को पूरी तरह तहस-नहस कर दिया है कि तकनीक से हमलों के संबंध में पहले पता लगाया जा सकता है। कुछ तकनीक के आधार पर चलने वाले उच्चकोटि के सिस्टम मानवीय दिमाग के वर्चस्व को छोटा करने का प्रयास करते हैं। मानवीय मन की गतिशीलता और सदैव विकसित हो रही मानवीय दिमाग की फितरत को वह तकनीक काबू नहीं कर सकती, जो कि इसी दिमाग पर आधारित है। इसलिए अमरीका के अपहृत दूसरे विमान को विश्व व्यापार केन्द्र के दूसरे टावर में मारे जाने से रोकने के पक्ष से और समूचे रूप से इस हमले में खुफिया तंत्र की नाकामी वास्तव में तकनीक पर बेपनाह निर्भरता

GUJARAT LESSONS | Dr Pramod Kumar

# Ideology overrides anti-incumbency

*Following the Gujarat polls, a section among the Sikh is pondering that if Bhindranwale can be labeled anti-national for advocating a theocratic state, why the Hindu radicals are referred to as ultra-nationalists rather than anti-national.*

THE GUJARAT election has shown that ideologies are relevant to electoral politics. In other words, it has questioned the expediency of coalition politics. The lesson for political parties other than the Bharatiya Janata Party is that effortless anti-incumbency campaigns will not be the decisive factor in elections. In other words, a holistic ideological stance relentlessly articulated on diverse issues through the party organisational set-up is the only mantra for survival in competitive politics. It has been clearly demonstrated in Gujarat that in elections, neither the magic of anti-incumbency nor the design of communal rioting per se determines electoral verdict.

Did Gujarat burn? That it was scorched is testified by 154 of its 182 constituencies which were torched by riots. But did all riot-affected constituencies go to the BJP — with only 126 wins? The riot touch did not prove the BJP's Midas. In fact, the results do not validate the thesis that the riot-hit constituencies or even those with high rioting had BJP as the sole claimant. Gandhinagar and Dessa were among the worst affected by riots yet they returned Congress candidates. Thus, the Congress has won in a significant number of constituencies (12 per cent) which witnessed a high degree of riots and others which had moderate riots (24 per cent). On the other hand, among the riot-free constituencies, more seats went to the BJP than to the Congress (more than 60 per cent), even in the proclaimed anti-incumbency heartland of Saurashtra. In other words, the BJP won irrespective of the presence or the extent of riots in Gujarat,

where it could win more than 60 per cent of the constituencies which had no rioting or low rioting. The Congress, on the other hand, did win seats in the heavily and moderately riot hit constituencies.

The Gujarat elections have produced a major shift from one variety of ideological monotheism to another i.e. from the minority religious group to the majority religious group, from nationalisation of Hindutva to regionalisation of regional sentiments and aspirations around Hindutva is a unique experiment which has serious implications for the nation-building project. It has not only reversed the secular nation-building project launched at the time of Independence, but has also distorted the RSS concept of nationalisation of Hindutva.

The whole tenor of electoral mobilisation in Gujarat was a clever blend of Gaurav of Gujarat and Hindutva identity. Earlier, a similar blend between regionalism and Islam has been witnessed in Kashmir. This process has built-in potential of leading to disintegration of the country. For instance, if the movements like Punjab for Punjabis (Sikhs), Kashmir for Kashmiris (Muslims), Maharashtra for Marathas (Hindus), Assam for Assamese (Hindus), Gujarat for Gujaratis

(Hindus) gain momentum, it will result in not only disintegration, but can also cause religious and ethnic cleansing. The radical assertions by Hindu extremists that India will become Hindu Rashtra within two years has provided post-facto rationalisation to radicals in Punjab. Already a section amongst the Sikh are pondering if Bhindranwale can be labeled as anti-national for advocating a theocratic state, why the Hindu radicals are referred to as ultra-nationalists rather than anti-national?

Providing a saffron garb to regional aspiration cannot be explained as a consequence of post-Godhra developments. In fact, the Godhra episode and the riots that followed are the products of an ideological fermentation carefully nurtured by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the BJP.

The elections in Gujarat have shown that it is not an end of ideology. And elections cannot be won through event management practices, including anti-incumbency rhetoric. The absence of communal riots is no negation of communal assertions. In fact, communal riots are themselves a manifestation of divisive politics with a multiplier effect. It may be desirable now to come out of the political expediency of appeasement of the minority or the majority's communal predisposi-

tions, the tune of which both leading parties have danced to, and now the BJP is affronted with Pravin Togadia's proclamation of Hindu Rashtra and the Congress is upset with Narendra Modi's rhetoric that 'If I lose, there will be celebratory fireworks in Pakistan'. For both the BJP and the Congress, the lesson is that it is not possible to nurture 'soft' communalism and escape the tragic consequences of religious polarisation and communal riots.

Another noticeable trend has been the marginalisation of the role of national leaders in the electoral battles within a cadre-based party like the BJP. The Congress experienced it after the end of the Indira Gandhi-Rajiv era.

The massive response to regionalisation of the Hindutva ideology and regional leadership can be understood in the backdrop of globalisation. The process of globalisation has undermined the concept of a nation. Having compromised on economic sovereignty, countries like India and Pakistan have surrendered their political sovereignty, as maintenance of domestic peace has been pushed into the realm of global political-decision making and dictates. It is in this context that President Pervez Musharraf raised the question of Gujarat riots at the United Nations and the 'Mian Musharraf' symbolism gained currency in the Gujarat elections. The process of globalisation has provided an impetus to 'son-of-the-soil' movement, particularly in Gujarat, which has a long history of communalising the job market.

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CHANDIGARH POLLS | Dr Pramod Kumar

# National concerns and local issues

*In Chandigarh, the voters have national concerns and local grievances. As a result, its politics has found expression through national political parties i.e. the Congress and BJP. Chandigarhians have continued to vote for the two political parties without sparing time to build a genuine alternative.*

Centre. The 1967 elections were preceded by the reorganization of states in 1966 and also witnessed the introduction of coalition politics and the emergence of an anti-Congress plank. This qualitative shift led to the victory of Shri Chand Goyal of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in Chandigarh, but the Congress party formed the government at the Centre. And in 1999 elections, Pawan Bansal of the Congress won from Chandigarh while a BJP led government came to power at the national level. This mismatch was attributed to local factionalism within the BJP, fielding of an outsider and non-performance by the BJP-dominated Municipal Corporation and personal image of the candidates. Factionalism within the BJP was so dominant that it had the backing of the BJP's strong man Narendra Modi, at present Chief Minister of Gujarat, which led to the denial of the ticket to its local leader, Satya Pal Jain.

Interestingly, although Chandigarh is the capital of Punjab and Haryana and a large number of government employees are active voters, political development in these states do not have a direct bearing on the voter's preference.

Another distinct feature of

Chandigarh's electoral politics is that it represents three distinguishable voter segments. Of its 5.83 lakh voters, a sizeable segment consists of urban voters (3.5 lakh), slum dwellers (1.56 lakh) and rural constituents (91938). The slum votes play an important role in the outcome of the elections. The slum voters have been voting enblock and also registered a high voting rate. In 1998 around 56 per cent and 1999 elections 52 per cent of the slum votes were polled. Whereas, fewer urban voters have been casting their votes. For instance, in the 1998 and 1999 elections, 54 per cent and 49 per cent of the urban voters cast their votes respectively. Unlike other constituencies, a very low percentage of the rural voters have been casting their votes i.e. 47 per cent in 1998 and 41 per cent in 1999 elections.

These segments have opposite political agenda. For the political parties it is a kind of balancing act. For example, the urban agenda emphasizes a restrictive growth of the slums, regulating the migrants to check crime, environment pollution, exorbitant school fees etc. Whereas, the slum dwellers demand regularization of illegal encroachments, access to basic amenities etc.

Local issues remain central in the slums and villages and national issues have a major bearing on the people's preference in the urban areas. National issues relating to Atal Behari Vajpayee versus Sonia Gandhi and the impact of the 'feel good factor' on urban Chandigarhians may influence the voters' preference. It will largely depend on the weightage the voters give to these factors. To illustrate, according to an IDC survey (Oct. 24, 1999) a section which voted for the Congress in 1998 abstained in 1999 because they were favourably inclined towards Vajpayee. It will be worthwhile to see whether these non-voters return to the Congress or vote for the BJP or again abstain from voting. How far the Congress party is able to keep Vajpayee's pull factor under control by aggressively campaigning around its own political and economic agenda shall influence the outcome of the elections. Further, the survey also revealed that in 1999 of the 5.3 per cent non-voters, two-thirds were BJP voters in 1998 elections. For the BJP it is a challenge to bring back these non-voters to the booths.

In fact, the Congress may indirectly counterpose the BJP's performance at the national level with the Congress performance at the local level. In the 1999 elections, the electorate overlooked the national issues, and the moot question is whether they will again do the same in the forthcoming elections.

*(The writer is the Director of the Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*

CHANDIGARH'S VOTER has been shaped by its unique growth. It has developed as an architectural marvel rather than a city with social moorings and political sensibilities. Instead of shaping the electoral agenda of the country, the city has reinforced the dominant national political dispensation. While its largely privileged middle class has been indifferent to elections, the substantial number of slum dwellers living in mafia driven human settlements are a captive vote bank. Its political leadership has remained confined to the margins of governance by a powerful administrative set-up. Hence the performance of political leaders at the constituency level does not emerge as a core issue. Consequently, anti-incumbency factor could not become a dominant criterion for a voter response in elections in Chandigarh.

In Chandigarh, the voters have national concerns and local grievances. As a result, its politics has found expression through national political parties i.e. the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Chandigarhians have continued to vote for the two political parties without sparing time to build a genuine alternative. Regional and caste based groupings could not emerge as a major pressure group, and the emerging trend of pre-election coalition is almost non-existent. Historically, their voting pattern is largely in conformity with the national trends. For instance, except the 1967 and 1999 elections, in the eight elections the party candidate who got elected from Chandigarh belonged to the same political group which came to power at the


 GUEST COLUMN | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Policing: Need for holistic approach

*There is need to involve the community in the decision-making process, insulate the police from political power which vitiates, violates and pollutes the basic spirit of Constitution*

force equipped with some of those men in uniform who arrogated to themselves supra-natural powers which can grant or take lives. Rather, their recently discovered potential has to be nurtured for building a pro-people force. A number of measures have been suggested to reform the police force, ranging from insulation of the force from political interference, mandatory judicial inquiry into all cases of custodial death or rape, selection of the Director General of Police by a committee, a rational transfer policy, etc. But sadly these steps have not been implemented due to various reasons.

The project of nation-building took the initiative away from the community. The state functioned as an enforcement agency and in the process got alienated from the people. The police, as the main instrument of enforcement, earned a bad image. The police enforced 'order' in seclusion from community support, lending credence to the belief that it was the state against the nation and in practical terms, it was seen as the police versus the people. This is reflected from the 1861 Police Act and the people's expectations from the police.

A citizens' survey conducted in 1999 revealed that a majority of the members of the community expected the police to enforce the law effectively. This perception converged with the current disposition of a majority of the police personnel (70%) who regarded the authoritarian mode to be the best style of public dealing. Consequently, the existing nature of police-community interaction was guided by an underlying preference for avoiding contact with the police.

The National Police Commission set up in

1977 has drawn attention to this aspect and stated that the police service can have no future unless it earns the respect and confidence of its men and the public. In its fifth report (November, 1980), the Commission expressed anguish that the 1902 Fraser Commission's observation that the people now might not dread the police, but they certainly dreaded getting involved with it in any capacity, continues to be valid. This was mainly the result of the brutal and rude functioning of the police.

Various public surveys conducted since the mid-60s by the National Police Commission in 1980 have reinforced the view that the constabulary is rude, threatening, intimidating and brutal in its interaction with the people. Having been alienated from the people, the police has started shifting responsibility to the community. In its anxiety to shed this image, it is now using community policing as a face-saving device.

Community policing is being enforced rather than collectively conceived, implemented and monitored. Community policing experiments were initiated in the Sixties and Seventies in India. All these efforts were constrained as the community remained on the margin of the policing system. These efforts were directed at providing a single-window service and using community representatives as facilitators for traffic management and security through neighbourhood watch groups. In other words, it is policing for the community and through the community and not along with the community. Punjab Police, perhaps, needs it more urgently.

There is need to involve the community in the decision-making process, insulate the police from political power which vitiates, violates and pollutes the basic spirit of the Constitution and the rights of humans. Within the police, the investigation wing used for combating corruption must be purged of political misuse for the intimidation of political opponents. Any reform process in the police must also pinpoint corresponding changes in support institutions such as the judiciary, the bureaucracy and political system.

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POLICING THE police has emerged as a major concern. The National Police Commission, which was set up in response to the partisan role played by the police during the Emergency, emphasised that the police should function as an impartial force and efficiently protect the citizens' rights. And the National Human Rights Commission in an affidavit to the Supreme Court asserted that the police in a democratic society should be low in authority and high in accountability. Disturbed at the 'disquieting increase in the number of complaints received against the police for violation of human rights', it felt that 'policing the police is an urgent issue to be addressed seriously'.

The task of policing the police is being undertaken as an exclusive agenda by each organ of the state. When the judiciary takes up this task it judges the heroes of bullet for bullet, 'the messiahs of peace' as the villains of human rights. When human rights activists start policing the police, they target the baton and veil the guns without uniforms. A system which allows policing as a remedy ceases to render justice and protect the rule of law.

The approach is to project institutions, be it the judiciary, the security apparatus, the legislature as moral or immoral and their functionaries as villains or heroes. In the Eighties in Punjab, the police was projected as fighting the nation's battle. And everything they did at that point was justified. In a changed context, the onus of building a just, honest and humane society was put on the judiciary and whatever the police did in the Eighties was judged as violative. The comedy of this situation is that each kind of policing produces heroes so long as they are the convenient instruments of dominant politics and become villains when a different political context throws up different heroes. This ad hoc approach has serious implications for the functioning of institutions like the police, particularly in Punjab where the police have enjoyed enormous political space.

For instance, in the post-terrorism period, to play loose with the police force for narrow political gains is fraught with danger, particularly when the police force has realised its hidden potential. There are cautions in handling such a

**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

## Polls to strengthen or subvert democracy?

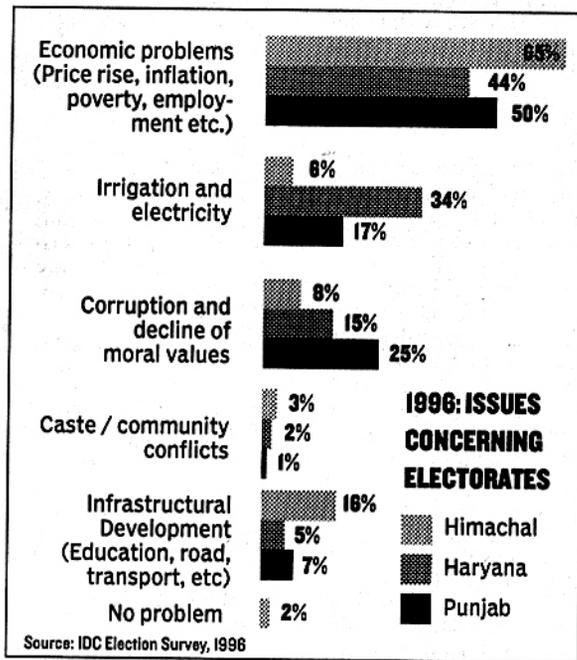
NOW THAT elections have been announced, it is timely to look at the previous polls in this region. It is interesting that in every election people have mentioned unemployment, poverty, availability of water, electricity, road and rampant corruption as the main issues and continued to vote for the political parties who promised, but could not perform.

For instance, a quick glance at electoral surveys conducted in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in 1996 and 2004 clearly indicate that:

In all the elections in every state a majority of voters said that they wanted economic development. It is a different matter that the political parties have now made it their main plank in electoral rhetoric.

The major gain of economic reforms agenda is an increase in the quantum of corruption, and political parties do not fail to make it an election issue. In fact, political parties justify their non-performance and corrupt practices by comparing it with others and presenting themselves as a lesser evil. It is precisely because of this that corruption as an issue continues to dominate electoral politics and voters have no choice but to keep on voting for the corrupt.

For instance, in the 1997 elections in Punjab, the major reason for the defeat of the Congress party was attributed to corruption scams and the Akali Dal



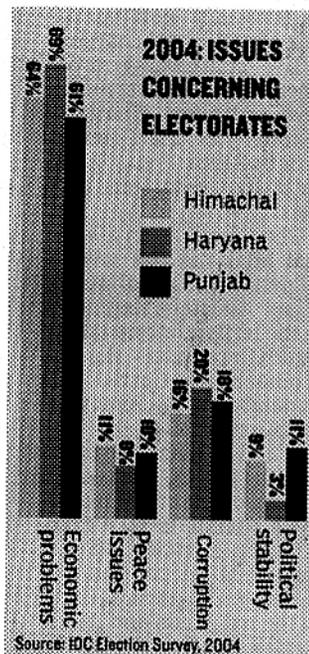
claimed it as a vote to eradicate corruption. Interestingly, in the 2002 elections the Akali Dal (Badal) was labeled corrupt and the Congress termed its victory as a mandate to fight corruption. Again in the 2004 Parliamentary elections the indications are that corruption will continue to dominate electoral discourse in Punjab. In every election both the parties compete to paint the other as more corrupt. This is clear from the statements made by party leaders.

Union Law Minister Arun Jaitley observed that "The Punjab Congress is adopting vindictive policies against SAD leaders and levelling 'false' cor-

ruption charges against them at a time when the son of the Punjab Chief Minister is himself facing serious charges." (HT Feb 24, 2004). The principle is to kill poison with poison and let the patient die.

Why do people keep on casting their vote for the continuation of same corrupt political dispensation? More than half of the respondents interviewed mentioned absence of alternative as a reason for casting their vote for "the lesser evil" (IDC Survey, 1996, 1999). Democracy seems to be performing a choice-limiting function rather than creating conditions for maximisation of choices.

It is not only the anti-in-



The logical fall out of this degeneration is the multiplication of dissident contestants, increased role of spoilers such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the rigging factor. This has de-linked the electoral arithmetic from real issues. All political parties in Punjab seem to be grappling with dissidents and encouraging dissidence in competing political parties. For instance, in the 2002 Assembly elections there were 40 constituencies that had decisive dissident presence that influenced the election results.

Another factor on which the major political parties seem to pin their hope is the rigging factor. This includes free access to liquor, drugs, gifts, bribe, monetary appeasement, etc. Political parties are working overtime to amend the popular dictum that religion is the opiate of the masses. It's turned around now and opium is the religion of the masses. It is distressing to note that electoral politics is relying on such factors.

Election is a double-edged weapon. It can make democratic process participatory and therefore legitimate. It also has tremendous potential to subvert democracy. Punjab is witnessing this process in a glaring form as it prepares itself for the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

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

cumbency that provides a safe passage to issueless politics. Another term which is in wide circulation is "win-ability". In the course of selection of candidates, political parties used 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. If he has the capacity to manipulate votes and proven loyalty, he has every chance to be selected. Above all, the money a candidate can invest with a hope to recover at a later date is a major facilitating factor. This is symptomatic of the erosion of the ideological support base of political parties.

# Punjabis look beyond barbed fencing

By Sarabjit Pandher

CHANDIGARH, FEB. 6. Punjabis, separated by the barbed fencing that marks India's western border with Pakistan, have begun to understand that religious solidarity within their respective countries, cannot satisfy their quest for cultural continuity, where tradition and language have a major role.

While this desire to share a common cultural landscape holds out a major promise to those who work to soften the Indo-Pak relations, there are apprehensions that some elements in the political establishments and fundamentalists on both sides could deflate the prevailing emotional levels.

These were the interpretations of the experiences by those, from the Punjab in India, who visited Lahore recently to participate in the World Punjabi Conference. Even the Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, was on record saying that crossing the physical boundary was like experiencing the realisation of being part of a composite Punjabi culture, tradition and language.

When the delegation from India reached Lahore, the Sikhs sporting turbans became a major attraction and visiting Hindus made a rush to don the local head-gears, especially the various types of caps. It was an elating moment for the Sikhs, especially when their turban has become centre of crisis in France. Many even no-

ticed the change, as sporting the turban had resulted in major losses during the riots during partition and later in 1980s due to terrorism in Punjab.

A seasoned journalist of Punjab, Jagtar Singh, noted that there was a sense of satisfaction among the Punjabis in Lahore that, of late, serious efforts to rectify the distortions of partition in 1947, have begun to receive official patronage. He points out that business in the State's Provincial Assembly has begun to be transacted in Punjabi, ever since Pervez Elahi took charge there. He also recalls fondly the manner in which two motorcyclists just stopped by to inform him that they were admirers of the poetry by Amrita Pritam.

Mr. Jagtar Singh was taken aback, when a senior citizen walked up to him and said, "Sardarji our fields have lost the lustre without you." Another one even suggested that instead of allowing multi-national companies to start contract farming, the task could be handed over to the Punjabis in India.

Like others, an officer of the State Civil services, G.S. Saroya, went to Pakistan with certain inhibitions for which he is at a loss to come out with a rationale. He was swept off his feet when taxi rickshaw drivers and tea stall owners refused to charge him for the services, while tough looking cop in the streets were extra polite. "People have a genuine and positive opinion

about their Punjabi brethren across the border and about Sikhs they still preserve an opinion of them being straight forward," he concludes.

Amarjit Singh Deepak is 62 years and leads a retired life. He was born in Rawalpindi, and had never been to Pakistan since his family migrated here. Mr. Deepak says he was overwhelmed when the delegation was accorded a major reception by the locals at mausoleum of the legendary Sufi Saint, Baba Bulleshah. "People just turned up in large numbers to greet us. Everybody had a prayer that the present efforts to soften the relations should reach their logical conclusion and succeed," he adds.

There were many for whom the World Punjabi Conference provided an opportunity to "sleep walk into history". A retired officer of the Panjab University was witness to the slaughter of his kin. Like many other Hindus in the present delegation, he desired to go back to the place of origin and once again the locals did not hesitate to fulfil the task, even though it meant crossing some boundaries.

Wearing a cap, which normally a Muslim urbanite of his age would sport, he recalls the visit as going back to his roots. He remarked that had he been turbaned, it may just not have been possible to step outside Lahore. He felt a unique satisfaction of not being physically distinct from the people, who now inhabit his village.

# Towards neo-statism

Tribune 27<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1993  
 by Pramod Kumar

GOOD governance is unpopular, thus spoke Mr L.K. Advani. Does good governance mean mobilising resources for the state without giving adequate emphasis on issues relating to unemployment, social justice, etc.? The sole aim of this resource mobilisation is to come out of the debt trap. This is a vicious circle. The real purpose of governance gets defeated - to provide social justice to the people. This kind of politics enriches the state and makes people poorer. That is why the President of Brazil, in response to a question on how his state was doing, said his state was doing very well but people were not.

The then BJP government in Himachal Pradesh religiously followed the dictates of the new economic policy, which even Mr Maamohan Singh is constrained to follow in totality. It is this approach to politics which had a bearing on the recent elections along with the other factors like the increasing dominance of the organised interest groups on electoral politics, autocratic functioning of a leader, caste polarisation, etc. In other words, the hope that the Ram Mandir slogan and premature dismissal of the government would be able to neutralise the caste differentiation, the autocratic functioning of a leader and the harsh economic measures initiated, was belied.

The 1993 election results have shown that the legitimacy of the government in power declines faster due to the mismatch between the electoral promises and the stark realities of the new economic policies. In the 1990 poll the BJP secured 44 seats with 41.2 per cent of the votes and the Congress eight seats with 37.01 per cent of the votes polled in Himachal Pradesh. The total votes polled were 67.62 per cent. In the 1993 elections the BJP got eight seats and there was a swing of 6.78 per cent votes against it. Besides this the decline in the percentage of votes polled in the constituencies the BJP contested in 1990 was around 18. This decline in legitimacy is symptomatic of the discourse initiated by the new economic policy and the electoral promises made by the competing political parties.

With the changes in the global economy and the shift in the national priorities, a new role is being attributed to the state. In the recent elections this was witnessed as a competition between the forces of neo-statism represented by the BJP, the status-quoism or populism articulated by the Congress and transformational politics going by default. The logic of the new economic policy will make the political party in power more vulnerable to pressures of new-statism and compel it away from populism and negate the forces of transformational politics. This is what happened in Himachal Pradesh.

Neo-statism became a dominant form of political functioning in Himachal Pradesh, which is being seen and described as "good governance" and, therefore, "unpopular". The inevitable logic of neo-statism is (a) aggrandisement of the state and pauperisation of the people, and (b) excessive reliance on the bureaucratic apparatus rather than on party cadres and non-government organisations to launch welfare programmes like Antyodaya or Water for Each Household.

The shift from the earlier form of statism - in which the emphasis used to be on nationalisation, the administering of prices, the control of wages, etc - to neo-statism with a veneer of the liberal non-regulatory state had a bearing on the elections. The BJP government in Himachal became an aggressive articulator of neo-statism. No doubt, the Himachal regime like the central government was faced with a financial crunch with an estimated annual income of Rs 299 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 722 crore. The interest on the outstanding debt has been Rs 293 crore (1993-94). To come out of this crisis, the BJP government started mobilising resources, and

in the case of resistance indulged in arm-twisting tactics. To illustrate the point, the BJP government took the following initiatives: The support price on apples was withdrawn; ad-hoc employees were retrenched; the fees on the medical card for government hospitals was raised four times, power tariff was raised; and privatisation of power generation was initiated.

When these measures were resisted by the people, the government used the repressive state apparatus. The resistance was natural. During the past four decades a large section of the people has been alienated from the state, and the notion that common people must make sacrifices to enrich the state is detested. This is logical because the rulers, including the BJP politicians, have failed to present an austere way of living and, on the contrary, people perceive them as the misappropriators or even looters of the state.

Then the resistance to the harsh economic measures was countered by using force. For instance, the movement launched against the withdrawal of the support price for apples was suppressed by using force and, consequently, three persons were killed and many injured.

Similarly, when the employees resorted to strike, first it was repressed by using all kinds of methods, and later they were made to suffer under the pseudo-moralist stance of "no work, no pay". This is so because the question of work ethics and ethos is a larger one, relating to distortions like corruption to which the BJP government's performance matched with that of the Congress. Further, it was a pseudo-moralist stance because it was confined only to the strike period. To deny people the right to protest in a peaceful manner and punish them for the same has the following implications:

(a) It encourages authoritarian forms of politics. To physically suppress strikes is to negate the democratic forms of grievance redressal. It is possible that people resorting to strike may or may not have genuine demands, but it is within their democratic right to resort to such measures. That is why it is accepted that democracy is the costliest form of government.

(b) These aggressive initiatives in the name of "good governance" provide impetus to violent forms of protest.

The election results have resolved the BJP's paradox between the denial of democratic rights and seeking a democratic mandate for the same. The populist or status-quoist thrust of politics represented by Congress could sweep the elections. This thrust occupied a large space in the political campaign of the Congress. It promised people to make Himachal the "fruit bowl of India and Switzerland of the Himalayas...." All those daily wage employees/casual labourers retrenched by the BJP government would be re-employed. The rights of employees as per trade union practices and the Industrial Disputes Act should be protected.... The dismissed employees who became victims of the BJP apathy and discrimination would be reinstated immediately."

These promises provided continuity to the politics of populism but with a difference. Until the eighties slogans like "Garibi Hatao", "Land to the tillers" and "Social justice for all" had been raised from time to time. All these slogans, along with the promise of building up a socialist society remained the hallmark of Indian politics.

However, after mid-eighties the slogan of "Justice for all" was replaced by "Justice for the backward castes". In the Himachal elections, this acquired an interesting dimension. The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government strengthened its

politics of neo-statism and alienated a large section of the population. Lower Himachal having a 20 to 40 per cent OBC population has been the traditional stronghold of the BJP. For instance, in Kangra district in the last elections the BJP secured 12 of the 16 seats, while the Congress got only one. In the 1993 poll the BJP could secure only three seats while the Congress won 12.

So strong was the feeling among the people against the BJP that Mr Vidya Sagar, a former BJP minister and popular OBC leader lost the election. Caste-based factionalism within the BJP also worked to its disadvantage. The growing feeling among the Rajputs that they were not being given their due place by the Brahmins proved fatal even for Mr Shanta Kumar. One of the reasons for the defeat of the former Chief Minister was this. In his constituency there are 16,000 Rajputs, 14,000 Chaudharis (a backward caste), 6,000 Harijans and 12,000 Brahmins. It was the Rajput-Chaudhari alliance that contributed to Mr Shanta Kumar's defeat.

The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government provided the Congress an opportunity to use this as a strategy to coopt a sizable section of the OBC's. This became easier in the absence of the Janata Dal from the scene. The Congress's election campaign emphasised that it would reverse the policies of the BJP. This was more a negative campaign and the issues relating to social justice found articulation in an indirect manner. This, in a limited way, provided expression to the populist rhetoric of the pre-1966 phase.

Both the BJP and the Congress reinforced the Himachali identity. The emphasis of the BJP campaign was not on issues relating to social justice, but on "self-reliant Himachal Pradesh" and Hindutva. Even sants and sadhus were pushed into the election campaign, of course without much success. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad mobilised sants and sadhus to hold congregations at about 800 places. Moving away from people's politics inevitably pushed the BJP into the lap of Hindutva and regional chauvinism.

The politics of religious revivalism was brought to the level of gimmickry to garner votes of women. In Himachal Pradesh, the number of women voters is higher than that of men voters. There are 1,29,855 women voters and 1,15,458 men voters. In around 26 constituencies women voters could have played a decisive role. It is in this context that even the observance of fast for the longevity of their husbands by women (Karva Chauth) was made an election issue. Advertisements congratulating women on Karva Chauth were issued by Mr Shanta Kumar. The women were asked to protest against the ban on the people for visiting The Ridge on the fasting day to see the moon.

The politics of neo-statism and the autocratic functioning of a leader reinforced each other. Interestingly, even many of the beneficiaries of the Antyodaya scheme initiated by the BJP voted against the party. This was made mainly due to the excessive reliance on the bureaucracy rather than the party or non-governmental organisations to implement welfare programmes. The beneficiaries identified themselves with the bureaucracy rather than with the party. The government employees were unhappy with the BJP and so were these beneficiaries.

The Himachal elections have shown that there is a visible absence of those forces which do not subscribe to neo-statism and status-quoism or populism. This, in fact is a serious pointer and even a challenge to all those who are committed to social justice, equality and, above all, to a genuine and vibrant effort to nurture and shape alternative social forces to transform

'Bewatni' is a kind of trauma that not even death can cure - for how can you rest in the soil that did not nourish you. Every seventh person in Europe is a migrant and they experience this cultural and emotional trauma. They could earn money by becoming machines with the machine, but the fantasy which they carved in their minds was shattered by the harsh reality of the callous capitalism and the practice of racism. A Panjabi poet Kabul Singh Asar says :

The line of privation lies in the wilderness  
of machines;  
Being a machine with the machine;  
You loose everything;  
Your humanity;  
Your tenderness.

Their hope that with their migration to 'Wilyat' will bring in a New Era of prosperity and dignity. Their hopes were transformed into frustrations and romance became nostalgia. Their marginal social existence in an alien socio-cultural environment have led to the psychological crises. Their rootlessness haunts and threaten the very basis of their being. The marginality, alienation and nostalgia become centre to their existence. Naturally when one is down and out and crushed by the harsh reality of capitalism and ideology of racialism, then humiliation makes one feel look back to find some anchorage in the place of origin. But <sup>it</sup> is also known if one looks forward to a future, then the distant traditions of the place of origin are mile-stones around the neck. Milton Smalling a young west-Indian Poet has beautifully ~~has~~ summed up the situation in a poem on The Indian Bury Their Heads in the Sand :

They smile with their eyes closed  
They die with eyes closed  
Burying their heads in the sand,  
Forgetting their own names  
The Indians sleep walking into history  
They came from the East.

(contd..)

They pray to their money in the West  
 They found heaven in Southall  
 And stand on the side lines,  
 The Indians sleepwalking into history  
 They only live for themselves.

They've got money now  
 They stand on the sidelines  
 And close their eyes

The immigrant population could multiply their wealth, but could not find any social and political respectability. The Europe of reformation and renaissance could not escape the torture of racism. Racism was an ideology provided the rationale for over exploitation of black and brown workers. Racism did not merely confine to economic exploitation, but it got inter-woven into the power structure itself. Racism become respectable and clinical with its institutionalization. The immigrant population, therefore, was not merely dealing with racism as social prejudice or attitude but with the power itself. The world of racial segregation has long been evolved. This racism is less visible and more virulent. Europe does not want these black and brown immigrant, but they need them. It is their labour cheap and captive which keeps their economy going. But the dilemma remains, how to make profits without these uncouth, illiterate black and brown labour.

Even trade unions are not free from this baneful influence. The trade union bureaucrats have proved on many occasions that they are incapable of opposing racism, even in their own ranks.

Further, the educational process merely tries to tinker with the methods and techniques without making any dent in the racist structure of the school and university system. The first generation settlers realized that education was not different from other:



All these varied experiences of immigrant population of different ages, sexes and places of origin brought to the surface some characteristic over-reactions to the social cultural and political scenario of their place of origin. Likewise, the exaggerated responses to the political situation as it prevails in Punjab is partly the result of the social, cultural and political environment of their place of migration. Even those who respond to their marginality and alienation by taking to drugs and heavy drinking know too well that they cannot escape their 'Bewatini'. The reality of racial discrimination, increasing intolerance within British society of ~~of~~ diverse cultural streams have necessitated the need for another renewal of Europe. Europe needs another renaissance and reformation. The process of constant questioning of everything not only in Europe, but through-out the world must continue. The questioning of the very basis of some of the realities like racialism, sexism, communalism, will make the civilization grow. The treatment of these issues has been done by Amarjit Chandan in his book Indians in Britain in a literacy rather than non-caring socio-cultural and historical academic style.

Pramod Kumar

## Punjab Crisis: A Political Diagnosis

PRAMOD KUMAR

**P**UNJAB 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

## 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 naïve. 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 a 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 do-gooders. 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.

# Towards neo-statism

by Pramod Kumar

GOOD governance is unpopular, thus spoke Mr L.K. Advani. Does good governance mean mobilising resources for the state without giving adequate emphasis on issues relating to unemployment, social justice, etc? The sole aim of this resource mobilisation is to come out of the debt trap. This is a vicious circle. The real purpose of governance gets defeated — to provide social justice to the people. This kind of politics enriches the state and makes people poorer. That is why the President of Brazil, in response to a question on how his state was doing, said his state was doing very well but people were not.

The then BJP government in Himachal Pradesh religiously followed the dictates of the new economic policy, which even Mr Mamohan Singh is constrained to follow in totality. It is this approach to politics which had a bearing on the recent elections along with other factors like the increasing dominance of the organised interest groups on electoral politics, autocratic functioning of a leader, caste polarisation, etc. In other words, the hope that the Ram Mandir slogan and premature dismissal of the government would be able to neutralise the caste differentiation, the autocratic functioning of a leader and the harsh economic measures initiated, was belied.

The 1993 election results have shown that the legitimacy of the government in power declines faster due to the mismatch between the electoral promises and the stark realities of the new economic policies. In the 1990 poll the BJP secured 44 seats with 41.2 per cent of the votes and the Congress eight seats with 37.01 per cent of the votes polled in Himachal Pradesh. The total votes polled were 67.63 per cent. In the 1993 elections the BJP got eight seats and there was a swing of 6.78 per cent votes against it. Besides this the decline in the percentage of votes polled in the constituencies the BJP contested in 1990 was around 18. This decline in legitimacy is symptomatic of the discourse initiated by the new economic policy and the electoral promises made by the competing political parties.

With the changes in the global economy and the shift in the national priorities, a new role is being attributed to the state. In the recent elections this was witnessed as a competition between the forces of neo-statism represented by the BJP, the status-quoism or populism articulated by the Congress and transformational politics going by default. The logic of the new economic policy will make the political party in power more vulnerable to pressures of neo-statism and compel it away from populism and negate the forces of transformational politics. This is what happened in Himachal Pradesh.

Neo-statism became a dominant form of political functioning in Himachal Pradesh, which is being seen and described as "good governance" and, therefore, "unpopular". The inevitable logic of neo-statism is (a) aggrandisement of the state and pauperisation of the people, and (b) excessive reliance on the bureaucratic apparatus rather than on party cadres and non-government organisations to launch welfare programmes like Antyodaya or Water for Each Household.

The shift from the earlier form of statism — in which the emphasis used to be on nationhood, the administration of prices, the control of wages, etc. — to neo-statism with a veneer of the liberal non-regulatory state has a bearing on the elections. The BJP government in Himachal became an aggressive articulator of neo-statism. No doubt, the Himachal regime like the central government was faced with a financial crunch with an estimated annual income of Rs 294 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 722 crore. The interest on the outstanding debt has been Rs 293 crore (1993-94). To come out of this crisis, the BJP government started mobilising resources, and

in the case of resistance indulged in arm-twisting tactics. To illustrate the point, the BJP government took the following initiatives: The support price on apples was withdrawn; ad-hoc employees were retrenched; the fees on the medical card for government hospitals was raised four times, power tariff was raised; and privatisation of power generation was initiated.

When these measures were resisted by the people, the government used the repressive state apparatus. The resistance was natural. During the past four decades a large section of the people has been alienated from the state, and the notion that common people must make sacrifices to enrich the state is detested. This is logical because the rulers, including the BJP politicians, have failed to present an austere way of living and, on the contrary, people perceive them as the misappropriators or even looters of the state.

Then the resistance to the harsh economic measures was countered by using force. For instance, the movement launched against the withdrawal of the support price for apples was suppressed by using force and, consequently, three persons were killed and many injured.

Similarly, when the employees resorted to strike, first it was repressed by using all kinds of methods, and later they were made to suffer under the pseudo-moralist stance of "no work, no pay". This is so because the question of work ethics and ethos is a larger one, relating to distortions like corruption to which the BJP government's performance matched with that of the Congress. Further, it was a pseudo-moralist stance because it was confined only to the strike period. To deny people the right to protest in a peaceful manner and punish them for the same has the following implications:

(a) It encourages authoritarian forms of politics. To physically suppress strikes is to negate the democratic forms of grievance redressal. It is possible that people resorting to strike may or may not have genuine demands, but it is within their democratic right to resort to such measures. That is why it is accepted that democracy is the costliest form of government.

(b) These aggressive initiatives in the name of "good governance" provide impetus to violent forms of protest.

The election results have resolved the BJP's paradox between the denial of democratic rights and seeking a democratic mandate for the same. The populist or status-quoist thrust of politics represented by Congress could sweep the elections. This thrust occupied a large space in the political campaign of the Congress. It prompted people to make Himachal the "fruit bowl of India and Switzerland of the Himalayas." All those daily wage employees/casual labourers retrenched by the BJP government would be re-employed. The rights of employees as per trade union practices and the Industrial Disputes Act should be protected... The dismissed employees who became victims of the BJP apathy and discrimination would be reinstated immediately.

These promises provided continuity to the politics of populism but, with a difference. Until the eighties slogans like "Garibi Hatao", "Land to the tillers" and "Social justice for all" had been raised from time to time. All these slogans, along with the promise of building up a socialist society remained the hallmark of Indian politics.

However, after mid-eighties the slogan of "justice for all" was replaced by "justice for the backward castes". In the Himachal elections, this acquired an interesting dimension. The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government strengthened its

politics of neo-statism and alienated a large section of the population. Lower Himachal having a 20 to 40 per cent OBC population has been the traditional stronghold of the BJP. For instance, in Kangra district in the last elections the BJP secured 12 of the 16 seats, while the Congress got only one. In the 1993 poll the BJP could secure only three seats while the Congress won 12.

So strong was the feeling among the people against the BJP that Mr Vidya Sagar, a former BJP minister and popular OBC leader lost the election. Caste-based factionalism within the BJP also worked to its disadvantage. The growing feeling among the Rajputs that they were not being given their due place by the Brahmins proved fatal even for Mr Shanta Kumar. One of the reasons for the defeat of the former Chief Minister was this. In his constituency there are 16,000 Rajputs, 14,000 Chaudharis (a backward caste), 6,000 Harijans and 12,000 Brahmins. It was the Rajput-Chaudhari alliance that contributed to Mr Shanta Kumar's defeat.

The rejection of the Mandal Commission report by the BJP government provided the Congress an opportunity to use this as a strategy to coopt a sizable section of the OBC's. This became easier in the absence of the Janata Dal from the scene. The Congress's election campaign emphasised that it would reverse the policies of the BJP. This was more a negative campaign and the issues relating to social justice found articulation in an indirect manner. This, in a limited way, provided expression to the populist rhetoric of the pre-1966 phase.

Both the BJP and the Congress reinforced the Himachali identity. The emphasis of the BJP campaign was not on issues relating to social justice, but on "self-reliant Himachal Pradesh" and Hindutva. Even saints and sadhus were pushed into the election campaign, of course without much success. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad mobilised saints and sadhus to hold congregations at about 800 places. Moving away from people's politics inevitably pushed the BJP into the lap of Hindutva and regional chauvinism.

The politics of religious revivalism was brought to the level of gimmickry to garner votes of women. In Himachal Pradesh, the number of women voters is higher than that of men voters. There are 1,29,855 women voters and 1,15,458 men voters. In around 26 constituencies women voters could have played a decisive role. It is in this context that even the observance of fast for the longevity of their husbands by women (Karva Chauth) was made an election issue. Advertisements congratulating women on Karva Chauth were issued by Mr Shanta Kumar. They were asked to protest against the ban on the people for visiting The Ridge on the fasting day to see the moon.

The politics of neo-statism and the autocratic functioning of a leader reinforced each other. Interestingly, even many of the beneficiaries of the Antyodaya scheme initiated by the BJP voted against the party. This was made mainly due to the excessive reliance on the bureaucracy rather than the party or non-governmental organisations to implement welfare programmes. The beneficiaries identified themselves with the bureaucracy rather than with the party. The government employees were unhappy with the BJP and so were these beneficiaries.

The Himachal elections have shown that there is a visible absence of those forces which do not subscribe to neo-statism and status-quoism or populism. This, in fact, is a serious pointer and even a challenge to all those who are committed to social justice, equality and above all to a genuine and vibrant — to nurture and shape alternative social forces to transform

# Checking caste antagonism to prevent violence

RECENT CASTE violence in Punjab is a pointer to the fact that certain factors that caused turmoil in the state continue to persist. There is a danger that Punjab could witness another spell of violence – this time based on caste antagonism.

Is there any relationship between the earlier agitations, including the Khalistan movement, and the caste violence in Punjab? On surface, it appears that there is no linkage between these visibly diverse phenomena, particularly between caste violence and religion-based linguistic and nationality assertions. All these assertions have been shaped by communally divisive politics and socially exclusive identity assertions in negation of the composite Punjabi identity. The recent caste violence should also be seen in the background of dwarfed articulations of Punjabi ethos. Unfortunately, these articulations could not surface forcefully enough and allowed retrogressive religious and caste-based violence to erupt.

In the Fifties and the Sixties, language was mixed with religion, which led to the Hindi agitation and the Punjabi Suba movement. This resulted in restricting Punjabi language and culture to religious groups. The underlying assumption was that the Sikhs and the Hindus had distinct interests and identities, which further degenerated into

**From Hindu to Sikh and now to Dalit identity, a weak Punjabi faces another challenge in the crisis-ridden Punjab politics. Now would Punjab witness a decade of caste-based violence?**

**Much depends on choices exercised by dominant political parties**

assertion for Khalistan in the mid-Eighties. Not only this, the process of defining identities made caste subservient to the hegemonic interests of the 'upper castes'. Attempts to co-opt the Scheduled Castes into the religious domain, while maintaining and reinforcing their subordinate social position, strengthened their exclusiveness to be appropriated by politics as a distinct Dalit identity.

Punjab has been known for its liberal ritualistic religious practices in relation to caste. Both Sikhism and the Arya Samaj have liberated the Dalits from the stringent purity-pollution based behavioral patterns. For instance, equality in religious gatherings, establishment of common kitchen and the institution of langar were initiated to overcome caste-based superior and inferior relationship. Not only this, offering of 'karah prasad' by any one irrespective of his caste was a symbolic departure from the notion that forbade food sharing by the upper and lower castes. These holy injunctions were, no doubt, clear but with the passage of time, differentiating ritual practices continued. The interactive social practices between the up-

per and lower castes continued to be imbued with the notion of purity-pollution, which co-existed with symbolic religious rituals like langar, sangat and pangat. To illustrate, Mahila Mandals were created to uplift women and a scheme for income generation through renting out tent and utensils for celebrations was launched. Assertions for maintenance of exclusiveness excluded the Scheduled Castes from using these utensils as the non-SC castes would not like to reuse these utensils. This led to formation of parallel Mahila Mandals by the Scheduled Castes. The formation of separate Mahila Mandals, gurdwaras, dharamshalas reflect the intense desire among Dalits to establish their exclusive identity emerging from political consciousness.

Another factor that contributed to the process of social tensions has been the specific nature of socio-economic development. Some of the traditional occupations in which the Scheduled Castes were engaged such as blacksmith work, carpentry and leather trade became upwardly mobile in the social ladder. Reservations in educational institutions and also jobs brought them

into the larger occupational canvas.

Further, the crisis in agriculture and the influx of migrant labour reduced the inter-dependence of the upper castes and the Scheduled Castes. These factors weakened the hegemonic control of the upper castes and also provided a life force to the Dalits' assertive attitude in political, economic and social spheres. This process contributed to the acceleration of the formation of an exclusive Dalit identity. Religious reforms and occupational mobility could not transform the inferior hierarchical social placement of the Dalits. They continue to live on the margins of society. However, political mobilisation for nurturing the exclusive Dalit identity has challenged the social exploitative relations and transformed these into caste violence.

Interestingly, Dalit assertion has usurped the idea of purity to present itself as a competing identity. Notions of honour, revenge and levirate marriages ('chaddar' system) that were considered exclusive to peasant groups are now being adopted by Dalits. The underlying assumption is that women are to be pro-

tected as they reflect the social status of the family. Historically, SC women have been treated as part and parcel of 'mai baap' feudal perks. Prior to these identity assertions, such violative practices were condoned but now these are resented. However, village panchayats continue to impose upper caste hegemony by dispensing discriminatory justice. If there is a perceived abuse, the panchayat brings about a compromise. Very few cases are registered. However, with the political mobilisation of SCs, sexual liaison by the Jat landowner is seen as sexual abuse. For the Dalits, it meant preventing 'pollution' of their exclusive identity. At the individual level, the Dalits are resentful of being unable to protect their women from what they now perceive as transgression of their manhood and identity.

These religion and caste-based violent assertions have serious ramifications for the secular, democratic policy and emergence of a Punjabi cultural identity. To undermine violent assertions like the Hindi agitation, Khalistan, caste violence, institutionalised primordial hierarchies need to be dismantled. Politics has to articulate the Punjabi secular ethos and negate socially divisive religion and caste based mobilization.

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GUEST COLUMN | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

## Election results and lessons for Punjab

PUNJAB POLITICS is in a state of flux. Political parties are caught in their self-created crises emanating from lack of clearly defined political agenda, absence of inner party democracy and intra-party factionalism. Recent elections in four Indian states have a direct ramification on Punjab on account of forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The defeat of the Congress in its 'best governed' states has serious implications for the Congress government in Punjab. The Congress party in Punjab is facing a crisis of dissidence within its ranks. But more serious issue is, why people did not vote for the Congress in its 'best governed' states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh? Answer to this question shall have a recipe for the ruling party in Punjab to conjure the magic number in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

These states have received certificates of good performance from the World Bank, the Planning Commission and even the Central Government. Then why did people betray these governments and not consider it even worthwhile to glance at the 'good performance certificates'.

The situation changed in the Nineties. Earlier, electoral promises used to be in line with the ideological commitment of political parties. Now, with the adoption of economic reforms agenda, electoral promises are in contradiction with the governments mandate.

Votes are sought for creation of jobs, for providing subsidies for poverty alleviation, whereas the mandate of the governments is to reduce employment in public sector and eliminate subsidies. Hence, 'good governance' certificates find rejection by the people in elections. Punjab also

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has become a victim of this paradox and started the process of economic reforms leading to politics of drift.

Punjab, therefore, has to shift its agenda to productive investment instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of government's expenditure in place of expenditure reduction. There is need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at predecessor regimes for corruption-free governance.

The Congress, both at the national and the state level, is caught in a ideological flux between Nehruvian nation building project to Indira Gandhi's apologetic state welfarism to Rajiv Gandhi's market driven governance. Congress has no choice but to shed the politics of drift and reconstruct pro-people policies. Market must not be allowed to govern to produce tragedies for people. The space occupied by transformational discourse represented in slogans like Garibi Haato must be recaptured.

Another lesson is that the politics of drift has a built-in mechanism to lead to disconnect between the people, the party and the government. In Punjab, this disconnect has become more pronounced. It has to balance the compulsion of legislative politics with the necessities of good governance. The dissidence clamouring to share the spoils of power with the faction

wielding power is multiplying. For the present, chief minister an easy option is to co-opt as many aspirants as possible leading to perpetuation of corruption. This is the surest way to defeat in the forthcoming elections. It is a catch-22 situation.

Is there an escape from this situation? Particularly when candidates were selected at the time of elections based on their capacity to win. It does not matter whether a candidate has a criminal record or does not possess capacity to do pro-people work but he/she must demonstrate the capacity to manipulate votes. This is symptomatic of the erosion of ideological support base of political parties. The logical fall out is multiplication of dissidents after the elections leading to defections. And answer to this is being found in making anti-defection laws more stringent rather than selecting people on the basis of their commitment to vision and philosophy of a political party.

Consequently, elections rather than making democratic process participatory and therefore legitimate, are trying to subvert democracy itself. The votes, which decide the fate of elections, are managed through majoritarianism, casteism, bribe, rigging and fear. And performance of individual leader is linked to its capacity to

manage votes. These leaders are presented as either villains or heroes. Yesterday's heroes become today's villains by succumbing to sting operation.

To replace Amarinder Singh with Rajinder Kaur Bhattal may have saleability value, but no shelf life. The Congress will remain in doldrums with or without leadership change till it has a clearly defined pro-people politics and positive economic agenda.

The Congress needs to be governed by mass leaders, which is a surest insurance against coterie, high command dictates and disconnect between the party and the people. Leaders and party activists must follow a cardinal code of conduct to seek lease of life from their constituents and not merely manage the eye of the high command.

People oriented initiatives like devolution of powers, employment generation, agrarian reforms social transformation including drug de-addiction, combating female foeticide may help the Congress government to capture the people's imagination. To treat elections as an ultimate mission rather than pro-people politics is to get into the vicious circle of production and appeasement of dissidents.

Elections are not merely events to be managed or won. Election are used for ideological positioning rather than strategic management. They have implications for making democracy representative, participatory and distributive within the spirit of Constitution for building up a humane, secular and egalitarian society.

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**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Gauging 2004 polls through previous tie-ups

PUNJAB HAS a history of mergers, post-election coalitions and electoral alliances of political parties. Only recently Punjab saw pre-election electoral alliances, occasional seat adjustments notwithstanding. There are two main groupings. These are led by the Congress and the Communists on the one hand and the Shiromani Akali Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the other. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has moulded itself to joining any grouping as per its needs. Fringe groups that sprout from time to time, position themselves vis-à-vis the main groupings to play the spoiler's role in the elections.

These groupings are formed around common minimum programmes which have been used mainly to defend the alliances rather than nurture the ideological basis. For instance, the BJP, in alliance with the Akali Dal, finds it difficult to make the anti-terrorist Act POTA a main election issue, since the Akalis had been at the receiving end of state repression in the early '90s. The Akalis, in alliance with the BJP, cannot revive their anti-Centre political plank. And the Congress finds it difficult to talk about economic liberalisation, as it has to take into account the sensitivities of its main ally, the CPI, which has campaigned against the WTO regime. The implications of this situation can be better understood by referring to the politics that has led to these alliances. This process can be studied in three distinct contexts. The first is the merger of Akali Dal with the Congress in 1948 and then in 1956.

The second context is post-election coalitions. These coalition governments were formed with the sole object of preventing the dominance of the Congress. Historically, the Akalis formed three coalition governments with the support of other parties. Their main coalition partner was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

*Like in other states, poll alliances have a major bearing on election results in Punjab. Previous alliances are good indicators to the future, provided the changed scenario is accounted for*

The first coalition was formed after the fourth general election in 1967. In this election, the Congress won 47 seats in an 104-member State Legislative Assembly. The Akali Dal (Sant Fateh Singh) secured 24 seats, the Jana Sangh 9, the Communist Party of India 5, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) 3, the Republican Party 3, the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh) 2. A united front of all parties was formed with Gurnam Singh as the leader. It was a combination of divergent ideological groups with the sole purpose of keeping Congress out of power.

The second coalition was formed after the mid-term elections in February, 1969, in which the Akali Dal won 43 seats and the Jana Sangh 8. The coalition government was headed by Gurnam Singh. Differences among the coalition partners arose over issues like language, Centre-state relations and the status of Chandigarh.

The third coalition came into being after the removal of Gurnam Singh as chief minister. Prakash Singh Badal was sworn in chief minister on March 27, 1970, with a new agenda of the coalition government. The Jana Sangh withdrew from the coalition in June, 1970, on the question of the jurisdiction of Guru Nanak Dev University. However, the main differences were on issues relating to the transfer of certain Panjabi-speaking areas to Punjab.

The third context is electoral alliances between competing political parties. The question arises why post-election coalitions did not find favour with political parties?

■ Political parties remain under pressure from their support base for implementation

of their politico-ideological agenda as articulated during the elections.

■ Post-election coalitions are seen as marriages of convenience involving the leadership, while their ranks hold each other with deep suspicion.

■ These coalitions, no-doubt, can reach the magic number, but are tedious to sustain and relatively unstable.

In view of these problems, political parties discovered the convenient practice of entering into pre-election coalitions. An unrecurrent of these alliances was the lessons learnt from the decade of terrorism and issues emerging from it.

In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Akali Dal entered into an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party and seat adjustment with the Bharatiya Janata Party. The alliance adversely affected the Congress Party's performance and resulted in an erosion of the support base of the Congress among the Scheduled Castes. Of the 13 parliamentary seats, the SAD won 8 and the BSP 3.

In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the Akali Dal entered into an alliance with the BJP. The Shiromani Akali Dal won the largest number of seats i.e. 8 and polled 33 per cent of the votes. The Bharatiya Janata Party won 3 seats and polled 12 per cent of the votes. The Congress, the BSP, and the communists entered into a pre-election alliance and could not win even a single seat. The Akali Dal-BJP alliance performed better because it provided the Akali Dal with the much needed political space at the national level to shed its anti-national image, and to the BJP it gave a political plank to counter

the Congress and the Left propaganda that its politics is anti-minorities.

In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the pre-election alliance of SAD-BJP failed miserably with the Congress-CPI alliance winning nine seats. This election witnessed the role of spoilers i.e. the BSP and the Akali Dal (Tohra). The SAD (B) secured 28.5 per cent of the votes and the Akali Dal (Tohra) got 4.6 per cent. If we add these, the total votes polled are equal to the votes polled in the 1998 elections i.e. 32 per cent. The BSP acted as a spoiler against the Congress in nearly 27 Assembly segments in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections.

If the 2002 Assembly results are analysed in terms of Parliament seats, the following trends emerge:

(a) If the percentage of votes of the BJP, the Akali Dal (B) and Akali Dal (Tohra) is added and converted into seats, then the Congress can win only 5 out of the 13 seats. And with the BSP votes, this alliance will leave the Congress with only one seat.

(b) The Congress led alliance can win 8 seats, if BSP votes are added to it.

(c) And if the BSP decides to go it alone, the Congress led alliance may be left with only 5 seats. It can lose seats like Hoshiarpur, Patiala and Ferozepur.

However, the electoral arithmetic may not reflect the 2002 Assembly election results because of the qualitative shift in the political scenario. The run-up to the 2004 polls see a much more confident and united Akali Dal, though it remains to be seen if its alliance partner, the BJP, has recovered any lost ground in urban areas. On the other hand, not only is the Congress debilitated by infighting, its alliance has reluctant Communists' support.

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# ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ

ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਹਰਕ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਚੇਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਪੈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ 'ਚ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਸਮਾ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨ ਤੇ ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਖਾੜੀ ਜੰਗ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਵਾਲ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸੱਦਾਮ ਹੁਸੈਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ। ਸਿਰਫ ਇਥੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਸਲਗ੍ਰਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਟੋ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਿੰਨੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਮਾਰੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸਰਬ ਨਸਲਪ੍ਰਤਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੁਣਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਗਿਵਿਉਂਚੀ ਬੰਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 33 ਗੁਣਾ ਵੱਧ ਸੀ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਿਰਫ ਕੀਤੀ ਨਸਲਗ੍ਰਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਦਾਮ ਦੇ ਘਟੀਆ ਰਾਜ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੋਵਾਂਗੇ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਫੇਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹੀ ਦੋਸ਼ਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਮਰੇ ਅਫਗਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ 11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਕਤਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਹਿੰਸੇਦਾਰ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਵਾਂਗੇ।

ਇਹ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਭਰਮ-ਜਾਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਫ਼ਸਣ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੇਬ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਪਾਗਲਾਨਾ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਐਕਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਹਿੰਸਕ ਜਨਤਕ ਲਾਮਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਬਦਲ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਸਿਰੇ ਹੀ ਗਲਤ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਹ ਵਿਲਾਸ਼ਰੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਬਣੇ। ਜਿਸ ਕੋਲ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਉਹੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। 11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਏ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਮਕਸਦ ਲਈ ਉਕਸਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਮੁੜ ਜਤਾ ਸਕੇ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਮਾਇਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਿੱਛਲੋਂ 'ਤੇ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਵਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਬੰਬ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਵੀ ਸਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਚਿਰ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਤਕੜਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੋਕ ਇਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਆਖਰ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਮਸਲੇ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਦੀ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਦਾ ਧਰਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ

11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਨਚੌੜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉੱਚ-ਤਕਨੀਕ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਹਲਾ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਟਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲ ਅਤੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਵਿਤਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਅਗਵਾ ਹੋਏ ਦੂਜੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਪਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਟਾਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸੂਰੀਆ ਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਦਰਅਸਲ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਬਾਹ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ। ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਛਤਰੀ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ, ਮਾਨਵਵਾਦੀ, ਬਰਾਬਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਇਕ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ। ਇਸ ਭਰਮ-ਜਾਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਕਸਰ ਦੋਸ਼ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਾਅ 'ਤੇ ਲਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਸਗੋਂ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ ਢੰਗ-ਤਰੀਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਖਾੜਕੂ ਮਾਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਨਿਆਂਪਾਲਕਾ ਨੇ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਫਸਰ ਚੁਣ ਲਏ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਹ ਮਨੋਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਪਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਕ ਦਿਮਾਗੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਹੁਣਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਿਰਫ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੱਕ 'ਚ ਬੰਦੂਕ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਜੇਕਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੰਦੂਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਿੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਪਟਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਫੇਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਜਾਂ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰਹੇਗਾ, ਓਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਫੇਰ ਸਿਰ ਚੁੱਕ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਉਹ ਹੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਇਹ ਮੱਤ ਜਾਂ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਪਨਪਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ, ਓਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਇਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਿਰਫ ਅੰਤਵਾਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ 'ਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਮੱਤ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੀ ਵਧੇਗਾ। ਹਮਲਾਵਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਵਰਤੀ ਗਈ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਦਾ ਨਿਬੰਧ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅਸੂਲ ਹੋ ਪਰ ਟੁੱਟਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਹੀ ਸੋਚ ਇਸ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗਲਤੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਸਿਧ ਲਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਗਠਜੋੜ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਖੁਦ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਨਾਹਗੀਰ ਹਨ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਧੁਰਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਛਲਾਵਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ 'ਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਸਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟਣ ਲਈ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਗਈ ਰਣਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ

ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਦੋਸ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 'ਮਹਾਂਬਲੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਨਾਂ' 'ਤੇ ਟੋਕ ਰੱਖ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਵੱਲੋਂ 'ਅਰਥਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵੀਕਰਨ' ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਚੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ।

## ਡਾ: ਪ੍ਰਮੋਦ ਕੁਮਾਰ

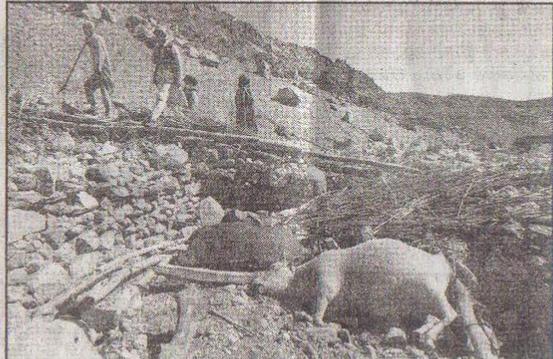
ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਰਥ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੁਣ ਚੋਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਅੰਗੋ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਰਥ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵੀਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਤਰਕਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿਤਾਂ

ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕੱਢਣ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਤਾਕਤਵਰ ਗਠਜੋੜ 'ਤੇ ਟੋਕ ਰੱਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਹਕੂਮਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਵੇਰ 'ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿਤਾਂ', 'ਖੇਤਰ' ਅਤੇ 'ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ' ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਅਰਥ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿਤ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਰਹੱਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ।

ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਥਾਕਰਤ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਗੁਣਗੁਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਰਫ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਭਰਮ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਦਿਸਣ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਜ਼ਾਈਲ ਹਮਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਮਿਜ਼ਾਈਲ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਾਲਪਨਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਲਈ ਅਰਥ ਡਾਲਰ ਖਰਚ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਵਾਪਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

11 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਨਚੌੜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉੱਚ-ਤਕਨੀਕ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਹਲਾ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਟਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲ ਅਤੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਵਿਤਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਅਗਵਾ ਹੋਏ ਦੂਜੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਪਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਟਾਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸੂਰੀਆ ਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਦਰਅਸਲ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਬਾਹ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਛਤਰੀ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ, ਮਾਨਵਵਾਦੀ, ਬਰਾਬਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਇਕ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ। ਇਸ ਭਰਮ-ਜਾਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਕਸਰ ਦੋਸ਼ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਾਅ 'ਤੇ ਲਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਸਗੋਂ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ ਢੰਗ-ਤਰੀਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ



ਵਿਆਪਕ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੋ ਜੰਗ

ਲਈ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀ ਚੋਰਵਾਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਠਜੋੜ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਬਣਦੀ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਆਰਥ-ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮੁਲਕ ਹੀ ਇਹ-ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ

ਨ ਸਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਦੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਅਮਨ-ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਵੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਫੈਸਲਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਆਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਵਾਪਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਛਲਾਵੇ ਨੇ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੀ

ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪੜਾ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅਧਰਾਧੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਦੇ ਦੇਣਾ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਮਜਬੂਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨੇ ਵੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਲੋਕ 'ਸਭਿਆਚਕ ਸਮਾਜ' ਦੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਣ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਠਹਿਰਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਸਬੂਤ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਧਰਮ, ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਭਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਭੌਤਿਕ ਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਸਾਹੂ ਦੇ ਤਿੱਖੇ ਤੇ ਉਲਟੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ 'ਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਤਰਕ 'ਤੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਾਫੀ ਲੋਕ ਸਾਰਾ ਦੋਸ਼ ਅਰਬਾਂ, ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਏਸ਼ੀਆਈ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਮੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ 'ਚ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਟਿੱਕ ਲਏ। ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਕੌਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਅਫਗਾਨਿਸਤਾਨ, ਇਰਾਕ, ਈਰਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਲਾਮੀ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋਰੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਝੁਜ ਜਾਂ ਝੁਜ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਕੱਲੇ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਬਿਨ ਲਾਦੇਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਾਤਮਾ, ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਖਾਤਮਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਬਕ ਸਿੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਪਨਾਹ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਲੜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵਧੇ-ਫੁੱਲੇਗਾ ਹੀ। ਕਿੰਨਾ-ਕੋੜਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦਿਹਾਂ ਵਾਪਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਦੂਜਾ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਜੰਗ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜਾ ਪੱਖ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਉਹ ਮੌਕਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਭਿਆਚਕ ਸਮਾਜ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਖੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋਚਣ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਫ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਤੇ ਯੂਰਪੀਅਨ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਵਿਕਰ ਕਰਨ।

ਚੋਧਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਚੋਰੀਵਾਦੀ ਮੁਲਕ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਸੰਕਲਪ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੀ ਆਮ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ 'ਠੋਸਟ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਲੋਕ ਰਾਏ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ। ਇਹ ਸਬਕ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੈ। ਫੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਚੋਰੀਵਾਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਦੇ ਹਿਤਪੂਰਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਬਦਲਵਾਂ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਵਰਨਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਨ-ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਕ ਮਿਹਾਤਮਾ ਹੀ ਬਣੇ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

## ਅਨੁਵਾਦ : ਬਲਜੀਤ ਬੱਲੀ

ਲੋਕ ਚੰਗੇਗੀਤ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਅਧਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖਿਆਉਣ ਵਾਦ ਵਿਚਲਾਮੰਟ ਐਫ ਬੀਊਨੋਬਿਲੋਨ ਚੰਗੇਗੀਤ ਦੇ ਭਾਵਿਕਾਠੇਰ ਹਨ।

# हिंसा से समाप्त नहीं होगी हिंसा

आतंकवाद सर्वव्यापक बन चुका है। प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को यह चुनना पड़ेगा कि वह हिंसा से निवृत्त होना पड़ेगा है कि वह अमरीकी सैन्य कार्रवाई के समर्थन में है या ओसामा बिन लादेन और तालिबान के। पहले भी खाड़ी जंग के समय ऐसी स्थिति उत्पन्न हुई थी, जब प्रश्न यह था कि आप सद्दाम हुसैन के साथ हैं या उसके विरुद्ध। केवल यही ही नहीं, इसी प्रकार हमें कोसोवो में अमरीकी बमबारी तथा किसी जाति विशेष पर अत्याचार में से किसी एक का चुनाव करने के लिए विवश होना पड़ा था। वहाँ अमरीका तथा नाटो संगठन द्वारा की गई बम वर्षा से जितने व्यक्ति मरे, उनकी संख्या सर्व कट्टरवादियों द्वारा मारे गये लोगों से तीन गुणा अधिक थी। इसी प्रकार बमबारी से शरणार्थी बने लोगों की संख्या 33 गुणा अधिक थी। हमें यह कहा गया कि यदि हम अमरीकी बमबारी का समर्थन नहीं करते, तो उपरोक्त नरसंहारों तथा सद्दाम हुसैन के अत्याचारों के लिए हम ही जिम्मेदार होंगे और अब फिर हमें यही बताना पड़ेगा कि यदि हमने गरीबी के बारे अफगानियों पर अमरीकी हमले का समर्थन नहीं किया, तो 11 सितम्बर को न्यूयार्क में हुई हत्याओं को जिम्मेदारी के हम भी भागीदार समझे जाएंगे।

यह एक प्रत्यक्ष भ्रमजाल है, जिसमें फंसने से परहेज करना चाहिए। सबसे अधिक खतरनाक बात यह है कि अमरीकी सैन्य कार्रवाई और आतंकवादियों के हमले दोनों ही हिंसा को राजनीतिक कार्रवाई और अहिंसक सार्वजनिक सामूहिकता का विकल्प समझते हैं। ये दोनों बातें ही गलत हैं। इसके पीछे यह तर्क कार्य कर रहा है कि विश्व भर में हिंसा प्रधान व्यवहार बने। जिसके पास अधिक मारक शक्ति होगी, वही विश्व पर राज करेगा। 11 सितम्बर को हुए आतंकवादी हमलों ने अमरीका को इस उद्देश्य के लिए उकसा दिया है कि वह अपना पहला दावा पुनः जता पाए कि उसके पास हिंसा का खजाना अन्यों से कहीं अधिक है। प्रतिक्रम है कि आतंकवादियों, उनके समर्थकों पर हिंसक वार किया जाए। इसके साथ ही वे निर्दोष नागरिक भी शिकार हुए जिनकी किसी भी गूट से हमदर्दी नहीं थी। इस सारे घटनाक्रम का परिणाम आतंकवाद को शक्तिशाली बनाने के रूप में ही निकला। आतंकवाद के जिम्मेदार लोग यही तो चाहते थे कि यह सिद्ध हो कि अंततः हिंसा ही प्रत्येक मसले का समाधान है। शांति लाने के लिए मुकाबले के डर को एक ढंग के रूप में प्रयोग करने से हिंसक संस्कृति उत्पन्न होती है। दृष्टिकोण को यह धुरी हिंसा के लिए जिम्मेदार लोगों को व्यक्तित्व रूप में निशाना बनाना है। दूसरे शब्दों में पुलिस वालों ने आतंकवादी मार दिए और दूसरी ओर न्यायपालिका ने सजा के लिये कुछ पुलिस अधिकारी चुन लिए। यह एक ऐसा सिलसिला है जिसकी कहीं समाप्ति नहीं। इसके पीछे यह उद्देश्य कार्य करता है कि आतंकवादियों को हत्या करके और कुछ चुनिंदा पुलिस वालों को सजा देकर आतंकवाद समाप्त हो जाए।

परन्तु आतंकवाद केवल एक मनःस्थिति नहीं। अपितु यह एक राजनीतिक रणनीति है। आतंकवाद का अर्थ केवल किसी हाथ में बंदूक होना नहीं है। यदि इन बंदूकों और हथियारों को स्थायी रूप में खामोश करना है, तो आतंकवाद

की राजनीति और विचारधारा से लड़ना होगा। जब तक आतंकवाद उत्पन्न होने वाला सिद्धत या कारण बरकरार रहेगा, तब तक आतंकवाद कभी भी सिर उठा सकता है। आतंकवादी वही लोग हैं, जो ऐसी विचारधारा की ओर खिंच जाते हैं, जब तक ऐसी विचारधारा पनपती रहेगी, तब तक आतंकवाद ऐसे लोगों को अपनी ओर खींचता रहेगा।

यह छलावा हिंसा तथा आतंकवादी संस्कृति के वास्तविक कारण और इनके साथ निपटने के लिए उचित रणनीति को धुंधला कर देता है। भारत की वर्तमान सरकार को इसके लिये दोषी नहीं कहा जा सकता कि यह आतंकवाद को समाप्त करने के लिए उसने अमरीका पर आश्रय रखा। वास्तव में, भारत सरकार का यह प्रतिक्रम भारतीय स्टेट द्वारा अर्थव्यवस्था के वैश्वीकरण किये जाने के किए गए चुनाव का स्वाभाविक परिणाम ही था।

से है, न कि महाशक्तियों से जोकि विकासशील देशों की राजनीतिक एवं आर्थिकता को अस्थिर कर रही हैं। फिर सुस्था केवल सेना की तैनाती को समझा जाता है, न कि लोकतंत्र को मंजूर करने को। यहां तक कि देश में अमन-शांति कायम रखना भी विश्वव्यापी निर्णयों तथा आदेशों के संरे में आ गया है। यह सभी कुछ घटित होने पर लोगों का कोई प्रतिक्रम नहीं हुआ। इस छलावे ने तकनीक पर बहुत अधिक निर्भर रहने वाली मानसिकता में वृद्धि की है। उदाहरण के लिए अधिक कारगर आधुनिक तकनीक वाले हथियारों के प्रदर्शन का गुणगान किया जा रहा है। तकनीक से केवल का भ्रम ही उत्पन्न नहीं होता, अपितु दुश्मन वास्तविक रूप में भी बलशाली तथा भयानक लगाने लगता है। अमरीका द्वारा अमरीकी भूमि

सन्दर्भ  
डा. प्रमोद कुमार



टैंक पर सवार तालिबान सैनिकों को देखते हुए कुछ बच्चे

भारत और पाकिस्तान जैसे देश अपनी आर्थिक प्रभुसत्ता के आत्मसमर्पण के बाद अब बड़े देशों के आगे राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता का आत्मसमर्पण कर रहे हैं। शायद यह पूंजीवाद के वैश्वीकरण का ही एक तर्कपूर्ण परिणाम है। अब यह आदेश मिल रहे हैं कि राष्ट्रीय हितों के लिए राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता का समर्पण आवश्यक है।

इन दोनों देशों ने विश्व की महाशक्ति द्वारा बनाए गए गठबंधन और इसके आदेशों को मानने से बचने के स्थान पर अपने राजनीतिक स्वायत्तता का आत्मसमर्पण कर दिया है। दोनों देश ही एक-दूसरे के साथ अपनी छोटी-छोटी दुश्मनी निकालने के लिए इस शक्तिशाली गठबंधन पर आश्रय रख रहे हैं। इन दोनों देशों के राजनीतिक शासकों ने एक बार पुनः राष्ट्रीय हितों, खतरे और सुरक्षा को अपने अनुसार नये अर्थ दिये हैं। उनके लिए राष्ट्रीय हित केवल सीमाओं की रक्षा है, न कि लोगों की राजनीतिक अथवा आर्थिक प्रभुसत्ता को बचाना। धमकी या खतरे का भाव केवल कमजोर पाकिस्तान, तालिबान या जैश-ए-मोहब्बत

को मिसाइल हमले से बचाने के लिए विकसित की गई मिजाइल विरोधी राष्ट्र नीति एक ऐसे काल्पनिक दृश्य के लिए अरबों डालर खर्च करने का उदाहरण है, जोकि केवल फिल्मों दृश्य में ही घटित हो सकता है।

11 सितम्बर के सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण परिणाम को पूरी तरह नज़रअंदाज़ कर दिया गया है। इस हमले ने इस धारणा को पूरी तरह तहस-नहस कर दिया है कि तकनीक से हमलों के संबंध में पहले पता लगाया जा सकता है। कुछ तकनीक के आधार पर चलने वाले उच्चकोटि के सिस्टम मानवीय दिमाग के वर्चस्व को छोटा करने का प्रयास करते हैं। मानवीय मन की गतिशीलता और संवेदक विकसित हो रही मानवीय दिमाग की फितरत को वह तकनीक काबू नहीं कर सकती, जोकि इसी दिमाग पर आधारित है। इसलिए अमरीका के अपहृत दूसरे विमान को विश्व व्यापार केन्द्र के दूसरे टावर में मारे जाने से रोकने के पक्ष से और समूचे रूप से इस हमले में खुफिया तंत्र की नाकामी वास्तव में तकनीक पर बेपनाह निर्भरता

का ही परिणाम है। कठने का अभिप्राय यह है कि अमरीकी प्रशासन तकनीक को ही सुरक्षा छतरी बना रहा है, न कि लोकतंत्र, मानववाद, समानता पर आधारित एक धर्मनिरपेक्ष प्रबंध को। इस भ्रमजाल के कारण देश अक्सर तकनीक को बढ़ा-चढ़ा कर पेश करते हैं और आतंकवाद का सामना करने के लिए न केवल अपनी राजनीतिक प्रभुसत्ता को भी दांव पर लगा रहे हैं, अपितु टकराव समाप्त करने के लिए लोकतंत्र और न्यायपूर्ण ढंगों को भी तिलांजलि दे रहे हैं। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि आतंकवादी हमलों का पहले पता लगाना कठिन है, इसलिए ऐसे अपराधियों को पहचान के संबंध में पहले ही निर्णय कर लेना शासकों की राजनीतिक विवशता बन जाता है। परिणाम स्वरूप जो भी लोग सभ्य समाज के दुश्मन माने जाते हैं, वे सभी आतंकवादी कार्रवाइयों करने के लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराए जा सकते हैं, चाहे उनके विरुद्ध कोई प्रमाण न हो।

धर्म, उत्पन्न होने वाले स्थान या भौतिक रूप के आधार पर आतंकवादियों की पहचान करने का परिणाम प्रभावित हुए समूह के तीक्ष्ण प्रतिक्रम के रूप में निकलता है। केवल तर्क तथा पक्षपात हावी हो जाते हैं। काफी लोग सारा दोष अरबों, मुसलमानों और दक्षिण एशियाई लोगों पर लगा रहे हैं। इस स्थिति में अमरीका ने अपना बदला लेने के लिए लक्ष्य निर्धारित कर लिए। आतंकवाद का मुकाबला करने के लिए अमरीका का प्रयास अफगानिस्तान, इराक, ईरान और इस्लामी जगत के उनके सहभागियों से बदला लेने का है। किसी एक बुरा या बुराओं द्वारा अकेले बिन लादेन या कई बिन लादेनों का सफाया हिंसक संस्कृति को समाप्त नहीं कर पाएगा। इस घटनाक्रम से कई सबक सीखने चाहिए। यदि आतंकवाद को शरण देकर भी इसके विरुद्ध लड़ा जाए, तो यह बढ़ेगा ही। कठने का अभिप्राय यह है कि यही सब कुछ इस समय हो रहा है।

दूसरा पहलू यह है कि व्यक्तिगत आतंकवाद के मुकाबले संस्थागत हिंसा को उत्पन्न करके इसे शांति के लिए की जा रही जंग के रूप में पेश किया जा रहा है। इस तरह करना हिंसा को स्थापित करना है। तीसरा पहलू यह है कि यह वह अवसर है जब सभ्य समाज विश्व के लोगों की जान की कोमल और रक्षा के संबंध में सोचे, न कि केवल अमरीकी तथा यूरोपीय लोगों की जानों को ही चिंता करे। चौथा पहलू यह है कि शक्तिशाली देश आतंकवाद के संबंध में उनके द्वारा बनाए गए संकल्प पर आधारित ही 'आम राजनीतिक सहमति' शीर्षक के स्थान पर आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध जनमत जुटाए। यह सबक यद्यपि स्पष्ट है, परन्तु इन्हें लागू करना या अपनाना कठिन है। आवश्यकता यह है कि प्रभुसत्ता के हित पूर्ण संकल्प के स्थान पर राजनीति का वैकल्पिक संकल्प खड़ा किया जाए, वरना हिंसा को और अधिक संस्थागत बल मिल जाएगा तथा अमन शांति केवल एक भ्रमचूषणा ही बन कर रह जाएगी।

अनुवाद : बलजीत बल्लरी

नोट : डा. प्रमोद कुमार चण्डीगढ़ की अनुसंधान अध्ययन संस्था इंस्टीट्यूट फार डिवैल्पमेंट एंड कम्युनिकेशन चण्डीगढ़ के निदेशक हैं।

CHANDIGARH POLLS | Dr Pramod Kumar

# National concerns and local issues

CHANDIGARH'S VOTER has been shaped by its unique growth. It has developed as an architectural marvel rather than a city with social moorings and political sensibilities. Instead of shaping the electoral agenda of the country, the city has reinforced the dominant national political dispensation. While its largely privileged middle class has been indifferent to elections, the substantial number of slum dwellers living in mafia driven human settlements are a captive vote bank. Its political leadership has remained confined to the margins of governance by a powerful administrative set-up. Hence the performance of political leaders at the constituency level does not emerge as a core issue. Consequently, anti-incumbency factor could not become a dominant criterion for a voter response in elections in Chandigarh.

In Chandigarh, the voters have national concerns and local grievances. As a result, its politics has found expression through national political parties i.e. the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Chandigarhians have continued to vote for the two political parties without sparing time to build a genuine alternative. Regional and caste based groupings could not emerge as a major pressure group, and the emerging trend of pre-election coalition is almost non-existent. Historically, their voting pattern is largely in conformity with the national trends. For instance, except the 1967 and 1999 elections, in the eight elections the party candidate who got elected from Chandigarh belonged to the same political group which came to power at the

*In Chandigarh, the voters have national concerns and local grievances. As a result, its politics has found expression through national political parties i.e. the Congress and BJP. Chandigarhians have continued to vote for the two political parties without sparing time to build a genuine alternative.*

Centre. The 1967 elections were preceded by the reorganization of states in 1966 and also witnessed the introduction of coalition politics and the emergence of an anti-Congress plank. This qualitative shift led to the victory of Shri Chand Goyal of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in Chandigarh, but the Congress party formed the government at the Centre. And in 1999 elections, Pawan Bansal of the Congress won from Chandigarh while a BJP led government came to power at the national level. This mismatch was attributed to local factionalism within the BJP, fielding of an outsider and non-performance by the BJP-dominated Municipal Corporation and personal image of the candidates. Factionalism within the BJP was so dominant that it had the backing of the BJP's strong man Narendra Modi, at present Chief Minister of Gujarat, which led to the denial of the ticket to its local leader, Satya Pal Jain.

Interestingly, although Chandigarh is the capital of Punjab and Haryana and a large number of government employees are active voters, political development in these states do not have a direct bearing on the voter's preference.

Another distinct feature of

Chandigarh's electoral politics is that it represents three distinguishable voter segments. Of its 5.83 lakh voters, a sizeable segment consists of urban voters (3.5 lakh), slum dwellers (1.56 lakh) and rural constituents (91938). The slum votes play an important role in the outcome of the elections. The slum voters have been voting enblock and also registered a high voting rate. In 1998 around 56 per cent and 1999 elections 52 per cent of the slum votes were polled. Whereas, fewer urban voters have been casting their votes. For instance, in the 1998 and 1999 elections, 54 per cent and 49 per cent of the urban voters cast their votes respectively. Unlike other constituencies, a very low percentage of the rural voters have been casting their votes i.e. 47 per cent in 1998 and 41 per cent in 1999 elections.

These segments have opposite political agenda. For the political parties it is a kind of balancing act. For example, the urban agenda emphasizes a restrictive growth of the slums, regulating the migrants to check crime, environment pollution, exorbitant school fees etc. Whereas, the slum dwellers demand regularization of illegal encroachments, access to basic amenities etc.

Local issues remain central in the slums and villages and national issues have a major bearing on the people's preference in the urban areas. National issues relating to Atal Behari Vajpayee versus Sonia Gandhi and the impact of the 'feel good factor' on urban Chandigarhians may influence the voters' preference. It will largely depend on the weightage the voters give to these factors. To illustrate, according to an IDC survey (Oct. 24, 1999) a section which voted for the Congress in 1998 abstained in 1999 because they were favourably inclined towards Vajpayee. It will be worthwhile to see whether these non-voters return to the Congress or vote for the BJP or again abstain from voting. How far the Congress party is able to keep Vajpayee's pull factor under control by aggressively campaigning around its own political and economic agenda shall influence the outcome of the elections. Further, the survey also revealed that in 1999 of the 5.3 per cent non-voters, two-thirds were BJP voters in 1998 elections. For the BJP it is a challenge to bring back these non-voters to the booths.

In fact, the Congress may indirectly counterpose the BJP's performance at the national level with the Congress performance at the local level. In the 1999 elections, the electorate overlooked the national issues, and the moot question is whether they will again do the same in the forthcoming elections.

*(The writer is the Director of the Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh)*



**GUEST COLUMN** | Pramod Kumar

# Paradigm shift in 'good governance' needed

IS GOOD governance really unpopular, as made out to be? The aim of 'good governance' these days appears to reduce employment in the public sector without creating employment in the private sector. Besides, it is to encourage people to participate in self-help groups and launch small businesses in the face of intense global competition. 'Good governance' is also to tell people to mind their own health and give subsidies to private hospitals; and to teach them to pay for life-saving services even if they do not have the opportunities to earn a livelihood.

No wonder, people do not respond positively to the 'goodness' entailed in this kind of governance. It's another matter that this phenomenon is beyond the understanding of the well-educated planners.

However, it is not without reason that the government is working overtime to disinvest. And an inefficient state apparatus is efficiently trying to eliminate itself. It is because they have once again resolved to remove poverty and inequalities. Earlier, at the time of Independence, the government committed itself to eradicating poverty, unemployment, and inequalities through public sector investment. Now it is in the process of privatising the public

*State govts in the region have the responsibility of evolving a positive agenda i.e. productive investment instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of expenditure in place of expenditure reduction. Similarly, they need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at predecessor regimes for corruption-free governance.*

domain. And the public interest is to be protected, promoted and sustained by private initiatives. It is for the people to appreciate the government's commitment to 'good governance' and make sacrifices to ensure the privileges of the few with the hope that they may find a place among them in the near future.

It is with this expectation from the people that the policy planners have initiated market reforms through certain negatives i.e. disinvestment, retrenchment, reduction in expenditure and anti-corruption. Through these negative initiatives, it is hoped that something positive shall emerge. Such is the faith in the fundamentals and tenets of market that even well-educated persons have succumbed to the glamour attached to this doctrine. They assert that even a competitive, efficient, em-

ployment-oriented and profit-making public sector unit has to be disinvested as per the tenets of market fundamentalism. Is this market fundamentalism any different from religious or caste fundamentalism? Isn't it equally dangerous?

Market-oriented reforms are called good and state-controlled development is considered evil. Everybody is being coerced to make a choice. The argument advanced is that the state-led mixed economy is nothing but 'common good as interpreted by self-seeking politicians and civil servants'. And in favour of market-led reforms is the argument that 'self-seeking actions of a multitude of individuals would lead to common good'.

Both are flawed.

Instead of reforming and rejuvenating governance, the thrust is

to replace an evil with another evil. Incidentally, all the dominant political parties have ideologically evolved an agreement around this philosophy. And consequently, successive governments have been enslaved by market-led reforms. In Punjab, it was the Akali government which constituted the disinvestment commission and the Congress government is taking it to its logical conclusion. Fiscal management is being presented as a model having these four negatives with a signpost that 'it is the market and not the government which will govern'.

And the market has no plan for the poor. In the pre-reform period, i.e. 1983-93, rural Punjab recorded a 7.09 per cent growth in unemployment and in the post-reform period i.e. between 1993 and 2000, rural Punjab experienced a 7.43 per cent growth in unemployment. A similar trend has been noticed in urban Punjab. From a 2.62 per cent growth in urban employment, it changed to 6.18 per cent growth in unemployment in the post-reform period.

It is, therefore, not without reason that all the dominant political parties have approved economic reforms in principle, but they have made electoral promises against these reforms. Consequently, the anti-incumbency factor provides an honourable exit to

a political party to be replaced by another with a similar track record.

All states in the region need to bring about a paradigm shift in governance. In Punjab, for example, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has distanced his government from a fundamentalist form of World Bank agenda by rolling back fees hike in educational institutions, mobilising private enterprises for generation of employment, rationalisation of reduction of government expenditure and also by devolution of powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). But he (and other state governments in the region) has a responsibility to evolve a positive agenda i.e. productive investment, instead of disinvestment, employment rather than retrenchment and rationalisation of expenditure rather than expenditure reduction.

Similarly, they need to go beyond the anti-corruption drive aimed at their predecessor regimes in order to provide corruption-free governance. This agenda must be implemented within the broader framework of putting in place social security and safety nets.

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GUEST COLUMN | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

## Policing: Need for holistic approach

**POLICING** THE police has emerged as a major concern. The National Police Commission, which was set up in response to the partisan role played by the police during the Emergency, emphasised that the police should function as an impartial force and efficiently protect the citizens' rights. And the National Human Rights Commission in an affidavit to the Supreme Court asserted that the police in a democratic society should be low in authority and high in accountability. Disturbed at the 'disquieting increase in the number of complaints received against the police for violation of human rights', it felt that 'policing the police is an urgent issue to be addressed seriously'.

The task of policing the police is being undertaken as an exclusive agenda by each organ of the state. When the judiciary takes up this task it judges the heroes of bullet for bullet, 'the messiahs of peace' as the villains of human rights. When human rights activists start policing the police, they target the baton and veil the guns without uniforms. A system which allows policing as a remedy ceases to render justice and protect the rule of law.

The approach is to project institutions, be it the judiciary, the security apparatus, the legislature as moral or immoral and their functionaries as villains or heroes. In the Eighties in Punjab, the police was projected as fighting the nation's battle. And everything they did at that point was justified. In a changed context, the onus of building a just, honest and humane society was put on the judiciary and whatever the police did in the Eighties was judged as violative. The comedy of this situation is that each kind of policing produces heroes so long as they are the convenient instruments of dominant politics and become villains when a different political context throws up different heroes. This ad hoc approach has serious implications for the functioning of institutions like the police, particularly in Punjab where the police have enjoyed enormous political space.

For instance, in the post-terrorism period, to play loose with the police force for narrow political gains is fraught with danger, particularly when the police force has realised its hidden potential. There are cautions in handling such a

*There is need to involve the community in the decision-making process, insulate the police from political power which vitiates, violates and pollutes the basic spirit of Constitution*

force equipped with some of those men in uniform who arrogated to themselves supra-natural powers which can grant or take lives. Rather, their recently discovered potential has to be nurtured for building a pro-people force. A number of measures have been suggested to reform the police force, ranging from insulation of the force from political interference, mandatory judicial inquiry into all cases of custodial death or rape, selection of the Director General of Police by a committee, a rational transfer policy, etc. But sadly these steps have not been implemented due to various reasons.

The project of nation-building took the initiative away from the community. The state functioned as an enforcement agency and in the process got alienated from the people. The police, as the main instrument of enforcement, earned a bad image. The police enforced 'order' in seclusion from community support, lending credence to the belief that it was the state against the nation and in practical terms, it was seen as the police versus the people. This is reflected from the 1861 Police Act and the people's expectations from the police.

A citizens' survey conducted in 1999 revealed that a majority of the members of the community expected the police to enforce the law effectively. This perception converged with the current disposition of a majority of the police personnel (70%) who regarded the authoritarian mode to be the best style of public dealing. Consequently, the existing nature of police-community interaction was guided by an underlying preference for avoiding contact with the police.

The National Police Commission set up in

1977 has drawn attention to this aspect and stated that the police service can have no future unless it earns the respect and confidence of its men and the public. In its fifth report (November, 1980), the Commission expressed anguish that the 1902 Fraser Commission's observation that the people now might not dread the police, but they certainly dreaded getting involved with it in any capacity, continues to be valid. This was mainly the result of the brutal and rude functioning of the police.

Various public surveys conducted since the mid-60s by the National Police Commission in 1980 have reinforced the view that the constabulary is rude, threatening, intimidating and brutal in its interaction with the people. Having been alienated from the people, the police has started shifting responsibility to the community. In its anxiety to shed this image, it is now using community policing as a face-saving device.

Community policing is being enforced rather than collectively conceived, implemented and monitored. Community policing experiments were initiated in the Sixties and Seventies in India. All these efforts were constrained as the community remained on the margin of the policing system. These efforts were directed at providing a single-window service and using community representatives as facilitators for traffic management and security through neighbourhood watch groups. In other words, it is policing for the community and through the community and not along with the community. Punjab Police, perhaps, needs it more urgently.

There is need to involve the community in the decision-making process, insulate the police from political power which vitiates, violates and pollutes the basic spirit of the Constitution and the rights of humans. Within the police, the investigation wing used for combating corruption must be purged of political misuse for the intimidation of political opponents. Any reform process in the police must also pinpoint corresponding changes in support institutions such as the judiciary, the bureaucracy and political system.

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GUEST COLUMN | Dr Pramod Kumar

# Polls to strengthen or subvert democracy?

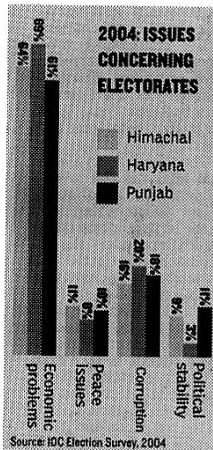
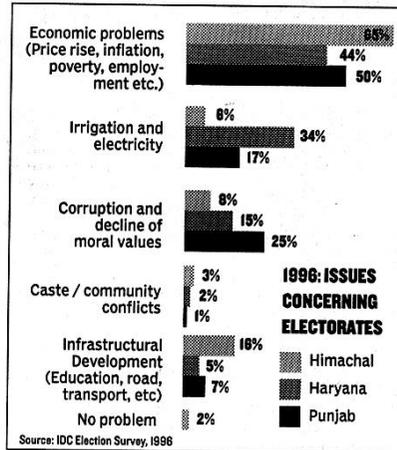
NOW THAT elections have been announced, it is timely to look at the previous polls in this region. It is interesting that in every election people have mentioned unemployment, poverty, availability of water, electricity, road and rampant corruption as the main issues and continued to vote for the political parties who promised, but could not perform.

For instance, a quick glance at electoral surveys conducted in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in 1996 and 2004 clearly indicate that:

In all the elections in every state a majority of voters said that they wanted economic development. It is a different matter that the political parties have now made it their main plank in electoral rhetoric.

The major gain of economic reforms agenda is an increase in the quantum of corruption, and political parties do not fail to make it an election issue. In fact, political parties justify their non-performance and corrupt practices by comparing it with others and presenting themselves as a lesser evil. It is precisely because of this that corruption as an issue continues to dominate electoral politics and voters have no choice but to keep on voting for the corrupt.

For instance, in the 1997 elections in Punjab, the major reason for the defeat of the Congress party was attributed to corruption scams and the Akali Dal



claimed it as a vote to eradicate corruption. Interestingly, in the 2002 elections the Akali Dal (Badal) was labeled corrupt and the Congress termed its victory as a mandate to fight corruption. Again in the 2004 Parliamentary elections the indications are that corruption will continue to dominate electoral discourse in Punjab. In every election both the parties compete to paint the other as more corrupt. This is clear from the statements made by party leaders.

Union Law Minister Arun Jaitley observed that 'The Punjab Congress is adopting vindictive policies against SAD leaders and levelling 'false' cor-

ruption charges against them at a time when the son of the Punjab Chief Minister is himself facing serious charges." (HT Feb 24, 2004). The principle is to kill poison with poison and let the patient die.

Why do people keep on casting their vote for the continuation of same corrupt political dispensation? More than half of the respondents interviewed mentioned absence of alternative as a reason for casting their vote for "the lesser evil" (IDC Survey, 1996, 1999). Democracy seems to be performing a choice-limiting function rather than creating conditions for maximisation of choices.

It is not only the anti-in-

cumbency that provides a safe passage to issueless politics. Another term which is in wide circulation is "win-ability". In the course of selection of candidates, political parties used 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. If he has the capacity to manipulate votes and proven loyalty, he has every chance to be selected. Above all, the money a candidate can invest with a hope to recover at a later date is a major facilitating factor. This is symptomatic of the erosion of the ideological support base of political parties.

The logical fall out of this degeneration is the multiplication of dissident contestants, increased role of spoilers such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the rigging factor. This has de-linked the electoral arithmetic from real issues. All political parties in Punjab seem to be grappling with dissidents and encouraging disside in competing political parties. For instance, in the 2002 Assembly elections there were 40 constituencies that had decisive dissident presence that influenced the election results.

Another factor on which the major political parties seem to pin their hope is the rigging factor. This includes free access to liquor, drugs, gifts, bribe, monetary appeasement, etc. Political parties are working overtime to amend the popular dictum that religion is the opiate of the masses. It's turned around now and opium is the religion of the masses. It is distressing to note that electoral politics is relying on such factors.

Election is a double-edged weapon. It can make democratic process participatory and therefore legitimate. It also has tremendous potential to subvert democracy. Punjab is witnessing this process in a glaring form as it prepares itself for the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

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



**GUEST COLUMN** | *Dr Pramod Kumar*

# Leveraging public funds

## Punjab Budget

BUDGET IS a weak instrument with strong statements of intent. Punjab's Budget for 2005-2006 is no exception. However, the present Budget is candid enough to admit that:

(a) Punjab is most globalised and Punjab's economy is least globalised. This is mirrored by a nominal FDI of 0.7 per cent as mentioned by a World Bank report.

(b) There has been a slow-down of the economy and it has the third lowest growth rate among the major states. Much of the slow-down is in agriculture i.e. 2.6 per cent per annum lower than the all-India average of 3.2 per cent. It has had an industrial growth rate between 5 and 7.5 per cent during the past 15 years.

(c) Services provided by the government are 'prohibitively costly with a sharp decline in quality'. A survey conducted by the Public Affairs Centre places Punjab 11th in the quality of services among 16 major Indian states. However, the 10 states above Punjab could provide quality services even without public-private partnership.

(d) Bad fiscal health has brought the 'development process to a virtual standstill'. In the fourth year of governance, the Finance Minister was concerned and announced that the fiscal health was showing signs of improvement. Time has come now to spell out the strategy for the major sectors of the state's economy.

It is naïve to expect that budgetary exercises can resolve paradoxes of development. The present Budget has taken adequate measures to restore the fiscal health of the state. It has reduced expenditure on salaries from 118.24 per cent (2001-2002) to 84.39 during 2004-2005. It could reduce interest payment of Rs 339 crore per annum by swapping high cost debt. However, it is not clear why the state's own tax revenue has decreased to the extent of 22 per cent.

For the first time, a substantial allocation has been made for the maintenance of general infrastructure like roads, bridges, etc. The municipalities and panchayats have been assigned the task of generating financial resources for the maintenance of infrastructure for ensuring quality water supply, sanitation and drainage. One hopes that the people will understand the 'goodness' entailed in these bold initiatives.

Budget has claimed to have reinvented the government by 'leveraging public funds for attracting private capital' and evolving a healthy partnership between private capital driven by profit and public funds which are spent for ensuring social equity.

This has been termed as a 'new paradigm'. This so-called 'new paradigm' has to be monitored as it may be hijacked by profiteers in the name of quality service. Politics has to ensure that the government does not become oblivious to the presence of those lesser mortals who are without means. The effort should be to introduce competition. As we have seen that even government model schools, medical institutions (PGIs), IITs could compete with other institutions and have set the standards for excellence.

The Budget has also created dedicated funds to avoid indulgences of successive governments leading to a diversion of funds. It has created a dedicated fund of Rs 450 crore for timely payment of pensions, an Agricultural Diversification Research and Development Fund of Rs 120 crore, a Municipal Development Fund of Rs 900 crore and a Village Development Fund of Rs 600 crore.

These dedicated funds have been adequately capitalised.

The creation of dedicated funds is a clear statement of the government's intent. But it is not clear why the government has not created dedicated funds for rural indebtedness, for the unemployed youth, for the generation of employment and fighting drug abuse among the youth.

Further, the allocation for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes has remained stagnant i.e. a nominal Rs 98 crore. For medical and public health, it has decreased from Rs 690 crore to Rs 652 crore, for other rural development programmes from Rs 97.6 crore to Rs 54.1 crore and on animal husbandry there is a nominal increase. The Budget has mentioned a cess of Re 1 per litre on diesel and 50 paise per litre on petrol, but it has not made clear the increase in the receipt of more than Rs 600 crore from stamps and registration and electricity duty and land revenue to the extent of Rs 250 crore. Are these to be taken as hidden taxes to be imposed at the appropriate time?

Notwithstanding these important initiatives, allocations for the agriculture sector should have been increased to raise the real incomes on a sustainable basis. To generate employment, there is need for allocating resources for the creation of an institutional mechanism for building linkages of agriculture with industry. Similarly, in education and health sectors, the guiding principle should have been to incur high costs in the short run to get high returns in the long run. There is an urgent need for shedding the obsession with 'balanced fiscal management', as the Budget has successfully overcome the temptation to be populist.

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

# Frog is the prince!

NEELAM MAN SINGH CHOWDHRY  
in conversation with Dr Pramod Kumar



**TABLE**  
*for TWO*

IN *Babette's Feast*, a brilliant movie based on a story by Isak Dinesen, the camera tracks back and forth between the kitchen where mountains of food are being cooked with loving care. And

the dining room where the stern faces of the spartan gathering are contrasted with the vast array of sumptuous dishes laid before them. How subtly and imperceptibly, the faces of this august group gets



transformed with the delicate wine and gourmet food, that is carousing through the senses.

I was hoping that such a miracle would also happen with both Dr. Pramod Kumar, Director, IDC, and me during our lunch at the Magic Wok in Mount View Hotel. In spite of the positive intention of the maitre-d and the splendid atmosphere the food tasted like *never ind* which we ate with a stoic stomach. Manipulating an over-peppered soup with pieces of pasta impersonating as noodles, created an instant fusion. Bon appetit.. to Nouvelle cuisine.

Talking with Dr. Pramod Kumar is always a very stimulating experience. He juggles words and concepts like a magician. Swinging from impassioned rhetoric to gender politics, with a precision and facility that leaves one jet-lagged. Between bouts of Haka Noodles and Chilli Vegetables, I asked him whether his concepts of social justice, equality and non-subjugating relationships percolated in his personal equations with his family and his wife. Pramod said in his domestic life, his family posed no dilemma to alternate traditional systems of hierarchy. He continued by adding that due to invisible social mechanisms, women are also part of gender socialisation. A paradox, which he felt no need to confront. He elaborated how in a patriarchal social setting, relationships based on equality are not possible. This had me reflecting on the vast chasm between thought and action in our social behaviour.

The continuous interruptions by jasmine tea, created pauses in the conversation and made me think how food always starts with the eye, yet most of us put just about anything into our mouths. We have somewhere lost the sensibility that the essential part of enjoying a meal lies in all the senses: smell, sight, touch and even sound. Taking from this moment of silence, Pramod recollected his early years at Panjab University, when the intellectual climate had a fervour and commitment. Jean Paul Sartre's birthday was celebrated with seminars, discussions and talks. Every social and political crisis led to passionate debate. Today it is lamentable that all that untapped potential is being sublimated in Valentine's Day and crass commercialisation.

The get-rich-quick syndrome manifested by myopic programmes like *Kaun Bane Ga Crorepati* has today become the national icon. Desensitisation of the young, gets processed by the abysmally dumb questions that go in the name of knowledge.

Pramod then mulled over the destigmatisation of public life, how until recent times austerity was a virtue and ostentation was something to be scoffed at. Today the tables have turned, the frog has become the prince and the means be damned. It's all in the game show!