

Bhavan Australia

www.bhavanaaustralia.org

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side - Rig Veda, 1-89-i

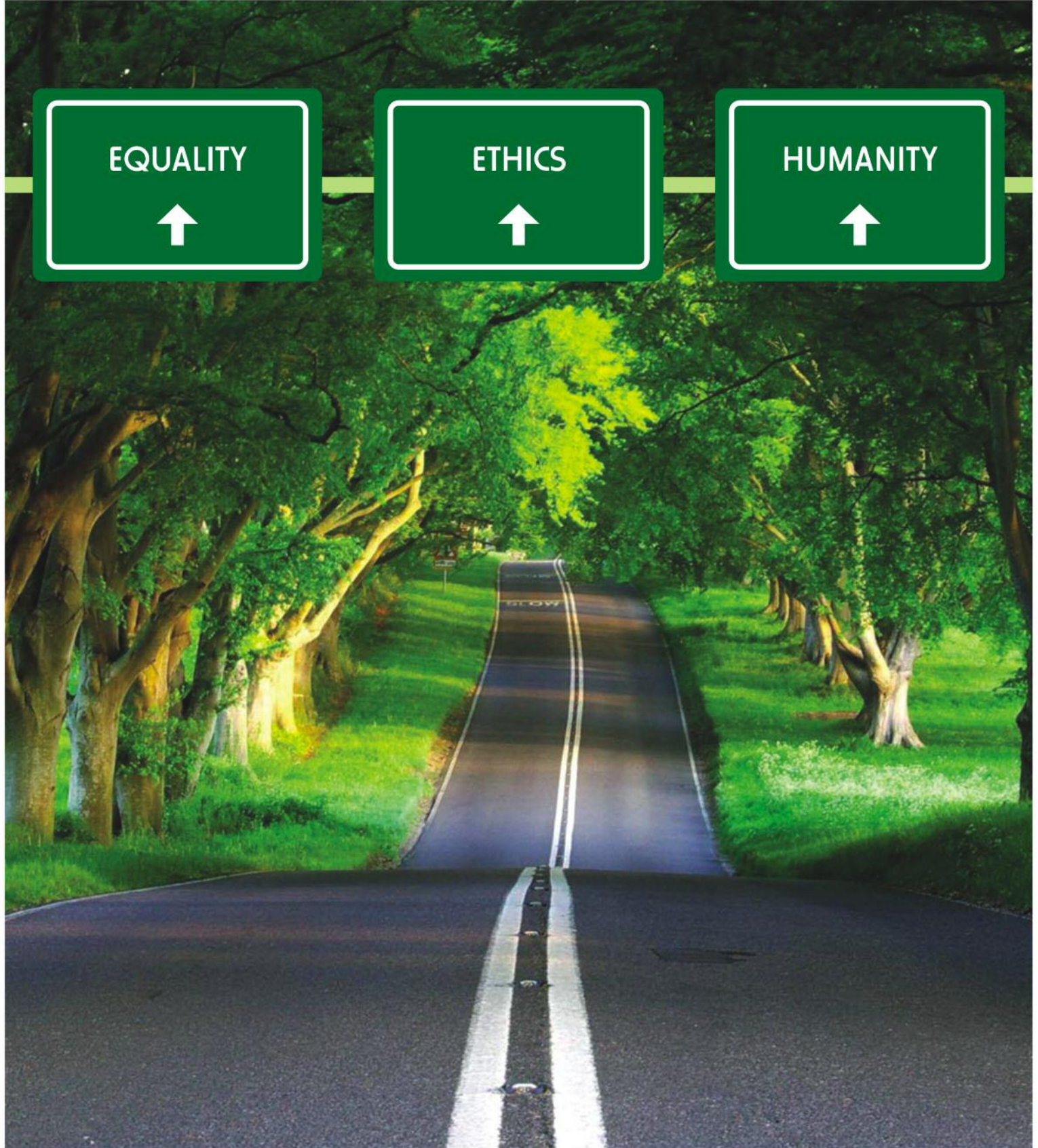
EQUALITY



ETHICS



HUMANITY



Life | Literature | Culture

Holy & Wise

Ekam Sad vipra bahuda vadanti

One alone exists, Sages call it by various names.



"In order to lead a meaningful life, you need to cherish others, pay attention to human values and try to cultivate inner peace."

-Dalai Lama XIV

"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value." .

-Albert Einstein

"If money help a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better."

-Swami Vivekananda

*"Seven Deadly Sins
Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Science without humanity
Knowledge without character
Politics without principle
Commerce without morality
Worship without sacrifice."*

- Mahatma Gandhi

If we are to go forward, we must go back and rediscover those precious values—that all reality hinges on moral foundations and that all reality has spiritual control.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Human Kind and Dharmic Values

Since millenniums life in the Indian sub-continent, known as Bharata Varsha, has been inextricably entwined with the two immortal epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana.

Though the composition of Mahabharata is attributed to Sage Veda Vyasa and of Ramayana to Sage Valmiki, both the sages had composed these magnum opuses to underscore the importance of righteous code of conduct or living according to the tenets of Dharma, by all our people, without any exception.

While both the sages had endowed their central characters with extraordinary vitality and divine capabilities, and had focused on their roles in retrieving, resurrecting and restoring Dharma or righteous conduct, they were careful in presenting them as human beings.

The appeal and impact of both Mahabharata and Ramayana upon our people for the past few millenniums are in fact due to the stories being primarily woven around human beings.

What is of most profound significance however is

the fact that both characteristics of human excellence as well as frailties, were presented with equal emphasis by the sages to drive home the fact that the edicts of dharma are inexorable and none can deviate from them.

Having made their point, they have shown how and why their central characters acted in the manner in which they did and that such actions were indeed necessary to firmly establish the supremacy of Dharmic values and conduct. There is one more very powerful message.

Although both Sri Krishna and Sri Rama personified the same ultimate truth and moral, they represented different times of Treta and Dwapar and it has to be understood that they acted the way they did only in accordance with the different times and their influences.

**-Surendralal G Mehta
President, Bharatiya
Vidya Bhavan Worldwide**



NONVIOLENCE MONTH

2 October - 1 November 2014

It will be an Australia-wide event in collaboration with the major universities in every major City - Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Hobart, Darwin.

Activities including educational lectures/workshops, talking to prison inmates, Police personnel, some musical and sports activities.

We seek your support / active participation preferably in the following manner:

Mark any of your proposed activities

during the month of October as part of the Nonviolence Month

Hold a lecture series on educating the concept of nonviolence and its implementation in day to day life in any university / institution in Australia

Dedicate any literary / sports activities at any of the universities / institutions to promotion of the cause of Nonviolence

Introduction to any of your high profile peace partners in the manner suitable/ appropriate to you



*International Centre of Nonviolence Australia
Suite 100, Level 4, 515 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Tel. +61 2 9264 1313 E: pr@nonviolence.org.au*



What is Prayer?

What is prayer? It is outpouring of the heart. It is offering flowers plucked from the garden of the heart. What is prayer? Prayer is the cry of the wounded heart to the beloved. What is prayer? Prayer is the soul's ascent to the mount of vision. This English word, 'prayer' means, literally, 'asking'. I recall the words of Jesus spoken on a memorable occasion to his disciples.

He said: "Ask and it shall be given to you." "Prayer is asking". Asking for what? And asking how? Prayer is asking for the key to the treasures of the Spirit-world. And I sometimes say prayer is a voyage of discovery. For, if you but know how to pray, you begin to discover a mighty world around you, the Spirit-world. And even as you learn to pray, more and more, you come in touch, more and

more with the Spirit world. To pray is to receive the key to a mighty spiritual treasure. How shall we ask? And what shall we ask?

We have a beautiful word for 'prayer' in the ancient Indian language, the Sanskrit language. That word is *Upasna*. Do you know what *Upasna* means? The literal meaning of the word is *Up-asna*, "sitting under". That is prayer, "sitting under" the influence of the Spirit. And sitting here with you beneath these beautiful trees and under the ancient skies. I have felt that I have been sitting under was the influence of the Spirit. Prayer is sitting under—under the influence of the Spirit. Blessed is this evening when we, 'sisters and brothers, meet together, trusting hearts in this beautiful spot under the influence of the Spirit.

Many years ago, when I was in England, one sweet little English girl came to me and said, "Teach me what to pray." I said: "My child! The Spirit alone may teach us what to pray." But she said: "You must speak to me: you must give me some words which I may recite every day!" And I passed on to her the words of an ancient Rishi: "Out of darkness lead me into Light!" And I said to her: "Recite these words and in silence meditate on their meaning." I was staying with the parents of this girl: I was a guest in their house.

One day I looked into a little room and in that little room I saw her sitting, this sweet English girl, and she was lisping the words: "Out of darkness lead me into the Light." And she offered the prayers in such sincerity, with such love in her heart, I saw her face illuminated, her eyes aglow with light, and I said to myself: "I have seen the Face of God." True it is, that from time to time you see a person filled with the spirit of prayer, and gazing at his face you feel that you see the Face of God.

*-Sadhu Vaswani,
Bhavan's Journal April 30, 2014*



Compassion and the Individual

How to be happy and make other happy

ONE GREAT QUESTION underlies our experience, whether we think about it consciously or not: What is the purpose of life? H.H. Dalai Lama believes that the purpose of life is to be happy. From the moment of birth, every human being wants happiness and does not want suffering. Neither social conditioning nor education nor ideology affects this. From the very core of our being, we simply desire contentment. .

It is possible to divide every kind of happiness and suffering into two main categories: mental and physical. Of the two, it is the mind that exerts the greatest influence on most of us. Unless we are either gravely ill or deprived of basic necessities, our physical condition plays a secondary role in life. If the body is content, we virtually ignore it. The mind, however, registers every event, no matter how small. Hence we should devote our most serious efforts to bringing about mental peace.

The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a close, warm-hearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. This helps remove whatever fears or insecurities we may have and gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. It is the ultimate source of success in life.

As long as we live in this world we are bound to encounter problems. If, at such times, we lose hope and become discouraged, we diminish our ability to face difficulties. If, on the other hand, we remember that it is not just ourselves but every one who has to undergo suffering, this more realistic perspective will increase our determination and capacity to overcome troubles. Indeed, with this attitude, each new obstacle can be seen as yet another valuable opportunity to improve our mind!

Thus we can strive gradually to become more compassionate, that is we can develop both genuine sympathy for others' suffering and the will to help remove their pain. As a result, our own serenity and inner strength will increase.

Ultimately, the reason why love and compassion bring the greatest happiness is simply that our nature cherishes them above all else. The need for love lies at the very foundation of human existence. It results from the profound interdependence we all share with one another.



Inter-dependence, of course, is a fundamental law of nature. Not only higher forms of life but also many of the smallest insects are social beings who, without any religion, law or education, survive by mutual cooperation based on an innate recognition of their interconnectedness. The most subtle level of material phenomena is also governed by interdependence.

We are completely dependent upon our mothers' care from the earliest stages of our growth. According to some scientists, a pregnant woman's mental state, be it calm or agitated has a direct physical effect on her

unborn child. The expression of love is also very important at the time of birth. Since the very first thing we do is suck milk from our mothers' breast, we naturally feel close to her, and she must feel love for us in order to feed us properly; if she feels anger or resentment her milk may not flow freely.

How can we start

Dalai Lama advises that we should begin by removing the greatest hindrances to compassion: anger and hatred. As we all know, these are extremely powerful emotions and they can overwhelm our entire mind. Nevertheless, they can be controlled. If, however, they are not, these negative emotions will plague us - with no extra effort on their part! - and impede our quest for the happiness of a loving mind.



So as a start, it is useful to investigate whether or not anger is of value. Sometimes, when we are discouraged by a difficult situation, anger does seem helpful, appearing to bring with it more energy, confidence and determination.

Here, though, we must examine our mental state carefully. While it is true that anger brings extra energy, if we explore the nature of this energy, we discover that it is blind: we cannot be sure whether its result will be positive or negative. This is because anger eclipses the best part of our brain: its rationality. So the energy of anger is almost always unreliable. It can cause an immense amount of destructive, unfortunate behavior. Moreover, if anger increases to the extreme, one becomes like a mad person, acting in ways that are as damaging to oneself as they are to others.

It is possible, however, to develop an equally forceful but far more controlled energy with which to handle difficult situations.

This controlled energy comes not only from a compassionate attitude, but also from reason and patience. These are the most powerful antidotes to anger. Unfortunately, many people misjudge these qualities as signs of weakness. I believe the opposite to be true: that they are the true signs of inner strength. Compassion is by nature gentle, peaceful and soft, but it is very powerful. It is those who easily lose their patience who are insecure and unstable. Thus, to me, the arousal of anger is a direct sign of weakness.

Thus, because the measures you employ have been calmly chosen, they will be more effective, more accurate and more forceful. Retaliation based on the blind energy of anger seldom hits the target.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gambhir Watts".

Gambhir Watts OAM
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Australia



Contents



Guru Rabindranath Tagore	09	Ramayana in a Nutshell	28
Rama: The Practitioner of Advaita	13	Who Says it and How?	30
Gopal Krishna Gokhale	14	Big Man Yerranderie Sikh-Aussie Pioneer Bud Singh	32
Tourism Vs Pilgrimage: Concepts and Consequences to the Environment	16	The Voice of Democracy	34
Indian Composite Culture—Religions	18	American Delusions Down Under	37
Swami Vivekananda's Poems	21	Family and Community	43
India's Disrupted Democracy	22	World's Largest Democracy Votes	47
Love the Bank, Hate the Banker	24	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi	55
Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	26	Untold Stories of King Bhoja	56

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN AUSTRALIA

Office Bearers:

President	Surendralal Mehta (President Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Worldwide)
Executive Secretary	Homi Navroji Dastur (Executive Secretary and Director General Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Worldwide)
Chairman	Shanker Dhar
Secretary	Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi

Other Directors:

Palladam Narayana Santhanagopal, Kalpana Shriram, Jagannathan Veeraraghavan, Moksha Watts, Krishan Kumar Gupta, Srinivasan Venkataraman.

President: Gambhir Watts OAM

Patrons: Her Excellency Mrs Sujatha Singh (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia), His Excellency Prahat Shukla (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia), His Excellency Rajendra Singh Rathore (Former High Commissioner of India in Australia)

Honorary Life Patron: His Excellency M. Ganapathi (Former Consul General of India in Australia and a Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia)

Publisher & General Editor:

Gambhir Watts OAM
president@bhavanaustralia.org

Editorial Committee:

Shanker Dhar, Parveen Dahiya,
Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi, Jesica Flores Sasse
editors@bhavanaustralia.org

Designed and Printed at:

India Empire, New Delhi, India
Ph: +91.9899117477

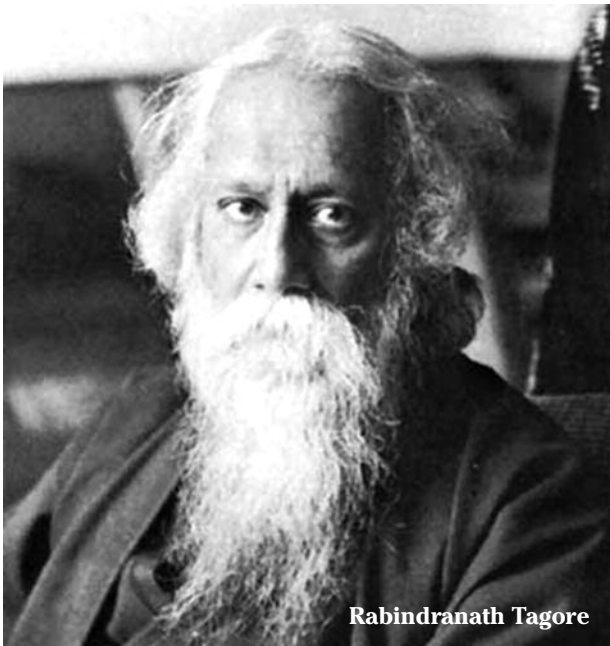
Advertising:

info@bhavanaustralia.org
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia
Suite 100 / 515 Kent Street,
Sydney NSW 2000

The views of contributors to *Bhavan Australia* are not necessarily the views of *Bhavan Australia* or the Editor. *Bhavan Australia* reserves the right to edit any contributed articles and letters submitted for publication. *Copyright:* all advertisements and original editorial material appearing remain the property of *Bhavan Australia* and may not be reproduced except with the written consent of the owner of the copyright.

Bhavan Australia: - ISSN 1449 – 3551

Guru Rabindranath Tagore



Rabindranath Tagore

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

-Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was an icon of Indian culture. He was a poet, philosopher, musician, writer, and educationist. Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to become Nobel laureate when he won Nobel Prize for his collection of poems, Gitanjali, in 1913. He was popularly called as Gurudev and his songs were popularly known as Rabindrasangeet. Two songs from his Rabindrasangit canon are now the national anthems of India and Bangladesh: the Jana Gana Mana and the Amar Shonar Bangla.

Early Life

Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861 in a wealthy Brahmin family in Calcutta. He was the ninth son of Debendranath and Sarada Devi. His grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore was a rich landlord and social reformer. Rabindra Nath Tagore had his initial education in Oriental Seminary School. But he did not like the conventional education and started studying at home under several teachers. After undergoing his upanayan (coming-of-age) rite at the age of eleven, Tagore and his father left Calcutta in 1873 to tour India for several months, visiting his father's Santiniketan estate and Amritsar before reaching the Himalayan hill station

of Dalhousie. There, Tagore read biographies, studied history, astronomy, modern science, and Sanskrit, and examined the classical poetry of Kalidasa.

The Multifaceted Personality

*Let your life lightly dance
on the edges of
Time like dew on the
tip of a leaf.*

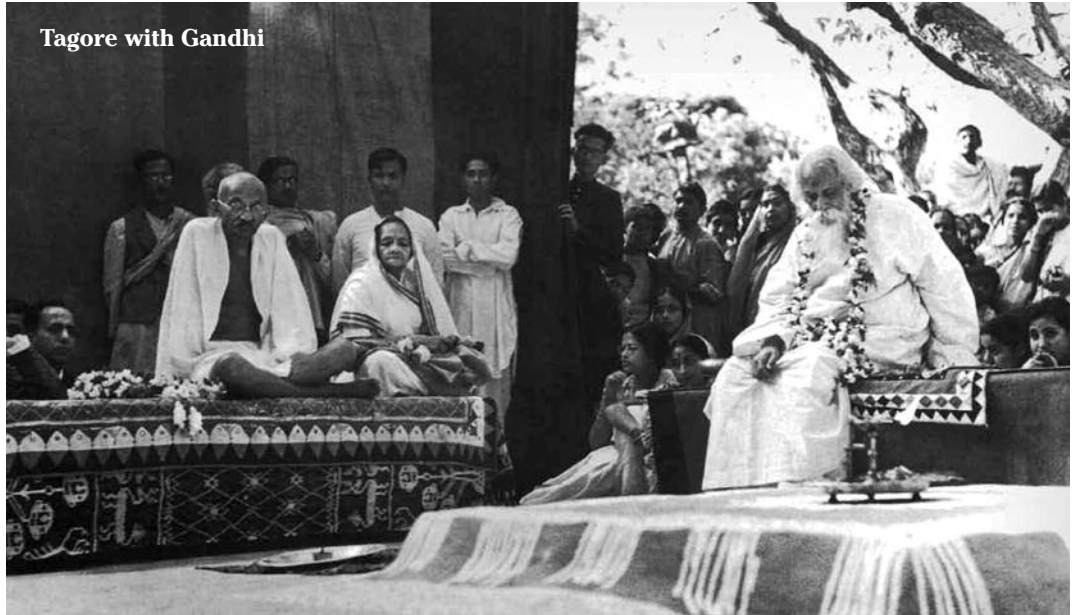
In 1874, Tagore's poem Abhilaash (Desire) was published anonymously in a magazine called Tattobodhini. Tagore's mother Sarada Devi expired in 1875. Rabindranath's first book of poems, Kabi Kahini (tale of a poet) was published in 1878. In the same year Tagore sailed to England with his elder brother Satyandranath to study law but he returned to India in 1880 and started his career as poet and writer. In 1883, Rabindranath Tagore married Mrinalini Devi Raichaudhuri, with whom he had two sons and three daughters.

In 1884, Tagore wrote a collection of poems Kori-o-Kamal (Sharp and Flats). He also wrote dramas, Raja-o-Rani (King and Queen) and Visarjan (Sacrifice). In 1890, Rabindranath Tagore moved to Shilaidaha (now in Bangladesh) to look after the family estate. Between 1893 and 1900 Tagore wrote seven volumes of poetry, which included Sonar Tari (The Golden Boat) and Khanika.

As a writer, Tagore primarily worked in Bengali, but after his success with Gitanjali, he translated many of his other works into English. He wrote over one thousand poems; eight volumes of short stories; almost two dozen plays and play-lets; eight novels; and many books and essays on philosophy, religion, education and social topics. Aside from words and drama, his other great love was music, Bengali style. He composed more than two thousand songs, both the music and lyrics.

In 1901, Rabindranath Tagore became the editor of the magazine Bangadarshan. He established Bolpur Bramhacharyaashram at Shantiniketan, a school based on the pattern of old Indian Ashrama. In 1902, his wife Mrinalini died. Tagore composed Smaran (In Memoriam), a collection of poems, dedicated to his wife.

Tagore with Gandhi



The Inspiring Man

Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.

Tagore's multi-cultural educational efforts were an inspiration to many, including his friend, Count Hermann Keyserling of Estonia. Count Keyserling founded his own school in 1920 patterned upon Tagore's school, and the ancient universities which existed in Northern India under Buddhist rule over 2,000 years ago under the name School of Wisdom. Rabindranath Tagore led the opening program of the School of Wisdom in 1920, and participated in several of its programs thereafter.

Bengal Partition

In 1905, Lord Curzon decided to divide Bengal into two parts. Rabindranath Tagore strongly protested against this decision. Tagore wrote a number of national songs and attended protest meetings. He introduced the Rakhibandhan ceremony, symbolizing the underlying unity of undivided Bengal.

Gitanjali

In 1909, Rabindranath Tagore started writing Gitanjali. In 1912, Tagore went to Europe for the second time. On the journey to London he translated some of his poems/songs from Gitanjali to English. He met William Rothenstein, a noted British painter, in London. Rothenstein was impressed by the poems, made copies and gave to Yeats and other English poets. Yeats was enthralled. He later wrote the introduction to Gitanjali when it was published in September 1912 in a limited edition by the India Society in London. Rabindranath Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for Gitanjali. In 1915 he was

knighted by the British King George V.

Jallianwala Bagh

In 1919, following the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Tagore renounced his knighthood. He was a supporter of Gandhiji but he stayed out of politics. He was opposed to nationalism and militarism as a matter of principle, and instead promoted spiritual values and the creation of a new world culture founded in multi-culturalism, diversity and tolerance.

Viswabharati University

In 1921, Rabindranath Tagore established Viswabharati University. He gave all his money from Nobel Prize and royalty money from his books to this University. Tagore was not only a creative genius, he was quite knowledgeable of Western culture, especially Western poetry and science too. Tagore had a good grasp of modern, post-Newtonian Physics, and was well able to hold his own in a debate with Einstein in 1930 on the newly emerging principles of quantum mechanics and chaos. His meetings and tape recorded conversations with his contemporaries such as Albert Einstein and H.G. Wells, epitomize his brilliance.

Final Days

Death is not extinguishing the light; it is only putting out the lamp because the dawn has come.

In 1940 Oxford University arranged a special ceremony in Santiniketan and awarded Rabindranath Tagore with Doctorate of Literature. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore passed away on August 7, 1941 in his ancestral home in Calcutta.

**Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.schoolofwisdom.com**

'BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS'

Essay Competition

\$10,000 cash prize for tertiary students

\$10,000

cash prize



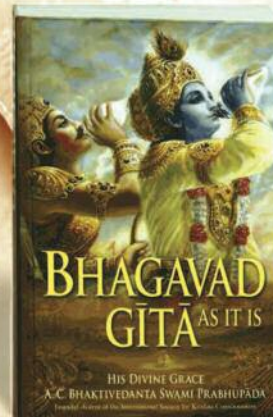
Essay writing competition

Discover the jewel of India's spiritual wisdom, the Bhagavad Gita As It Is.

- Open to all Australian university and tertiary institution students
- Deadline: 28 November 2014

To find out more visit:

www.bgasitisesay.com.au



Rationale behind the Project

This is a non-sectarian initiative, open to all tertiary students at universities and TAFEs nationwide, which provides the opportunity to delve into the wisdom of an ancient eastern philosophical text, still highly relevant today, concerned with the environment, society and the human condition.

"I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence, which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us".

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Essay Question

There is an entrance fee of \$35 via PayPal.

A hard copy of **'Bhagavad-Gita As It Is'** by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada will be sent to each applicant's postal address, including access to an e-version of the book and a set of introductory materials, which explain and give context to the work.

Entry deadline is Friday, 28 November 2014.

The winner will be announced 5pm AEST Friday, 30 January 2015.

"It is the year 2050 and a united, peace-loving world government has been formed. The leaders of that government have decided to implement Krishna's strategy for peace and happiness in the world.

You have been tasked to succinctly summarise and promote Krishna's message in a convincing pamphlet that motivates obstinate elements in the population (who are attached to the former failed system) to implement these teachings in their lives and societies."

Initiators of the Project and our Inspiration

The inspiration for this competition came from a similar Bhagavad Gita competition recently run for secondary school students in India.

Australian entrepreneurs have set up a \$10,000 cash prize, to motivate our tertiary students to read and reflect on the ideas espoused in this timeless, philosophical Indian text. The urgency to find solutions to the human condition is even more

pressing and necessary in current times, where there is so much conflict and dissatisfaction in the world.

Further inspiration has come from a perceived lack of treatment of ontological issues, such as existence, righteous action and free will in tertiary courses.

Project Vision

We are born into this life with many unanswered questions. This is the human condition: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of life?

'Bhagavad Gita As It Is':

- * is an ontological discussion between a teacher and student, which not only attempts to answer the questions, but also prescribes how to lead a happy and fulfilling life, how to be peaceful in this world of rapid change and incessant conflict.
- * gives a helpful framework, with which to go forth into the world and live your life successfully. A successful life is measured not only by material success, but also by spiritual wellbeing - that which affects our human spirit or soul - in essence by maintaining happiness through the ups and downs of life's journey.
- * gives helpful tools with which to lead a larger life. The philosophies discussed in the Gita help you to pursue the life of your dreams. At school you're taught to go out and get a job. But life is not simply about getting that job. Life is a mystery, an adventure, an unfolding.
- * helps you to embrace the awesome mystery of your own life, purpose and destiny.

This is the first time the essay competition has been run. We intend running it annually, if there is significant student interest.

Unaffiliated with any social, political, cultural or religious group, we do not promote any religion, but simply stand on a philosophical platform in the universal exchange of ideas. We hope that each participant's open mind will be further expanded and their spirit uplifted by reading this most helpful book and being exposed to its wonderful visions for humanity.

Please visit our website for more information:
www.bgasitisessay.com.au

Rama: The Practitioner of Advaita

The debate on the existence of God is a never ending issue. Much can be said on both sides. No specific characterisation can be given for a God. God was in the form of light and had no particular shape. Later, God took the shapes of Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Sustainer or administrator, and Shiva, the Destroyer.

The curse of Bhrgu Maharshi for not worshipping Brahma on earth might have given least preference to worship of Brahma. The life of a human being is a bundle of desires. If one is satisfied another will crop up. This cycle is a never ending process.

The responsibility of administration is of Lord Vishnu. To get all the wishes and desires fulfilled, people worship Lord Vishnu. The portion of giving salvation lies with Lord Shiva. Every human being enters the world with an unknown date of exit. At least to have the date of inevitability people go with a mercy petition to Lord Shiva. In some instances, both have interchanged their duties. Some worship only Vishnu and some adore Lord Shiva; a majority worship both.

The characteristics and appearances of Vishnu and Shiva are to be observed. Vishnu appears to be a luxurious and stylish person and Shiva is made out as poor. Vishnu wears a silk dhoti, whereas Shiva clothes the skin of tiger. The ornaments of Vishnu are made of gold and diamonds, that of Shiva are snakes. Vishnu puts on a crown whereas Shiva has long tresses of hair for his crown.

In one of the avatars Vishnu feathered his crown with a plume. Shiva decorated his weaved headdress with a crescent. The former wears gold and diamond studded necklaces whereas the later embellishes with snakes.

Vishnu adorns flowers and basil knitted garland, Shiva wears a garland of skulls. Vishnu applies aroma to his body and Shiva smears his body with ash. Vishnu put tiru namam on his forehead whereas Shiva has his third eye in the shape of a namam on his forehead.

The dish in which the courses Vishnu dines is of gold and that of Shiva is a bowl of skull. The abode of Lord Vishnu is the milky ocean and sleeps on soft and tender serpent coils. Shiva takes rest in burial ground. The Vedas clearly state that

“Shivaaya vishnu roopaya shiva roopaya visnave...” which means Shiva will be in the form of Vishnu and Vishnu in the form of Shiva which ultimately proves that God has no particular shape. Here lies the catch.

The tatva of the two manifestations is to be interpreted that one should receive and enjoy the phases of richness and poverty alike. In Ramatatva, ‘Rama is the incarnate of Lord Vishnu, who came onto the earth as a human being. He was born to Dasaratha, the emperor of Ayodhya.

Quite naturally, the Prince had the privilege of experiencing the comforts of royalty. He was offered with the Crown of Ayodhya and slipped from the same in a fraction of second with the active connivance of his step mother Kaikeyi. He was neither on cloud nine when offered the Crown, nor dispirited when deprived of it. He obeyed the orders of his father and went to the forest.

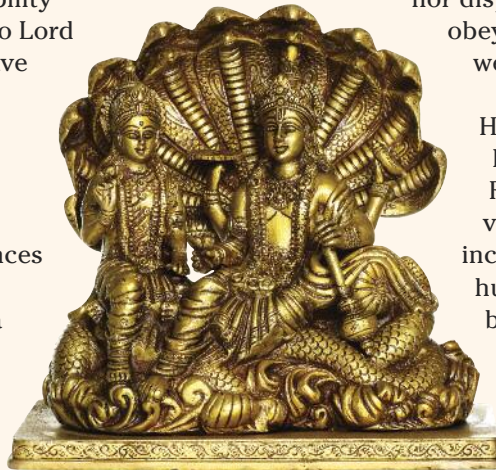
He was down in the dumps when his wife was abducted by demon Ravana and sought the help of vanaras. Even though God incarnate, he behaved like an utter human being. The acts of Rama may be interpreted as of the trio Gods. When Rama was following Rishi Vishwamitra, with the touch of his toe a stone was turned into a lady, named Ahalya, who was relieved from the curse of her husband Gautama Maharshi.

This event may be considered as a creation like Brahma. After completing the exile, Rama ruled this land for about 11,000 years. He proved an able administrator. During his reign people were healthy, contented and lived with complete peace and harmony. There was no evil, no war, no natural calamity or no diseases.

Rama ruled the whole earth without using military force as all kings submitted themselves to him.

This shows that Lord Vishnu was aptly and effectively performed by Rama. Last but not least, Rama obliterated the bad evil which was in the form of Ravana by killing him. At that time he played the role of a destroyer Lord Shiva. The philosophy of Jagadguru Aadi Sankara is monism. Succinctly, Rama lived like a complete man and stood as a role model to the human kind.

-K.S.N. Murthy, Bhavan's Journal April 30, 2014



Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Those who have conquered themselves...live in peace, alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, praise and blame...To such people a clod of dirt, a stone, and gold are the same...Because they are impartial, they rise to great heights.

-Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a senior leader of the Indian National Congress was one of the pioneers of the Indian Independence Movement. He was one of the scholar-statesmen of India and struggled to uplift the Indian masses. He undoubtedly was the pioneer among the architects of modern India, a leader of social and political reformists. Being one of the first generations of Indians to receive college education, Gokhale was respected widely in the Indian intellectual community. Mahatma Gandhi revered Gokhale as his guru.

Early Life

Born in Kothluk, a village in Maharashtra, on May 9, 1866, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was raised in the home of his maternal grandfather. This village was not too far from Tamhanmala, the native town of his father, Krishna Rao, a farmer by occupation who was forced to work as a clerk due to the poor soil of the region. His mother, Valubai, also known as Satyabhama, was a simple woman who instilled in her children the values of religion, devotion to one's family, and caring for one's fellow man.

Education

Supported by his elder brother and sister-in-law, Gokhale managed an education at Rajaram High School in Kothapur. Due to his respect for his brother and recognition of the compassion with which he was treated, Gokhale learned the value of self-sacrifice to avoid asking for more material support. At times he went without meals and studied by the light of street lamps to save as much money as possible. A hardworking student, he moved on to college and graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay in 1884 at the age of 18, earning a scholarship of Rs 20 per month in his final year. The education influenced Gokhale's life in many ways. Primarily, his understanding of the English language allowed him to express himself without hesitation and with utmost clarity. Also,




his appreciation and knowledge of history instilled in him a respect for liberty, democracy, and the parliamentary system.

The Teacher

After graduation, he moved on to teaching, and took a position as an Assistant Master in the New English School in Pune. Among many achievements which testify to his talent and passion for teaching, perhaps the greatest of them all was a compilation, a book of Arithmetic in collaboration with a colleague, N.J. Bapat, which became a widely used and widely translated textbook across the country. Gokhale moved on to become a founding member of Fergusson College in Pune in 1885 with colleagues in the highly honoured Deccan Education Society. He pledged twenty years of his life to this college, as a teacher and board member. So apt was he at teaching subjects of any variety, that he was known as the "Professor to Order."

Public Life

The year 1886 saw the entry of Gopal Krishna Gokhale into public life. At only 20 years of age, he delivered a public address concerning "India under the British Rule" and was applauded for his expression and command of the English language. Gokhale soon moved on to managing public affairs. While contributing articles to the English weekly Mahratta, he was seduced by the idea of using education as a means to awaken patriotism among



Due to his respect for his brother and recognition of the compassion with which he was treated, Gokhale learned the value of self-sacrifice to avoid asking for more material support. At times he went without meals and studied by the light of street lamps to save as much money as .

the people of India. Just as this idea was enveloping Gokhale was promoted to Secretary of the Deccan Education Society. Once in the limelight, there was no looking back. After being given charge of the Bombay Provincial Conference in 1893, he was elected to the Senate of the Bombay University.

In time, Gokhale came to devote all his spare time to the causes of the common man: famine, plague relief measures, local self-government, land reform, and communal harmony. As a member of the Pune Municipality, twice elected its President, Gokhale continued to strive to solve the problems of the poor, and those who came to him with grievances concerning water supply, drainage, etc. They were quite pleased with the practical manner in which he dealt with the problem. Gokhale also published a daily newspaper entitled Jnanaprakash, which allowed him to voice his reformist views on politics and society.

The Man for the Masses

In 1905, he founded the Servants of India Society, which trained people to be selfless workers so they could work for the common good of the people. So strong was the desire to make a difference, that these kindred spirits vowed a simple life of dedication to these causes. Among the many things the organization did, there were the commendable services of helping victims of floods and famines, and taking the time to educate women in society, so that they too may have a voice. Many people influenced Gokhale and gave him the strength and discipline to bring his ideas to the realm of reality, but none more than Mahadev Govind Ranade, to

whom he was apprenticed in 1887. Ranade trained him for 15 years in all spheres of public life, and taught him sincerity, devotion to public service, and tolerance. These qualities, which Ranade helped instill in Gokhale, are those qualities which helped make Gokhale the man he is known today.

Swaraj

Gokhale visited England and voiced his concerns relating to the unfair treatment of the Indian people by the British Government. In one span of 49 days, he spoke in front of 47 different audiences, captivating every one of them. Before long, he was touted as the most effective pleader for India's cause. While Gokhale pleaded for gradual reforms to ultimately attain Swaraj, or self-government, in India, some of his contemporaries, comprising a radical element, wished to use force as a means of persuasion. Gokhale maintained his moderate political views and worked out some reforms for the betterment of India.

He was instrumental in the formation of the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909, which eventually became law. Unfortunately, the Reforms Act became law in 1909 and it was disappointing to see that the people were not given a proper democratic system despite Gokhale's efforts. The communal harmony he had longed for was shattered when he realized that the Muslim community was steadfast in considering itself as a separate unit. On the bright side, however, Gokhale's efforts were clearly not in vain. Indians now had access to seats of the highest authority within the Government, and their voices were more audible in matters of public interest.

Final Days

The years of hard work and devotion of Gopal Krishna Gokhale did much for the country of India, but sadly also took their toll on the health of this great leader. Excessive exertion and the resulting exhaustion only aggravated his diabetes and cardiac asthma. The end came peacefully on February 19, 1915. Pointing his finger toward heaven and then folding his hands respectfully, Gopal Krishna Gokhale made his final statement to an audience, a fond farewell.

**Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.culturalindia.net**

Tourism Vs Pilgrimage: Concepts and Consequences to the Environment

The concept of Tourism, which originated in the West, primarily refers to affluent people in developed countries making pleasure trips to places of natural scenic beauty, man-made wonders etc. This pastime is now becoming popular in developing countries and also with middle class of the society. When we see the tourists we more often than not come across people who have an urge to enjoy at any cost, tendency to spend lavishly and wastefully, and are unaware of the value and importance of Nature on which their very life depends. In addition, tiresome fast track journeys, untimely and unhealthy food habits and lack of proper sleep invariably cause damage to the health of the individual also. Medical tourism is another serious dimension added to tourism. While the government gets money and the touring patient gets cured, the land of treatment suffers badly because modern medicine and surgery create huge quantities of toxic wastes that are hazardous to the environment, particularly when they are not properly treated and disposed. Internationally Tourism industry is one of the biggest industries in the world that generates an income of as much as 1 trillion dollars (60, 00,000 crores). Tourism attracts lot of people due to

attractive travel brochures, picture postcards, holiday packages and other commercial advertisements. Tourism being a huge money spinning activity, environment cannot be stopper. Moreover the government is the main promoter of tourism because it earns a lot of money and also foreign exchange at national level.

In contrast, at least theoretically, pilgrimage is undertaken on a moral and spiritual ground. All religions, being value based, promote a simple and eco-friendly living for the people. For example pilgrimage involves simple living, absolute cleanliness and holy thoughts. The mind and body are to be kept impeccably pure and absolute celibacy, austerity and sobriety are to be practiced. Total abstinence from all vices like alcohol, tobacco and non-vegetarian food is stipulated. Irrespective of the religion, it is a test of the patience, belief, spirit of sacrifice, humbleness, kindness, brotherly love, love towards God, readiness to give up all material comforts and conveniences for the will and plan of God. Thus a pilgrim is likely to cause much less damage than a tourist to the environment. This may be understood better from the table below, which lists the conceptual differences between tourism and pilgrimage.

With increasing population, increasing communications and availability of surplus money there is a mass movement of people whether it is tourism or pilgrimage. Increased travel means increased vehicle pollution, increased garbage containing plastics, other toxic waste etc leading to exponential increase in pollution levels of air, water, sound etc. The most unfortunate development now is that a pilgrim also is developing a tourist mentality with a demand for more comfort, wasting more money and causing greater damage to the environment. With the sharp distinction between a tourist and pilgrim vanishing, there is greater danger than before to the environment. But definitely we can and should try to preserve the earth and delay the inevitable, just as a human being, knowing fully well that one day he will die, makes all out effort to live longer and healthy.

* First we need to remind ourselves that India's density of population is 370/sq.km as against 40/sq.km of US and 140/sq.km of even the



Conceptual Differences

Tourism/tourist	Pilgrimage/pilgrim
Sensory pleasure	Pleasure of the soul
Ego boosting	Ego busting
Temporary enjoyment	Lasting Satisfaction
All age groups	Generally old people
May be theist or atheist	Necessarily theist
Fast track	Slow and steady
No religious connection	Religious in nature
Done with Surplus money	Done through austerity
Done with selfish motive	Done with a spirit of sacrifice
Creates turbulence	Creates peace
Maximum comfort	Minimum comfort
Maximum budget	Minimum budget
Maximum Pollution	Minimum pollution
Anti-health	Pro health
Inimical to Environment	Eco-friendly

highly populated China.

- ※ We need to change our concept of ‘development’ promoted by vested interests of both developed countries as well as our own country and invoke the best of our ancient sciences, culture and wisdom.
- ※ We need to give a pause to industrial development and clean up our cities, rivers, pilgrim centers and bathing ghats, with a fraction of cost spent being spent on for several wasteful expenditure.
- ※ We should ban all wasteful practices in health, education and entertainment followed by developed countries and reintroduce to the extent possible our own ancient practices of simple and eco-friendly living.
- ※ We should ban the manufacture of dangerous and toxic materials produced wastefully by the industry and change to biodegradable alternatives.



**-T.S. Ramakrishna,
Founder and
Secretary,
Earthsystem
Sciences
Awareness and
Research
Association**

(ESWARA) retired as Director and Head of Geophysics Division of the Southern Region, Geological survey of India (GSI), Hyderabad. He has made major contributions to the GSI in the field of exploration geophysics during his more than three decades of service, which got him the Government of India’s prestigious National Mineral Award. He worked as WAPCO’s (Govt. of India) groundwater expert in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He has authored two books and several papers and is a Fellow of the Geological Society of India and the Indian Geophysical Union.

The above lecture abstract is a part of series of abstracts on various disciplines of ancient Indian science as well as related aspects in modern science that have a bearing on the present society.

Source: www.eswaraindia.org



Indian Composite Culture—Religions

Radhakrishnan, in his well-known book 'Religion and Culture' remarks, "The need for religion for a system of thought, for devotion to a cause which will give our fragile and fugitive existence significance and value does not need much elaborate argument. It is an intrinsic element of human nature. The question is what kind of religion? Is it a religion of love and brotherhood or of power and hate? Secular ideologies ask us to worship religion or no religion but what kind of religion? "Religions which make for division, discord and disintegration and do not foster unity, understanding and coherence, play into the hands of the opponents of religion". The necessity for a religion which clearly satisfies the above requirements is the need of the hour. Tolerance and acceptance of other religions are the prime requisites. India is a multi-lingual country and has in its fold, at present, eight different religions. They are, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. The religions Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are off shoots of Hinduism and thus indigenous to the country. The other four are of foreign origin. Judaism was the first to arrive in the country. While the religions preach love, compassion, universal brotherhood etc, sometimes passions lead to community clashes, emphasising the need for inter-religious understanding.

Hinduism

Hinduism is the main religion of our country, India. It will perhaps be more apt to add that Hinduism is a doctrine and way of life. The words Hindu and Hinduism are not Indian in origin. Hinduism is the popular name given to the most ancient of all the living religions today and therefore the mother of all religions; Sanatana Dharma, a religion based on the eternal principles of truth and values in life.

Vedanta is the best among the names given to the religious faith of the Hindus. Asia comprises half the population of the world and here the religions and moral ideas followed are mostly those that originated in India. It is true, ours is a secular state but that does not imply that the majority of the people following Hinduism should give up the spiritual and moral doctrines in which they have been brought up and which forms the basis of their culture. Hinduism derives its strength from the great and sacred literature, the Vedas and Upanishads, the most ancient literature of man. They deal with the fundamental values of life. What is man? What is the nature of this Universe.

What is the destiny of man? What is the relationship between man and man? These questions, which concern the mystery of existence were answered by the seers and sages as a result of study, and contemplation. Great sages discovered such truths as the spiritual relationship between soul and soul, between individual spirit and the father of all spirits etc. and invite us to follow them and have these truths tested by ourselves. "It is open to every one of us to enter into this great discipline, this great spiritual adventure in the context of our daily life". Hinduism says "Man is essentially Divine; hence the possibility of its experience or realisation". The 'ATMAN' has to be realised and "this is the very centre, very vital conception of Hinduism" said Vivekananda. Thus the whole concept of Hinduism is a constant struggle to become perfect, to become Divine, to reach God and to see God.

Max Muller says "It is surely astounding that such a system as Vedanta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers thousands of years ago, a



system that even now makes us feel giddy. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heriditus, Plato, Kant or Hegel has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms and lightnings. Stone follows stone. But it is clearly seen that in the beginning, there can have been but one, as there will be, but one in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman”.

We have the following in the Kathopanishad. “The self-existent Lord fashioned the sense organs and mind of man with the initial defect of an outgoing tendency. Therefore man saw things of the external (not self) world, but not the self within. A certain wise man, however, impelled by his desire to seek immortality turned the direction of the energies of his senses and mind inward and realised the Pratyayatman (the immortal and Divine inner self). Thus started man’s search for God, truth and fulfilment, forming a new science, Adyatmavidya, the science of the Atman “the science of the study of man and in depth “the science of God” providing a contribution to human knowledge”.

The authoritative sources of Hinduism are the classics, the Sruti and the Smrti. The four Vedas are the fountain head, the source of the religion. The secondary scriptures, the Smrtis, the Ithihasas, the Puranas, the Agamas and the Darsanas are only developments of the Vedas. The making of man as a perfect spirit like God and one with him, is the common aim of the scriptures. The formula for the Hindu view of life is the Dharma-Artha-Kama-Moksha doctrine. Dharma is righteousness; Artha wealth, Kama desire and Moksha the liberation of the spirit from the bonds of flesh. These four are the Purusharthas or the ends of life. Artha and Kama are to be within the limits of the Dharma law. “Thus Hinduism does justice to the flesh as well as the spirit of man”.

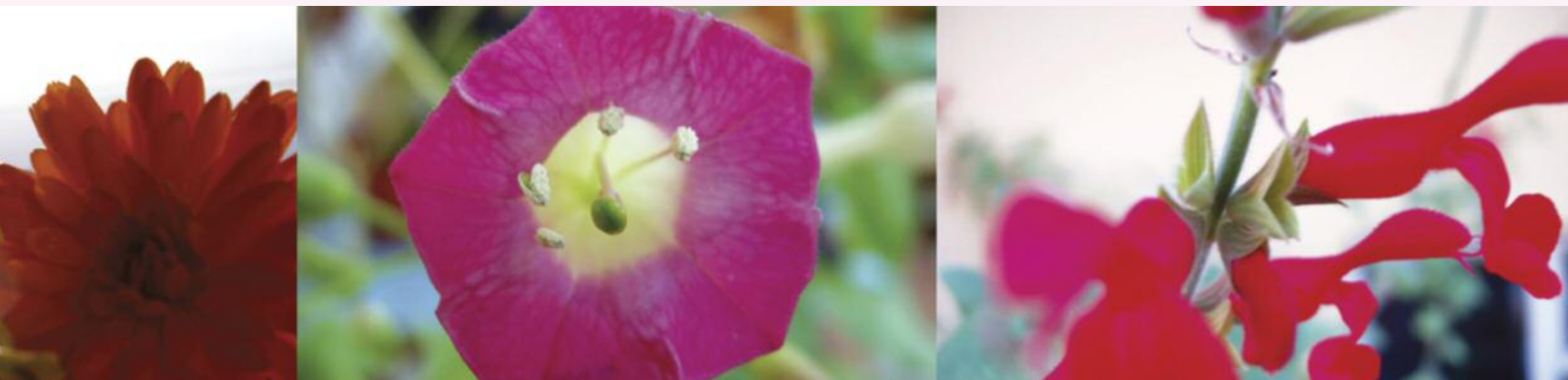
The cardinal virtues are purity (Saucum), self-control (Samyama), detachment (Asanga or

Vairagya), truth (Satyam) and non-violence (Ahimsa). At the other end, the sins are six. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya, which must be avoided.

The spirit of tolerance, harmony of human life with all created beings, the true balancing of Dharma, Artha and Kama in this life, the cultivation of Dama, Dana and Daya as essential qualities of man, the belief in the law of moderation; these are the aspects of Hinduism which are facing challenges today in this age of modern, science and technology world; but their aspects will never

diminish. There is a prevailing notion that the main teaching of Hinduism through Vedanta is retirement from activities of the world. Nothing can be further from the truth. Vedanta does advocate renunciation but this renunciation is of attachment, not abstention from work or duties. The much talked of word Sanyasa is meant only giving up of selfish desires and not giving up action. “Vedanta lays the greatest emphasis on duties in co-operative life and activities and in general interest. It produces the force to reduce our selfishness, egoism, attachment to pleasure and fear of pain”. Vedanta emphasises the clear distinction between the body (the ‘I’) and the soul. A virtuous and pure heart is needed to see the soul within us. The sages of yore first sought an answer to the question ‘was there a first cause?’ This has been raised in the sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad. The world surely did not come out of nothing. The Sages believed that the causeless beginning was Sat i.e. Being with consciousness. This expanded and became light, sound, water and all living forms of the world. Vedanta has no quarrel with the biological theory of evolution based on the spontaneous biogenesis of organic matter. The unexplained factor which brought about this matter first is Sat.

The rather controversial doctrine in Hinduism is



Maya. The mistaken impression given is that the doctrine lays down that the world is not real. Far from truth. All the philosophers who stood by the doctrine of Maya and taught it, definitely felt that the world is real. "They took this world and this life and the law of Karma to be hard realities. If they still taught the doctrine of Maya, that everything is an illusion created by the Lord, it means that the apparent with its false values is different from the real and nothing more. When we say 'I want', 'I came' it is really the act of the soul that brings about the activities of the body. The Lord is a reality and so too are the souls that are his bodies. The Paramatman, the overall soul, permeates and supports all souls, but that does not mean that the latter is unreal. Though the in-dwelling Atman is one and the same, each soul lives a life of separate individuality without a sense of identity with others. Herein is the illusion referred to as Maya; to overcome is the aim of the Vedanta" (Rajaji).

Attainment of Moksha is the aim of Hinduism. Moksha is not a place or place of pleasure. It is a state of freedom from the bondage of Maya. When the realisation comes that the soul and the in-dwelling supreme soul are one and the same "the shadow merges in the light. This is Moksha. This Sanskrit word means "liberation". Purity of life and self-control qualify the individual soul to attain this Moksha". The Law of Karma, expounded forcibly in Hinduism is the law of cause and effect. Just as in the scientific world, we have the law of action and reaction so too in the spiritual world, the law of Karma operates as the law of cause and effect. It is wrong to think of Karma as fatalism. "Fatalism is breakdown of faith in human effort which is not involved in Vedanta. Karma is the unalterable law of effect following previous causes. This is what distinguishes Vedanta from its half-brother fatalism, as it emerged in the west from the pagan philosophies. When a Hindu speaks of the decree of fate, the word he uses for fate is Vidhi which means law. He means thereby that one should expect only the fruit of one's action and nothing else. Far from under-estimating human efforts, Vedanta puts the highest value on it. It is not possible to do a thing and escape from its result. The law of Karma thus does not do away with free will but constitutes the charter of the true freedom. One cannot in Law be robbed of the fruits of one's action and thus the Law of Karma is the Magna Carta of free will. Industry and character will have their reward and

the Law of Karma guarantees it. Karma means work and Vidhi means law and thus Karma is not fatalism" (Rajaji).

One important aspect which distinguishes Hinduism from other religions is an extension of the law of cause and effect through many lives. "When death occurs the character of the life forms the initial start for the soul on its next journey. A fresh birth results with fixed tendencies. Thus on the basis of the immortal soul and the basis of personality, it can be claimed that no theory can be formulated more in conformity with known laws of nature than the Hindu doctrine of Karma. This is in conformity of the moral sphere of the law of conservation of energy, Karma being the counterpart of conservation of the scientific law in the spiritual world, since the soul continues to operate beyond death". Though past deeds have their effect in the next birth, the soul has the freedom to act and overcome material tendencies and strive to achieve liberation and this may be through many births for better or worse. "The battle is as long as eternity and the tedium is relieved by the loss of memory with each death. We are indeed blessed with the loss of memory with each death". Just as in Christianity there is room for grace through penitence and is not a mere gift of the Lord, it gets worked out through the suffering of pain and sorrow. References are available on request. (to be concluded...)



-Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, an Agricultural Scientist with Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, was associated with The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Coimbatore as Honorary Vice Chairman for a period of 22 years till 2003. During the 22 years, Dr. Rao had the unique opportunity to read the Bhavan's Journal from 1956 for the last 50 years (the store house of the history of Indian culture) covering over 300 issues and books and understand the history of the culture of the country from Rig Vedic times to the present day with its ups and downs in relation to social conditions.

Source: Cultural Heritage of India by Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, Impress, Coimbatore, India



Swami Vivekananda's Poems

Angels Unawares

I

One bending low with load—of life
That meant no joy, but suffering harsh and hard—
And wending on his way through dark and dismal
paths,
Without a flash of light from brain or heart
To give a moment's cheer—till the line
That marks out pain from pleasure, death from life
And good from what is evil, was well-nigh wiped
from sight—
Saw, one blessed night, a faint but beautiful ray of
light
Descend to him. He knew not what or wherefrom,
But called it God and worshipped.

Hope, an utter stranger, came to him, and spread
Through all his parts, and life to him meant more
Than he could ever dream, and covered all he
knew,
Nay, peeped beyond his world. The Sages
Winked, and smiled, and called it 'superstition'.
But he did feel its power and peace
And gently answered back—'O Blessed
Superstition!'

II

One drunk with wine of wealth and power
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on
His maddening course, till the earth, he thought,
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden, and man,
The crawling worm, was made to find him sport,
Till the thousand lights of joy, with pleasure fed,
That flickered day and night before his eyes,
With constant change of colours, began to blur
His sight, and cloy his senses; till selfishness,
Like a horny growth, had spread all o'er his heart;
And pleasure meant to him no more than pain,
Bereft of feeling; and life in the sense,
So joyful, precious once, a rotting corpse between
his arms,
Which he forsooth would shun, but more he tried,
the more
It clung to him; and wished, with frenzied brain,
A thousand forms of death, but quailed before the
charm.

Then sorrow came—and Wealth and Power
went—
And made him kinship find with all the human
race
In groans and tears, and though his friends would
laugh,
His lips would speak in grateful accents—'O
Blessed Misery!'



III

One born with healthy frame—but not of will
That can resist emotions deep and strong,
Nor impulse throw, surcharged with potent
strength—
And just the sort that pass as good and kind,
Beheld that he was safe, whilst others long
And vain did struggle 'gainst the surging waves.

Till, morbid grown, his mind could see, like flies
That seek the putrid part, but what was bad.
Then Fortune smiled on him, and his foot slipped.
That ope'd his eyes for e'er, and made him find
That stones and trees ne'er break the law,
But stones and trees remain; that man alone
Is blest with power to fight and conquer Fate,
Transcending bounds and laws.

From him his passive nature fell, and life
appeared
As broad and new, and broader, newer grew,
Till light ahead began to break, and glimpse of
That
Where Peace Eternal dwells—yet one can only
reach
By wading through the sea of struggles—courage-
giving came.

Then, looking back on all that made him kin
To stocks and stones, and on to what the world
Had shunned him for, his fall, he blessed the fall,
And, with a joyful heart, declared it—'Blessed
Sin!'

**Source: *In search of God and Other Poems* by
Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama,
Publication Department, Kolkata**

India's Disrupted Democracy

New Delhi: India's 15th Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament) passed into history ignominiously this month, following the least productive five years of any Indian parliament in six decades of functioning democracy. With entire sessions lost to opposition disruptions, and with frequent adjournments depriving legislators of time for deliberation, the MPs elected in May 2009 passed fewer bills and spent fewer hours in debate than any of their predecessors.

As if that were not bad enough, the final session witnessed new lows in unruly behavior, with microphones broken, scuffles in the well of the house, and a legislator releasing pepper spray to prevent discussion of a bill he opposed. In the latter incident, the Speaker was rushed, choking, from her seat, and three asthmatic MPs were taken to the hospital, prompting the offender to explain that he was acting in self-defense against those who sought to prevent him from engaging in less exotic forms of disruption.

To those of us who sought election to Parliament in order to participate in thoughtful debate on how to move India forward, and to deliberate on the laws by which we would be governed, the experience has been deeply disillusioning.

To be sure, democracy has proved to be an

extraordinary instrument for transforming an ancient country—one featuring astonishing ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity, myriad social divisions, and deeply entrenched poverty—into a twenty-first-century success story. Only democracy could have engineered such remarkable change with the consent of the governed, and enabled all to feel that they have the same stake in the country's progress, equal rights under its laws, and equal opportunities for advancement. And only democracy could defuse conflict by giving dissent a legitimate means of expression. Some observers express astonishment that India has flourished as a democracy; in fact, it could hardly have survived as anything else.

But the “temple of democracy,” as Indians have long hailed their parliament, has been soiled by its own priests, and is now in desperate need of reform. Parliament's functioning has become, to most Indians, an embarrassment and, to many, an abomination. People turn on their televisions and watch in disbelief as their elected representatives shout slogans, wave placards, scream abuse, and provoke adjournments—indeed, do almost anything but what they were elected to do.

The result is that most Indians consider Parliament a colossal waste of time and money. After all, its dysfunction not only cheapens political discourse; it also delays essential legislative business. Bills languish, policies fail to acquire the legal framework needed for implementation, and governance slows.

The errant MPs are not just betraying their voters' confidence; they are also betraying their duty to the country and discrediting democracy. But the complacency with which the political establishment accepts the disruption of Parliament suggests that even experienced politicians do not understand this.

Because a parliamentary system usually results in predictable outcomes, with the ruling majority typically getting its way, India's opposition MPs (and any government MPs who disagree with the cabinet's position on a specific issue) prefer disruption to debate. And this is greeted on both sides of the aisle with a shrug, as if intentionally drowning out one's colleagues with shouted slogans were just another parliamentary maneuver, as valid as a filibuster or an adjournment motion.



Love the Bank, Hate the Banker

New Delhi: Public discourse is rarely nuanced. The public's attention span is short, and subtleties tend to confuse. Better to take a clear, albeit incorrect, position, for at least the message gets through. The sharper and shriller it is, the more likely it is to capture the public's attention, be repeated, and frame the terms of debate.

Consider, for example, the debate about bank regulation. Bankers are widely reviled today. But banking is also mystifying. So any critic who has the intellectual heft to clear away the smokescreen that bankers have laid around their business, and can portray bankers as both incompetent and malevolent, finds a ready audience. The critic's message—that banks need to be cut down to size—resonates widely.



Bankers can, of course, ignore their critics and the public, and use their money to lobby in the right quarters to maintain their privileges. But, every once in a while, a banker, tired of being portrayed as a rogue, lashes out. He (it is usually a man) warns the public that even the most moderate regulations placed on banks will bring about the end of civilization as we know it. And so the shrillness continues, with the public no wiser for it.

A more specific example drives home the point. A significant number of banks operated at very high levels of leverage prior to the recent crisis, with debt/equity ratios of 30-1 (or more) in some cases, and with much of the debt very short-term. One might reasonably conclude that banks operated with too little equity capital, and too little margin of safety, and that a reasonable regulatory response would be to require that banks be better capitalized.

But this is where the consensus breaks down. The critics want banks to operate with far less leverage, especially regarding short-term borrowing; indeed, some want all-equity banks, so that the system becomes safe. The bankers retort that they must pay a higher return on any additional equity that they issue, so that more equity would increase their cost of capital, forcing them to raise interest rates on the loans they make, which would reduce economic activity.

Neither side is quite right in their public arguments. The bankers do not seem to have internalized a fundamental axiom of modern finance: risk emanates from the assets that a bank holds. According to the Modigliani-Miller theorem, the mix of debt and equity that it uses to finance its assets does not alter its average cost of financing. Use more “cheap” debt, and equity becomes riskier and costlier, keeping overall financing costs the



same. Use more equity, and equity becomes less leveraged and less risky, which causes investors to demand lower returns to hold it, and again the overall financing cost remains the same. Put differently, given a set of cash flows from a bank's assets, the bank's value is not affected by how those cash flows are distributed among investors, so more leverage does not reduce the bank's cost of funding.

If their public argument is incorrect (and they must know it), why do bankers prefer short-term borrowing to long-term equity finance? The critics would say that it is because of the tax preference accorded to debt, or because banks are too big to fail.

But these arguments do not withstand scrutiny. If the tax deductibility of interest made debt attractive, then bankers should be indifferent between long-term debt and short-term debt. Yet they seem to prefer the latter.

Similarly, too-big-to-fail banks would not care about the failure risk associated with debt financing. But, again, it is unclear why they should prefer short-term debt. After all, if bankers were trying to benefit, would they not issue long-term debt, for which the default risk, and the gain from the implicit government guarantee, is high? Furthermore, why do small banks, which have no implicit backing from the government, also have so much leverage?

The critics' arguments about the benefits of equity are equally unsatisfying. Of course, given a set of bank assets, more equity would reduce the risk of failure. But failure is not always a bad thing; a banker operating an all-equity bank, with no need ever to repay investors, would be likelier to take unwarranted risk. The need to repay or roll over

debt imposes discipline, giving the banker a stronger incentive to manage risk carefully. For example, when Washington Mutual collapsed in 2008, following an uncontrolled lending spree (it was the largest bank failure in American history), it was not because equity holders decided to close it down, but because depositors did not trust it anymore. How much more value would Washington Mutual's management have destroyed if the bank had been all-equity financed?

In sum, there are tradeoffs. Too much short-term debt makes banks more prone to failure, while too much equity places little restraint on bankers' capacity to destroy value. The truth lies somewhere between the positions of today's strident critics and indignant bankers, which may be why the moderately leveraged bank has been a feature of Western economies for a thousand years. Our distaste for the banker must not be allowed to destroy the bank.

-Raghuram Rajan, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and the chief economic adviser in India's finance ministry, served as the International Monetary Fund's youngest-ever chief economist and was Chairman of India's Committee on Financial Sector Reforms. He is the author of *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, the *Financial Times Business Book of the Year*.



Copyright: Project Syndicate, www.project-syndicate.org

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

Vande Mataram

Since we do not live off our parallel pursuits, we are under no compulsion to make compromises. And, though we are amateurs, we strive to maintain high standards of professionalism.

-Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

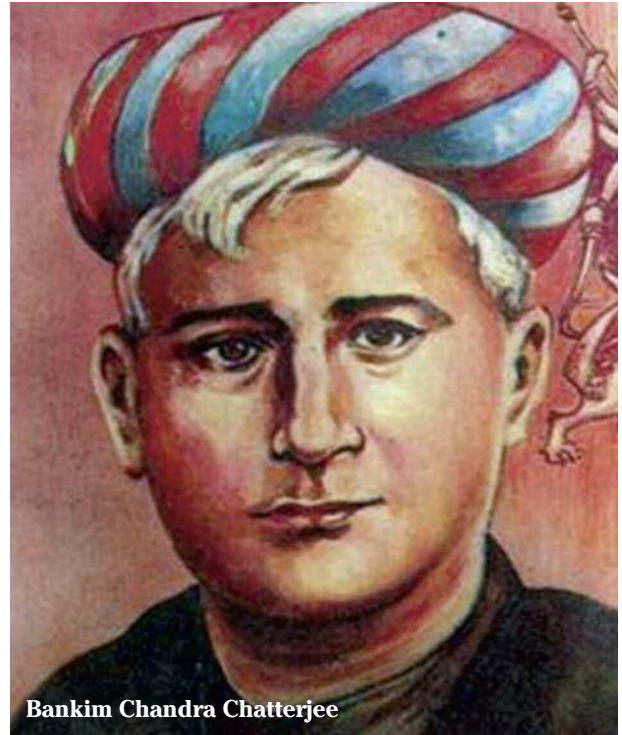
Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was one of the greatest novelists of India who gave the people the sacred 'mantra'—'Vande Mataram' *The National Song of India*. The Bengali Novel practically began with him. He also wrote philosophical works, which stimulated independent thinking. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was a literary pioneer and nationalist who had an exceptional ability to communicate with and arouse the masses.

Early Life

Born on 27 June 1838 in the village Knathalpara of the 24 Paraganas District of Bengal Bankim belonged to a family of Brahmins. The family was well-known for the performance of Yangas (sacrifices). Bankim Chandra's father Yadav Chandra Chattopadhyaya was in Government service. In the very year of his son's birth he went to Midnapur as Deputy Collector. Bankim Chandra's mother was a pious, good and affectionate lady. The word 'Bankim Chandra' means in Bengali '*the moon on the second day of the bright fortnight*'. The moon in the bright half of the month grows and fills out day by day. Bankim Chandra's parents probably wished that the honour of their family should grow from strength to strength through this child, and therefore called him Bankim Chandra.

A Man of Brilliance

Bankim Chandra's education began in Midnapur. Even as a boy he was exceptionally brilliant. He learnt the entire alphabet in one day. Elders wondered at this marvel. For a long time Bankim Chandra's intelligence was the talk of the town. Whenever they came across a very intelligent student, teachers of Midnapur would exclaim, "*Ah, there is another Bankim Chandra in the making*". Bankim Chandra finished his early education at Midnapur. He joined the Mahasin College at Hoogly and studied there for six years. Even there he was known for his brilliance. His teachers were all admiration for his intelligence. With the greatest ease Bankim Chandra passed his



Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

examinations in the first class and won many prizes.

He was not very enthusiastic about sports. But he was not a student who remained glued to his textbooks. Much of his leisure was spent in reading books other than his texts. He was very much interested in the study of Sanskrit. He would read and understand Sanskrit books on his own. Bankim Chandra's study of Sanskrit made him stand him in good stead. Later when he wrote books in Bengali this background of Sanskrit was of great help to him. There was no set rule for his study of books. It was enough that a particular book attracted his attention. He would pore over it for hours on end in some corner of the college library.

He used to spend most of the academic year in this way, reading books other than his texts. And as the examinations drew near he would race through the texts. But it made no difference for, as usual, he would pass in the first class, and win prizes. And then again he would keep away from texts.

The Marriage

Bankim Chandra was married when he was only

eleven and his wife just five years old! Within a year or two of his appointment as a Deputy Collector at Jessore he lost his wife. Bankim Chandra was only twenty two then. The death of his young and beautiful wife made him very sad. After some time he married again. His second wife was Rajlakshmi Devi. They had three daughters but no son.

As Deputy Collector

In 1856 he joined the Presidency College in Calcutta. He sat for the B.A. Examination along with eleven candidates. The Lieutenant Governor of Calcutta appointed Bankim Chandra as Deputy Collector. His father Yadav Chandra had also rendered service as Deputy Collector. According to his father's wishes Bankim Chandra accepted the appointment. He was then twenty years old. Having developed an interest in the study of Law he got through effortlessly in the B.L. Degree examination, too.

The Justice

Bankim Chandra was appointed Deputy Magistrate. He was in Government service for thirty-two years and retired in 1891. He was a very conscientious worker. Most of his officers were Englishmen. They were a proud lot for they were the ruling power of this country. Bankim Chandra never submitted to any of their proud, unjust or stubborn behaviour. He worked hard and with integrity. Yet he never got the high position that he so much deserved! Bankim Chandra would never sacrifice justice or self-respect. His self-respecting behaviour invited many such troubles and due to this his official career was full of such troubles. There were also some unhappy incidents in his personal life.

The Writer

When he was in Jessore, Bankim Chandra met a person, Dinabandhu Mitra. He was a renowned Bengali dramatist of the time. They became close friends. Later Bankim Chandra dedicated his 'Anandamath' to the memory of his dead friend Dinabandhu Mitra. In due course Bankim Chandra emerged as a great writer in Bengali. He wrote novels and poems. He wrote articles, which stimulated impartial thinking. He became well-known outside Bengal too. His novels have been translated into many Indian languages. Bankim Chandra first wrote poems. Then he wrote a novel in English. But after this he began to write novels in Bengali. Bankim Chatterjee was superb story-teller,

and a master of romance.

Bankim Chatterjee was also a great novelist in spite of the fact that his outlook on life was neither deep nor critical, nor was his canvas wide. But he was something more than a great novelist. He was a path finder and a path maker. Chatterjee represented the English-educated Bengalee with a tolerably peaceful home life, sufficient wherewithal and some prestige, as the bearer of the torch of western enlightenment. No Bengali writer before or since has enjoyed such spontaneous and universal popularity as Chatterjee. His novels have been translated in almost all the major languages of India, and have helped to simulate literary impulses in those languages.

Vande Mataram

***Patriotism is religion and
religion is love for India.***

Vande Mataram (I worship mother) became the mantra of nationalism and the national song. It gave tremendous impetus to the various patriotic and national activities culminating in the terrorist movement initiated in Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century. 'Vande Mataram' became the sacred battle cry of freedom fighters. It became such a source of inspiration that the British officers were enraged at the very mention of this. People were sent to prison just because they sang this song. 'Vande Mataram' has an honoured place in independent India. It keeps bright in the hearts of the people the ideal of dedication to our country. Throughout his life, Bankim wrote on social and political issues facing the society and the country at that time like widow remarriage, education, lack of intellectual development and freedom. He believed that by communicating with the masses he could unite them against the British.

Final Days

The British Government honoured him with the title "Ray Bahadur" in 1892. Though he wanted to write for long term but he was not able to devote many years to writing on a large scale. His health soon declined and he passed away on April 8, 1894 at the age of only fifty six.

**Source: www.calcuttaweb.com,
www.liveindia.com, www.FreeIndia.org,
www.indiavisitinformation.com,
www.indianetzone.com**

Ramayana in a Nutshell

Ramayana sung by Kusa and Lava at the Royal Court of Sri Rama

Sage Valmiki wrote the history of the life of Sri Rama in the form of a grand epic. His great poem is made up of seven parts—seven kandas—five hundred cantos—sargas—and twenty-four thousand verses or slokas. The great seer narrated in the poem not only the past events in Rama's life but also the incidents that were to occur later. Ramayana can be read and also sung as a melodious song in unison with the notes of Veena. It is a beautiful epic depicting in a wonderful manner, the nine emotional impulses of man's life, love, valour, mirth and humour, fear and terror, sorrow, anger, pity, surprise and disgust.

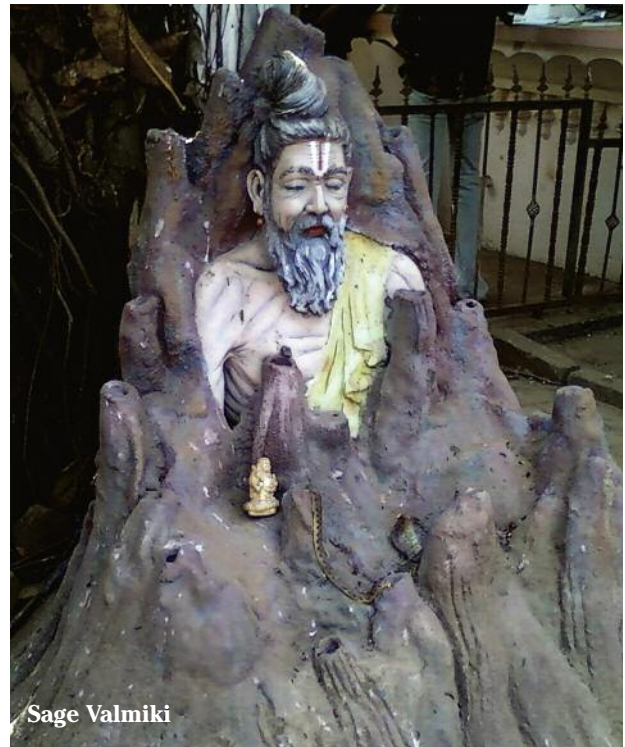
After completing the epic, Valmiki began to wonder how his poem could be made known to the people and whose talents and ability would be equal to this task. While Valmiki was thus thinking Lava and Kusa dressed in hermit's raiments came to greet him, their master, and touch his holy feet. The royal twins of handsome appearance were the inmates of the hermitage. They were well versed in the Vedas and scriptures and were the disciples of the sage and none could be more fit for the task. Valmiki taught them the great song of Ramayana, describing Rama's glory, Sita's life of sacrifice and the tragic fall of Ravana.

*“Recite ye this heroic song
in tranquil shade where sages throng
Recite it where the good resort
in lowly homes and royal courts.”
thus Valmiki instructed his disciples.*

Thus directed, the princes Lava and Kusa who were gifted with a rich and melodious voice sang Ramayana in the assemblies of sages and saints. They were well-versed in the art of music and its intricacies. Their voice was so rich that they could sing easily in all the three scales. They were

handsome like the gandharvas and they looked exactly like Rama in their face and appearance and looked like two images made from the original. Having sprung from the loins of Rama, they looked like two other Ramas. Their voice also resembled that of Rama in its richness and melody.

Lava and Kusa had mastered the whole Ramayana and they sang the great epic in the assemblies of



Sage Valmiki

sages and learned men. The great saints and sages while listening to the grand epic were moved to tears of joy by the beauty of the subject, by the richness of its poetry and by its melody and music. They exclaimed in ecstasy, “Well done, Well done.” They continued, “the poem is so true to facts and so vividly descriptive that the incidents narrated therein appear to be as real happenings before our eyes.” Thus they praised the Ramayana.



While the two princes were thus reciting with melodious music the great song, a sage stood up and presented the singers with a water-bowl and another sage with a happy smile of love gave them clothes to wear. A third one gave them deer-skin to sit upon and a fourth sage a fine water-pot. Still another one gave an axe to split the wood and a certain sage gave them a girdle of muncha grass. Coloured clothes, fine sacred threads, beautiful planks for seats and many other similar things were presented to Lava and Kusa by the sages who had assembled to hear the Ramayana. Then all the holy men gave them their benediction in one voice. They blessed them with long life and granted them several boons.

They exclaimed in one voice. "This epic is beautifully made and will serve as the chief support for poets and minstrels in future. This poem is sure to bless people with long life and good progeny."

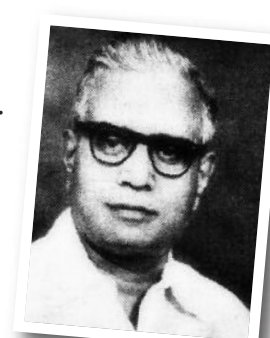
The great epic was once sung by the princes in the streets of Ayodhya, the capital of Sri Rama, and it was very well applauded and admired. They were then invited to the palace to render the great song before Sri Rama. Seated on his golden throne, surrounded by his brothers, ministers and courtiers and casting a loving look at the royal twins, who were not only charming in appearance but also modest, Rama directed Lava and Kusa to sing the great poem. Thus enthused and encouraged, the two brothers sang very sweetly the great epic in complete unison with melodious notes of veena, and the hearts of all in the royal assembly were filled with joy. The song sent a thrill and gladdened the minds and hearts of all the people. They sat spell-bound by the sweet music and rich poetry of Ramayana and there was perfect stillness in the air. Rama then turned to his brothers and said, "O, Lakshmana and Bharata, listen to the sweet music of these two singers, who have the auspicious marks of rulers of the earth.

Colourfully woven with the music of rich words, full of deep emotion and meaning, this great poem—Ramayana—will bestow goodness and prosperity and welfare on me, on you and on every one who is fortunate to listen to it."

When all in the assembly were listening, deeply absorbed in the sweetness of the poem, Rama slowly and softly glided down from his throne, step by step, and sat along with other people very near the singing brothers and enjoyed the narration of the Ramayana.

(To be continued....)

-Prof. N.S. Mani learnt Sanskrit, at the feet of his revered father, a great scholar, well versed in our ancient lore. Of all the ancient texts, Valmiki Ramayana fascinated him and he translated Ramayana and Sundara Kanda into English. Bala Kanda, the first book of Srimad Ramayana, describes in detail the birth of Sri Rama, his boyhood, his superlative prowess, his benevolence to all, his training under the great sage Viswamitra, his magnificent feat of breaking the mighty bow of Lord Siva at Janaka's Court, his marriage with Sita and Parasurama's challenge and Sri Rama's victory. The book also describes vividly sage Viswamitra's incredible adventure and dedicated endeavour to rise to the spiritual status of Vasishta thus demonstrating by his example to what celestial heights human soul can rise.



Source: Sri Valmiki Ramayana Bala Kanda (Childhood Episode) by Prof. N.S. Mani, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay (Mumbai), India

Who Says it and How?

Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge: it is those who know little, and not those who know much, who so positively assert that this or that problem will never be solved by science.

-Charles Darwin

Winston Churchill once said that in any statement there are three aspects which matter. They are who is making that statement, how is s/he saying it and finally, what is said? Of the three, Churchill felt that the last is the least important.

Therefore when a big man makes a statement, the powers that be get energised to act! Reading a news item a few days ago about a statement by a great Sarkari technologist, I felt the future of our ancient medical care delivery system using nature's bounty of herbal drugs and the folk medicines in India, which have been the backbone of medical care for "times out of mind," has a bright future. This statement came from one of country's top Sarkari technologists, Sam Pitroda, in the presence of a business tycoon of Bangalore who is in western drug business, at the inaugural ceremony of a new private university wishing to research the Indian wisdom to be scientifically validated! Pitroda made the statement with all his governmental authority.

Now that Churchill's prediction could come true, I am very happy for the Indian wisdom that has found patronage at the highest level. I only hope that this becomes a reality sooner than later for the common good of mankind.

The present system of western reductionist chemical molecules in the treatment of diseases has become a curse with adverse drug reactions being the rule rather than exception. In the USA alone every week four Jumbo Jet load of people die of adverse drug reactions, one of the leading causes of death, deadlier than cancer and heart attack.

Sam Pitroda was advising the new University to get science out of our ancient "shastras". It is a bit too late in the day as German scientists, especially quantum physicists like Hans Peter Durr, the emeritus director of the famous Max Planck Institute, a Nobel Laureate, has already shown how important the Indian wisdom is? His invention that matter and energy are but the two faces of the same coin, which he initially called "duality," now he seems to prefer the Indian wisdom of Shankara's "Advaita" as a better name for the new science of quantum physics!

The world Academy of Authentic Healing Sciences, which is now 15 years old, (www.waahs.com), has been authenticating ancient methods successfully. It has a body of 15 world renowned scientists from all over the world. They publish their own journal (www.thejsho.com). Their good work has neither caught the imagination of the press in India nor the attention of our slumbering government.

I was so pleased reading the above news item and seeing the colour photographs of the event proclaiming to do just what is being done in many places, but this time the pronouncements are coming from the horse's mouth.

If Churchill were right it will take off for sure. Thank God for that, if pursued diligently and sincerely, this will be the saviour of mankind for sure. I have a couple of suggestions for the new university lest they should fall into the usual traps of aping western scientific methods applied to authenticate Indian wisdom wholesale.

The first and the foremost suggestion is about the difference between the western and eastern sciences. The research methodologies should be totally different. In the past there have been governmental efforts to study herbal drugs using the western method of trying to analyse the chemical contents of the herbal drugs on the same lines as reductionist chemical molecules of the western medicine. They came to grief as herbs should be studied as a whole and not in bits and pieces.

Sam Pitroda should make the scientists to understand this one line from the Vedas which tells it all. "This is a whole and that is a whole; if a bit is removed from the whole the bit becomes a whole and the whole remains a whole."

To give an example there are 43 scientific studies on garlic pearls in the world literature and all of them showed that garlic is good for cooking, but not as a medicine. The flaw was not in garlic but in the method. Garlic pearls did not contain garlic. They had sulfhydryl group removed to avoid the "bad" smell!. Without the SH group, the drug is not garlic at all.

To be useful as drug garlic has to be chewed raw in the mouth and kept there for a few seconds for the salivary trypsin to convert the inactive allanin in the garlic into active allicin.

This can only happen in the human mouth and the garlic has to be whole. Raw garlic has many, many

medicinal qualities in many illnesses especially the viral minor illness syndromes.

Kienzel at the late Rustum Roy's laboratory in the Penn State University has been able to get atomic hydrogen from salt water; leaving the water and the hydrogen as whole entities. They are using that atomic hydrogen for running motor engines. The usual western hydrogen extraction from water leaves only nascent oxygen behind (not water as whole), that eats into the motor engine. See the "Purnam idam and Poornam adaha" dictum elaborated above.

In addition, healing powers of herbal medicines, which are in very small doses in their natural habitat inside that herb, depend on the medicine's environment (inside the herb as a whole) rather than its pure chemical extract form.

Good example will be a tomato. Tomato, which has a small dose of Vitamin C in addition to many other important chemicals, is strongly bio-positive while Vitamin C in large doses in isolation is bio-negative. This process is called HORMESIS. Herbal drugs are useful in therapeutics for another vital reason.

Herbs as a whole are accepted by the body's inherent wisdom (healer inside) as food and used for the body's own good.

All reductionist chemicals that we use are treated by human body's wisdom as poison and sent to the liver to get destroyed, damaging the liver in the bargain. It is only what remains (after the liver tries to destroy the drug) that might work on the human body, the so called "first pass effect" in medical school pharmacology classes.

This was so elegantly demonstrated by a leading western scientist, Douglas C. Wallace, a professor of genetics using his latest MIT chip (mitochondrial chip). Douglas was able to show how almost all western chemical molecules are rejected by the body while herbal drugs—Tibetan and Chinese are accepted as food by the human body.

Although Indian Ayurveda is more authentic in the world, people like Wallace do not know thanks to our governmental apathy towards Ayurveda and its step motherly treatment.

Douglas's monumental study that gives credence to my forty-year-old hypothesis is published in one of the leading American journals, Genetics (2008; 179: 727).

The next warning I would like to give to the new university is that the time honoured western randomised controlled trials (RCTs) should not be the method for herbal research. RCTs have brought misery for mankind. West has recognised that fact.

Sir Michel Rawlins, the chief of UKs NICE (national institute of clinical excellence) was of the opinion, in one of his Harevian orations at the Royal College of Physicians in 2008, had this to say. "The RCTs have been put on an undeservedly high pedestal"! The future of herbal science depends on observational outcomes research, studying patient outcomes rather than body parameter outcome studies (cross sectional) like lowering blood pressure, sugar etc. The latter are only surrogate end points. Patient outcome is the final end point. The (in)famous multiple risk factor interventional trial, MRFIT study, clearly showed that while the so called risk factors can all be controlled successfully by reductionist chemicals the final risk of premature death is not altered; in fact, the drug treated people have higher precocious deaths!

The study has been a boondoggle after spending millions of dollars and twenty five years' follow up!

The new university must not try to ape the west and do copy-cat and me-too research, but must learn from the mistakes west committed in scientific research. John Ioannidis, a Stanford professor has shown that almost 95% of western reductionist research is flawed seriously!

Let India show the world the greatness of Indian wisdom of Ayurveda and the time honoured folk medicine in India which has been successfully used for nearly 1500 years, in India (Folk Medicine in India by O.P. Jaggi of AIIMS). Thank you, Sam Pitroda, for waking up to the reality to help the hapless disease sufferers.

I seem to have been like a child playing on the seashore, finding new and then a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.

-Isaac Newton

-B.M. Hegde, MD, FRCP, FRCPE, FRCPG, FACC, FAMS. Padma Bhushan awardee 2010. Editor-in-chief, The Journal of the Science of Healing Outcomes; Chairman, State Health Society's Expert Committee, Govt. of Bihar, Patna. Former Prof. Cardiology, The Middlesex Hospital Medical School, University of London; Affiliate Prof. of Human Health, Northern Colorado University; Retd. Vice Chancellor, Manipal University, Chairman, Bhavan's Mangalore Kendra.



Source: Bhavan's Journal, February 28, 2014



Big Man Yerranderie Sikh- Aussie Pioneer Bud Singh

Bud Singh was one of many thousands of Sikhs who came to Australia in the late 19th and early 20th century. Like thousands of his fellow countrymen and pioneer Sikh-Australians, he worked as a hawker, selling goods in small country towns. He was much loved by the local community and always made generous donations to the local hospital or charitable organisation.

But what makes Bud Singh unique is that in the early 1900s, he was made a life member on the Board of the Camden Hospital (in New South Wales), and now in the year 2014, the hospital will hold a special ceremony to reinstate a plaque to honour Bud Singh as one of its earliest benefactors!

According to historian Len Kenna, “Although numerous memorials of Sikh and Indian hawkers dot the countryside wherever you go in rural Australia, all of these memorials were erected posthumously—after the hawkers died. Bud is unique that he was acknowledged by the Yerranderie community during his lifetime—and so, the upcoming commemoration at Camden hospital will acknowledge all of the other Sikh and Indian hawkers, who contributed heavily to the development of Australia in the early 20th century.

Here is what we know of Bud Singh (probably “Budh Singh”).

He was born in Punjab in 1873 and reached Australia in 1899. He began work as a hawker on foot, who carried his goods in a basket, and soon earned enough to buy a horse cart. He then opened a general store in Yerranderie, invested in the local tin mines and went on to become quite wealthy.

Says Len Kenna, from the Australian Indian Historical Society, “Bud was very involved in the local community. He was a member of the Rifle Club, the Bike Riding Club, the Athletics Club, you name it. He was heavily involved with the Red Cross and was a donor to the Camden Hospital. He was even a judge at a local music competition, which tells you that he participated in everything.”

Len estimates that there were around 30,000 hawkers from the subcontinent (mostly from

Punjab, and generally Sikh), working in country-towns around Australia in the early 1900s.



Bud Singh

“Conforming to the pillar of Sikh belief to do good deeds and offer your services to the community, 90% of these hawkers donated part of their wages to the local hospital. The wonderful thing about Bud was that he managed to become a life member of the hospital board, and his name was painted alongside the Who’s Who of Yerranderie at that time. That in itself questions the White Australia policy as we know it”.

Bud was a very successful businessman, who frequently travelled to Sydney and Melbourne to turn over his merchandise. Local newspapers printed his boastful advertisements for “new, cheaper and better goods” and he was considered to be a part of the town’s elite.

Len adds, “Bud was a very colourful character though, who ruffled many feathers back then.” He ended up in court numerous times—all the proceedings are well documented—but Len feels that, “the fact that we find so much folklore about Bud means that he was a much loved character in Yerranderie— Camden area”.

An account written by Norman Dunn, who worked at Bud’s store, says “About 1904, he established a small general store in Yerranderie. Though he could neither read nor write, he could read figures and sign his name and the shop did well ... He paid me 12/- a week, and my family got all the purchases at cost price. Bud treated me well. I found him to be a good, kind man.” There is a humorous account by Norman Dunn, about a time that Bud felt “spurned”, but he avenged the insult to his “stature” quite publicly.

A meeting was convened at Yerranderie to invite Mr Griffiths, the Minister for Railways, to consider a new rail line between the town and Camden. The convenors invited the cream of the town to the meeting, but overlooked Bud Singh.

On his part, Bud Singh mounted his equally famous horse, “Paddy” and caught up with Mr Griffith even before he reached the venue and said, “Mr Griffiths, I big store-keeper Janderie. I welcome you Janderie.” It is fabled that he earned the nick-name “Me Big Man Yerranderie” thereon!

Another account by Jack Stein states this about Bud Singh: “His name is on the plaque of the Camden



District Hospital. He gave £100 a year to the hospital. He was a gentleman, an ex-cavalryman in the Indian Army, who lost one eye in an uprising in India.”

But these are just verbal accounts which may well be retelling pompous tales, particularly the story about Bud’s eye being lost in a war in India. Crystal Jordan, also from the Australian Indian Historical Society explains that there is a court trial about when Bud seemed to have lost his eye.

She says, “Five men attacked Bud in his general store one day, probably because he kept all his cash under the floor-boards. The attack was quite vicious and Bud was taken to the hospital immediately. In the ensuing court case, the attackers were charged with assault and the judge posted an astronomical bail amount of £500. To put this in context, that amount was virtually unpayable back then, since the average wage was around £2 per week in those days.

“But we believe that’s when Bud lost his eye, and not in any war, because he probably wouldn’t have been allowed to enter Australia if he was blind in one eye.” So even though there’s a photo of Bud Singh in some sort of military uniform, it cannot be attributed to any particular army or regiment since it has no identifying feature— perhaps it was Bud’s way of adding “more spice” to his personal story.

But a very important (and well documented) aspect of Bud Singh’s story is that although he came to Australia at the turn of the 20th century, and established himself as a very wealthy man, he went back to Punjab in 1926—never to return.

And maybe, just maybe, his descendants are alive and well, back in Punjab!

Crystal has found the records from back in 1926, that indicate that Bud left on a ship called Moldavia from the Woolloomooloo Wharf. The local newspaper states that “he was farewelled by many of his turbaned friends.”

But Len feels that Bud intended to return back to Australia, because he still had property in his name, back here. Says Len, “I believe that when Bud left in 1926, he had plans to come back, because he owned assets here, including some freehold land in Yerranderie. If he intended to go away for good, he wouldn’t have left his property unattended.”

Crystal’s research reveals that the authorities actually auctioned this land in 1952 to recover unpaid taxes for the previous 26 years. According to the records, the “Overdue Rates amounted to £6/12/6 (\$ 13.26 AUD) on the land at lot 57 Quiq Street and Dobson Street, Quiqtown, Yerranderie, NSW in 1952.”

There is also a note that states that when this land was auctioned, Bud Singh was deceased by then. Len believes that “Bud fell ill and died in Punjab, or perhaps, died on his way back home”. But Crystal believes that if his descendants are still living in Punjab, it shouldn’t be hard to identify Bud from the portrait photo she’s found.

“Bud left Australia when he was aged in his early 50s, and he was a very wealthy man, so someone in Punjab should be able to identify him from this picture,” she says hopefully. So while the search is on for Bud’s descendants in Punjab, many people in Australia are waiting for the commemoration at Camden Hospital in NSW, which is expected to be held sometime in May 2014. As Len and Crystal say, “Bud Singh wasn’t unique in that he donated to the local hospital. Almost all Sikh hawkers donated in cash, kind or in other ways.

“We know of a potato farmer in Victoria who donated 100 tonnes of potatoes to hospitals around the state, and also donated to the World War I efforts; there was Sunda Singh of Portland who donated regularly to the hospital and even paid for the whole hospital to be re-painted ... he paid for paint and labour, which must have been really expensive; and there was the Sondhu family from Harrow who donated their land for community use.

“So many Sikh-Australians did exactly what Bud did, and perhaps more. But now that the plaque will be reinstated in his honour at Camden Hospital, it will be a symbol of acknowledgement of all those other acts of kindness that have since, been forgotten.”

Len goes on to add, “This will become a symbol and a reminder of the Sikh contribution to the development of Australia at the turn of the 20th century. The tragedy is that Australia’s ethnic history hasn’t been documented and people mistakenly believe that the country was built merely on the contributions of the British or the Anglo Saxon people. But that’s not true. Punjab’s contribution to Australia’s development must be told and must be accepted as part of our history here.”

Crystal adds, “I think it is also very important for the Sikhs in Australia to know more about the heritage that they have inherited, so that they can embrace it and feel good about the contribution of Sikhs have made to the development of Australia.”

***-Manpreet Kaur Singh,
Executive Producer Punjabi
Program, Special
Broadcasting Service (SBS)
Australia, Guest writer,
columnist at Hindustan Times***





The Voice of Democracy

Back in 1984 it needed the assassination of his mother for Rajiv Gandhi of the Congress Party to completely sweep the general elections in India that immediately followed. Thirty years down the line, it needed another assassination—that of the rule of law under the regime of the Congress-led UPA coalition—for Narendra Damodardas Modi to make the 2014 Indian general elections his own. A record turnout in India, 66% plus, voted for absolute change.

Changing ‘expectations’ to ‘electroculation’ 2014
In an India that had become somewhat too accustomed to the perils and shenanigans of decades of coalition politics, this was the mother of

all elections given the shrill political hyperbole, the media’s 24/7 high-decibel razzmatazz and the enormous scale of voting that took place. Not since the 1984 elections has a single party secured an absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament—the Lok Sabha. Yet this was to be a seismic change in India’s constitutional history which could bring paradigm changes in the mode of political behavior from hitherto caste-based to aspirational politics.

At the end of the count, there was one man standing. Most of the opponents of Narendra Modi had been punched out by the electorate, several of them lay in ruins, completely routed from the very



The President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee administering the oath of office of the Prime Minister to Shri Narendra Modi, at a Swearing-in Ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 26 May 2014

turf they had made their own. Narendra Modi may have majorly played the development card during the elections, but the backing of the RSS from whose cadres he once rose to political stardom, certainly helped. Purveyors of appeasement and caste were the biggest losers. Narendra Modi had altered the rules of the game, perhaps forever. How poignant could Indian democracy, the largest in the world, be when a tea seller’s son from a humble background becomes the Chief Executive of the country, truly corporate style.

In an electioneering process that was Herculean from every conceivable angle, Modi achieved what

at the outset of the elections seemed an unlikely task, taking the Bharatiya Janata Party past the half-way mark of 272 seats single-handedly. In the process, the BJP-led NDA coalition ended up with 336 seats, BJP itself winning 282 of those. The result is not just about a political win, or about a stable Government. It is turning the caste dynamics in the political matrix, once and for all, an audacious script that is now the talk of every household in India and perhaps for much of the world, including the large far-flung Indian diaspora. An important factor was a vote against incumbency much to protest through the exercise of ballot to set in a new order, a revolt against excesses,

corruption and misgovernance that bedeviled the previous administration. Narendra Modi safely rode on the bandwagon of this aspirational chorus to a remarkable victory.

Financial growth that had been accelerating admirably in the first five years of UPA rule had begun to decelerate strikingly during its second term beginning 2009. India was no longer the economic tiger it had promised the world that it would be. Jobs began to wane from the market. Inflation took a vice-like grip on the common man's dreams. The aspiring Indian youth—65 per cent below the age of 35 saw their hopes for a better future, shattered. They needed to pin their hopes on someone that promised them a better future, and their families, security, preferably someone with a proven track record, and not known to have dipped his fingers in the cesspit of corruption. In Narendra Modi, the youth had finally found its icon.

Deserting Sinking Ships

In what was once her magical heartland, Mayawati of the Bahujan Samaj Party was left with not a single Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh. The party had won 21 in the 2009 general elections. There had been reports that over 3,300 BSP members joined the BJP's youth wing in the last three months prior to the elections. Mayawati, who has ruled the state of U.P. several times in the past, found it incredibly hard to withstand the strong winds of political change sweeping across the state. Even the dalits, her core constituency, deserted her.

Overall, about 5,900 cadres from the BSP, Samajwadi Party and the Congress in the state of U.P defected to the BJP in the last three months. The ruling Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in India with 80 Lok Sabha seats, saw its seat count abysmally down to 5 from 22 that it had won in 2009, so much so that the party had to per force disband its state unit and look for a new strategy.

The back of the Congress has been broken in Assam, and chief minister Tarun Gogoi who helmed the State Government since 2001, resigned, taking responsibility for the debacle of his party at the general elections. The BJP won 7 of the 14 LS seats in Assam, the same number that Congress had in 2009.

Mauled in the Lok Sabha elections and facing dissidence within, Bihar chief minister Nitish



Kumar also resigned. The BJP won 22 of the 40 seats in the state while its ally, the Lok Jan Shakti Party won 6. Nitish Kumar's party, the JD (U) got only 2 seats, a crunching loss. Kumar, who had been chief minister since November 2005, had chosen to opt out of his alliance with the BJP, once the party announced Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate and concurrently the biggest loser in the current elections. Today the bitterest foe of Nitish Kumar, Lalu Yadav, again a caste-based satrap and leader of the RJD, is waving an olive branch at Nitish Kumar.

Calls are also out for the resignation of Uttarakhand chief minister Harish Rawat, after his party, Congress, was routed in the state, with the BJP winning all five 5 LS seats. In 2009, the Congress had won all the seats, but once again it has been proven that five years is a long time in politics.

Staggering Figures

When Rajiv Gandhi swept the 1984 elections in India with 414 seats for the Congress, the highest ever for any party in India's Republican history, the BJP was making a modest entry inside Parliament with a party with two Lok Sabha seats. That year India's population at less than 700 million was about half of what it is today, and about 64 per cent of the electorate had turned out to vote. Apart from a brief flourish in political power by the Janata Party in the late 1970s, the Congress was well entrenched as India's principal political party at the time. Also, regional parties, apart from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) of N.T. Rama Rao 30 seats in 1984 general elections), were by and large yet to gain any momentum, though the next 30 years were to change all that.

The TDP, one of the BJP's two major allies gained 16 seats. The general elections of 2014 witnessed an all time high turnout—66.48 per cent—since

independence from British rule. Nearly 553.8 million voters out of the 833 million electorates turned out to vote. In the world's foremost democracy, over 80 per cent turnout was recorded in 7 out of 35 states and union territories that went to the polls. Nagaland topped with a whopping 87.82 per cent, while the union territories of Lakshadweep (86.61 per cent) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (84.07 per cent) followed close behind. Turnout in two of the largest eastern states remained high with West Bengal recording 82.16 per cent and Assam 80.07 per cent. In 13 of the states and UTs, voter turnout was between 70 and 80 per cent. In 12 states it was between 60 and 70 per cent. In the two largest states, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, turnout remained below 60 per cent—58.39 per cent in the former and 56.28 per cent in the latter. Yet, the numbers who voted in these states, 35.8 million in Bihar and 81.09 in U.P., were enough to turn the tide favourably in the way of the BJP.

The BJP won 22 of the 40 seats in Bihar, and an incredible, “beyond the party's wildest dreams”, 71 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh. Along with Rajasthan (25 out of 25), Madhya Pradesh (27 out of 29), Chhattisgarh (10 out of 11), Jharkhand (12 out of 14), the BJP simply swept the Hindi heartland, and bolstered its numbers with clean sweeps in Delhi (7 out of 7), Gujarat (26 out of 26) and Goa (2 out of 2). It is matter of debate if the victory margin could have been higher provided a greater percentage of the electorate had voted in U.P. and Bihar—two states that traditionally send out maximum migrants to other parts of the country.

As the election machinery rolled for weeks, and preparations went on for months, several interesting statistical trivia cropped up. For instance:

- * According to a study, anywhere between Rs 400 to Rs 500 per voter was spent by the Government, candidates and political parties, catapulting election expenses to anywhere around US\$ 5 billion, making this by far the most expensive Lok Sabha elections ever.



- * Cases were registered against 2.65 million people during the run up to the results.

- * Action under preventive laws was taken against 1.15 million people.

- * The total number of hamlets declared vulnerable was 75,237, and the number of

vulnerable electorate numbered 5.84 million.

- * Action against 218,227 intimidators was initiated.

- * A total of 428,368 non-bailable warrants were executed.

A new beginning

A new day lies ahead, for Modi, and the country alike. No more divisive policies nor caste-based configurations will bring in votes. No more Indian youth to be deceived by rabble rousing demagogues drawing wedges in the society in the name of religion.

India has to emerge a strong, united and integrated society by force of its own composite demographics, add skills to its labour force whether for the domestic market or overseas. The industry, already sympathetic to the new administration, will fall in line. Indian brains will form pools of knowledge to bridge the rich-poor disconnect and politics will play second fiddle to economics. Together they will take India to greater heights of success finding its rightful place in the global table as a truly emerging economy, a hard power out to play ball with the major stakeholders in global politics.

May be this is not all wistful thinking after all. It is the reality to be, emerging like a brilliant ray of light from the dark clouds of despondency and exhaustion which the Indian society had been burdened with for so long.

-Malay Mishra is India's Ambassador to Hungary. He was earlier India's High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago. This piece has been extracted from the latest issue of the bi-monthly publication, Amrit, published from Budapest by the Indian Embassy.



-Sayantan Chakravarty is Editor and Publisher of India Empire Magazine since the last 9 years. He was earlier with India Today magazine and Indian Express Newspaper. He is author of the books Global Indian Diaspora and Gadar Heroics.



American Delusions Down Under

NEW YORK – For better or worse, economic-policy debates in the United States are often echoed elsewhere, regardless of whether they are relevant. Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s recently elected government provides a case in point.

As in many other countries, conservative governments are arguing for cutbacks in government spending, on the grounds that fiscal deficits imperil their future. In the case of Australia, however, such assertions ring particularly hollow – though that has not stopped Abbott’s government from trafficking in them.

Even if one accepts the claim of the Harvard

economists Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff that very high public debt levels mean lower growth – a view that they never really established and that has subsequently been discredited – Australia is nowhere near that threshold. Its debt/GDP ratio is only a fraction of that of the US, and one of the lowest among the OECD countries.

What matters more for long-term growth are investments in the future – including crucial public investments in education, technology, and infrastructure. Such investments ensure that all citizens, no matter how poor their parents, can live up to their potential.

Government debt

General government gross financial liabilities as a percentage of GDP

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Australia	13.9	19.4	23.6	27.0	32.1	33.1	35.2	35.9
Austria	68.7	74.3	78.8	80.6	86.0	83.4	90.0	89.5
Belgium	92.6	101.0	100.9	104.1	106.4	106.7	106.8	105.4
Canada	74.7	87.4	89.5	93.6	96.1	93.6	94.2	93.6
Czech Republic	34.4	40.8	45.2	48.2	55.7	57.1	58.8	60.9
Denmark	41.4	49.3	53.1	59.9	59.3	55.2	56.5	59.3
Estonia	8.5	12.6	12.4	9.6	13.3	13.1	13.0	12.7
Finland	40.3	51.8	57.9	58.2	64.0	66.4	69.3	70.1
France	79.3	91.4	95.7	99.3	109.3	112.6	115.1	116.1
Germany	69.9	77.5	86.2	85.8	88.5	85.9	83.9	79.8
Greece	122.5	138.3	157.3	179.9	167.5	186.0	188.7	188.2
Hungary	77.2	86.4	87.7	86.8	90.0	89.4	90.3	90.1
Iceland	76.4	94.5	100.1	106.8	103.7	97.9	96.0	91.3
Ireland	50.1	71.1	88.5	103.9	127.8	134.6	133.1	132.0
Israel ¹	72.9	75.3	71.5	69.7	68.2	67.8	67.6	67.0
Italy	118.9	132.4	131.1	124.0	142.2	145.5	147.2	147.4
Japan	171.1	188.7	193.3	209.5	216.5	224.6	229.6	232.5
Korea	28.3	31.0	31.8	33.3	34.8	36.5	37.9	39.0
Luxembourg	19.3	19.2	26.2	26.3	30.2	30.3	31.6	33.5
Netherlands	64.8	67.6	71.9	76.1	82.7	86.2	87.5	87.7
New Zealand	28.7	34.0	37.8	41.3	42.4	40.6	39.3	38.1
Norway	55.2	49.0	49.3	33.9	34.7	35.6	36.7	39.6
Poland	55.5	57.6	62.2	63.0	62.3	63.8	56.8	58.4
Portugal	80.8	94.0	104.0	118.4	134.6	139.4	141.3	142.2
Slovak Republic	32.2	40.4	45.9	48.3	56.9	59.3	59.1	60.1
Slovenia	28.9	43.3	47.6	51.2	61.6	80.5	85.9	89.7
Spain	48.0	63.3	68.4	78.8	92.6	104.0	108.5	111.5
Sweden	48.3	50.2	47.3	47.6	46.7	47.1	48.5	48.3
Switzerland	48.3	47.5	46.2	46.3	46.5	46.2	45.9	45.3
United Kingdom	57.3	72.1	81.7	97.1	101.6	99.3	101.7	103.1
United States	72.6	85.8	94.6	98.8	102.1	104.3	106.2	106.5
Euro area (15 countries)	78.0	88.8	93.9	95.9	104.4	106.7	107.7	106.9
OECD-Total	79.9	91.2	97.5	102.1	107.1	109.5	111.1	111.2

Last updated: 4 June 2014; disclaimer: <http://oe.cd/disclaimer>

Note: For more information, see OECD Economic Outlook Sources and Methods (<http://www.oecd.org/eo/sources-and-methods.htm>).

1. Information on data for Israel: <http://oe.cd/israel-disclaimer>.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook No. 95 (database)

Definition and measurement

Measures of income inequality are based on data on people's household disposable income (see "Definition and measurement" in GE1 for more detail). The main indicator of income distribution used is the Gini coefficient. Values of the Gini coefficient range between 0 in the case of "perfect equality" (each person gets the same income) and 1 in the case of "perfect inequality" (all income goes to the share of the population with the highest income). Life expectancy data is discussed in "Definition and measurement" of indicator HE1.

Income inequality is an indicator of how material resources are distributed across society. Some people consider high levels of income inequality are morally undesirable. Others focus on income inequality as bad for instrumental reasons – seeing it as causing conflict, limiting co-operation or creating psychological and physical health stresses (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Often the policy concern is more focussed on the direction of change of inequality, rather than its level.

Income inequality varied considerably across the OECD countries in the late 2000s (EQ1.1, Panel A). Chile, Mexico and Turkey had the highest income inequality. OECD Anglophone countries had levels of inequality around or above the OECD average. Southern European and Mediterranean countries also tended to have higher than average inequality. Inequality was lower than average amongst the Nordic countries and continental European countries.

Since the mid-1980s, income inequality grew moderately across the OECD (EQ1.1, Panel B). However, the overall range concealed a diversity of experiences across countries and across the time period. Income inequality rose most strongly in the Czech Republic, Finland, New Zealand and Sweden. But the pattern of increasing inequality was

not general. Income inequality actually fell considerably in Greece, Ireland, Spain and Chile.

Poorer countries have tended to have higher income inequality (EQ1.2). The most unequal countries in the OECD included the several of the least rich: Chile, Mexico and Turkey. Luxembourg, Iceland and Norway were all relatively rich and relatively equal, but more unequal than expected given their high incomes (above the line in EQ1.2). The United States was quite unequal, given its riches (above the line in EQ1.2), while the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland managed to be quite equal, given their relatively low income (below the line in EQ1.2).

There was no strong tendency for countries that grew richer faster to have rising inequality (EQ1.3). Sometimes it is argued that rapid income growth requires paying a price – growing inequality. Alternatively, some suggest that rapid income growth brings a further gain in its wake: a more equal society. Neither of these two stylised facts is supported by the OECD income inequality data.

Further reading

OECD (2008), *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2011), *Causes of Growing Income Inequality in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, forthcoming.

Wilkinson, R. and K. Pickett (2009), *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, Penguin Books, London.

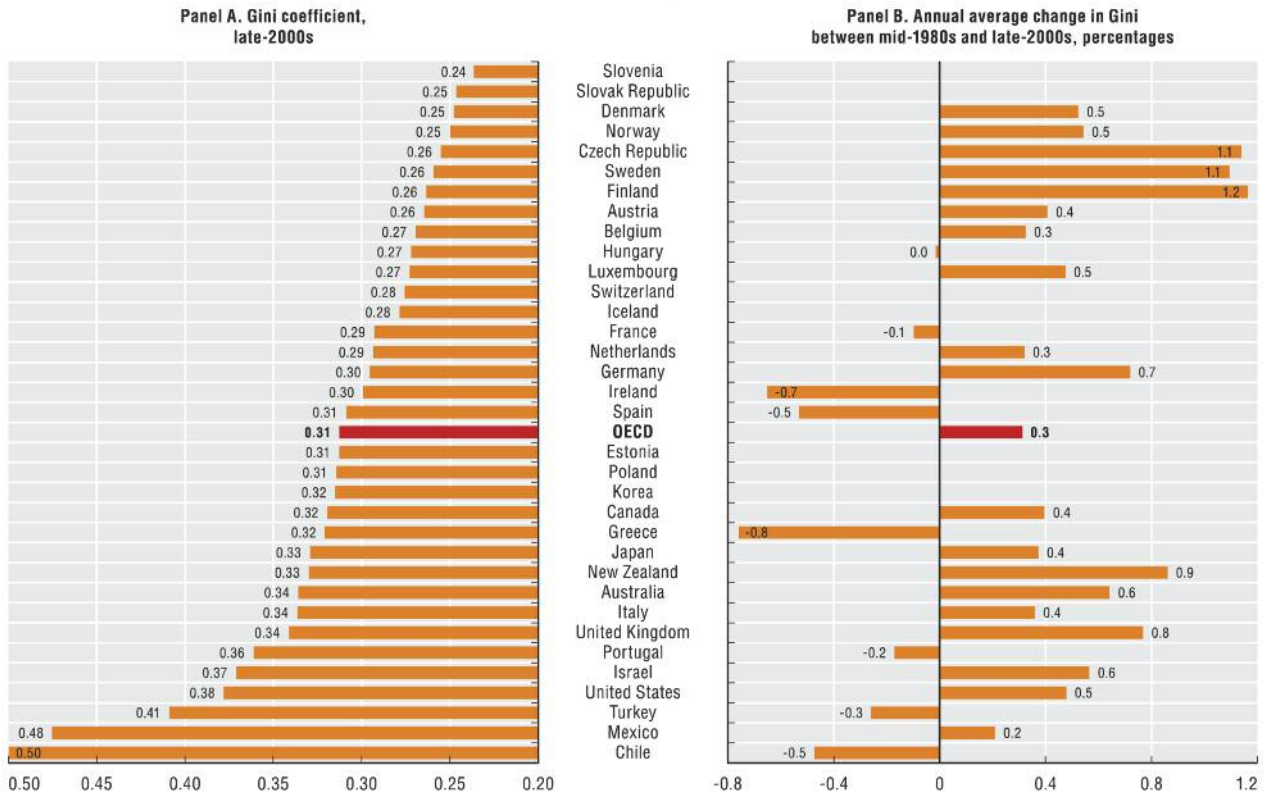
Figure notes

Figure EQ1.1, Panel A: Gini coefficients refer to mid-2000s for Greece and Switzerland.

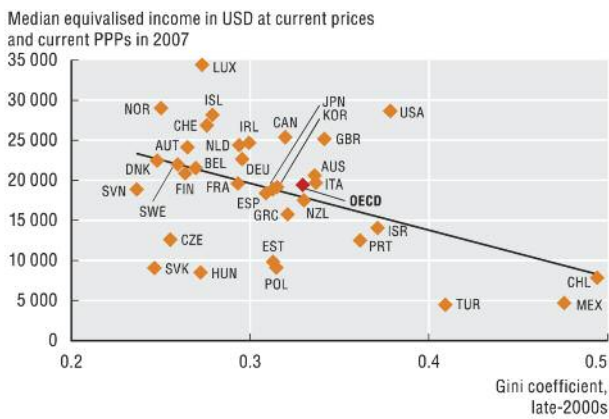
Figures EQ1.1, Panel B and EQ1.3: No changes available for Estonia, Iceland, Korea, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland. Changes are available from mid-1990s for Australia, Chile, Israel and Portugal. Changes are available until 2000 for Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, as current data from EU-SILC are not comparable with earlier years for these countries.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

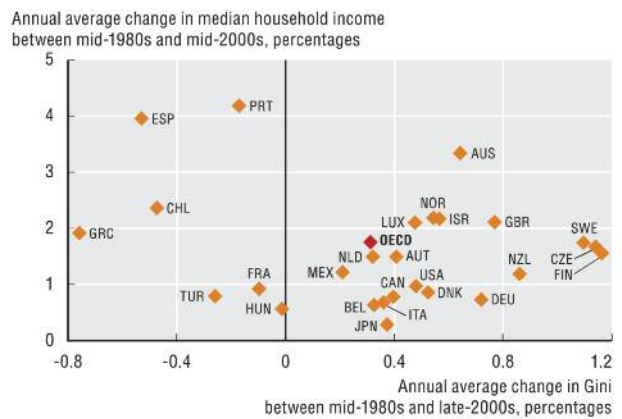
EQ1.1. Income inequality has been rising



EQ1.2. Richer countries have lower income inequality



EQ1.3. Rapid income growth does not reduce inequality



Source: Provisional data from OECD Income distribution and Poverty Database (www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality).



Definition and measurement

Data on annual median equivalised household disposable income came from the income distribution project (OECD, 2008). Disposable income was gross household income after deduction of direct taxes and payment of social security contributions. It excluded in-kind services provided to households by governments and private entities, consumption taxes, and imputed income flows due to home ownership. People were attributed the income of their household. Household income was adjusted for household size by assuming a common equivalence scale of 0.5.

In previous editions, net national income (NNI) per capita was used as the income measure. Following recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi commission, the income measure in *Society at a Glance* changes in 2011 to a household-based one. Median household income is conceptually stronger for social purposes. It more closely relates to family income than NNI per capita. In addition, median household income creates a link with the poverty data (see EQ1 and EQ2), which uses the median household income data in its calculation. Data was provided to the OECD by national consultants and was based on common methods and definitions applied to national micro data. While this approach improves cross-country comparability, national data sets still differ from one another in ways not readily standardised. In some countries, median income come from different data sources over time, and this adds further data error. It is likely that household income measures, while conceptually stronger for social purposes, have a lower degree of international comparability than the national income aggregates. To reflect this imprecision, household income figures were rounded to the nearest USD 1 000.

For cross-country comparison, national currency measures of income were converted into the United States dollars (USD) using purchasing power parity exchange rates (PPPs). These PPPs reflect the amount of a national currency required in each country to buy the same basket of goods and services as a dollar does in the United States. Both income and PPP estimates are affected by statistical errors, so differences between countries of 5% or less are not considered significant.

After subtracting taxes and adding welfare benefits household income provides an indication of the goods and services families can purchase on the market. It is thus an absolute objective indication of material quality of

life. Household income is adjusted for family size and the adjusted measure is attributed to every person in that household. Half of all people have higher and half lower income than the median.

In 2007 half the people in Turkey and Mexico had household incomes less than USD 5 000. Half the people in Luxembourg had incomes about seven times higher (GE1.1). Low household income countries included those in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean and much of Eastern Europe, as well as the two Latin American countries – Chile and Mexico. Higher household income countries included Norway and the United States. Country income rankings using equivalised household income were similar to those calculated using per capita net national income (NNI). However, using a household rather than an NNI measure changed country income rankings considerably for some countries. Sweden fell seven places and New Zealand and Korea rose by five places.

Household income growth between the mid-1980s and 2007 averaged about 1.5% across the OECD (GE1.2). By way of comparison, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth was more than half a per cent higher, and NNI growth was higher by a similar amount. Such differences can cumulate considerably over a generation. OECD average growth also hides huge country variations. Mexico, Portugal and Spain were countries where household income growth was equal to or higher than conventional national aggregates. Household income growth was especially low relative to national aggregates in Belgium, Chile, Luxembourg, Hungary, and Japan. Reasons for differences between household and aggregate production growth measures could be due to the household focus, rather than of the nation as a whole, the focus on medians, rather than averages, the different methods of adjusting for numbers of people, or measurement errors in the statistics.

Further reading

OECD (2008), *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Stiglitz, J., A. Sen and J.P. Fitoussi (2009), "Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress", www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf.

Figure note

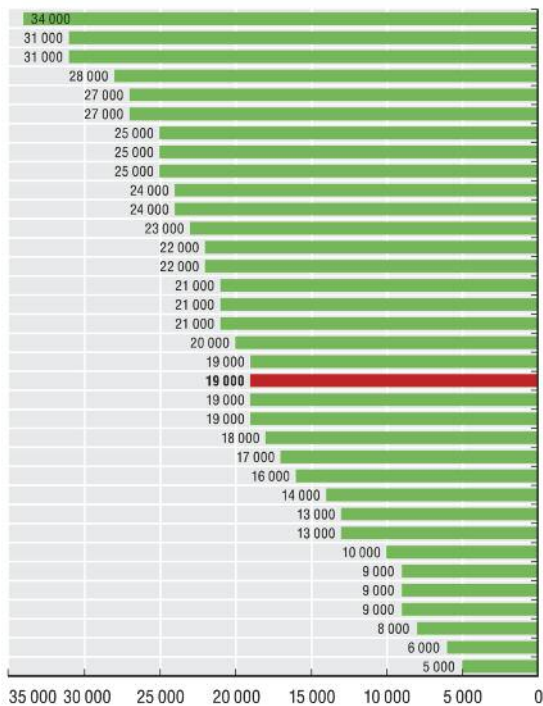
Figure GE1.1, Panel B: Median income changes over a 10-20-year period are not available for Estonia, Iceland, Korea, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland. Changes are available from mid-1990s for Australia, Chile, Israel and Portugal.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

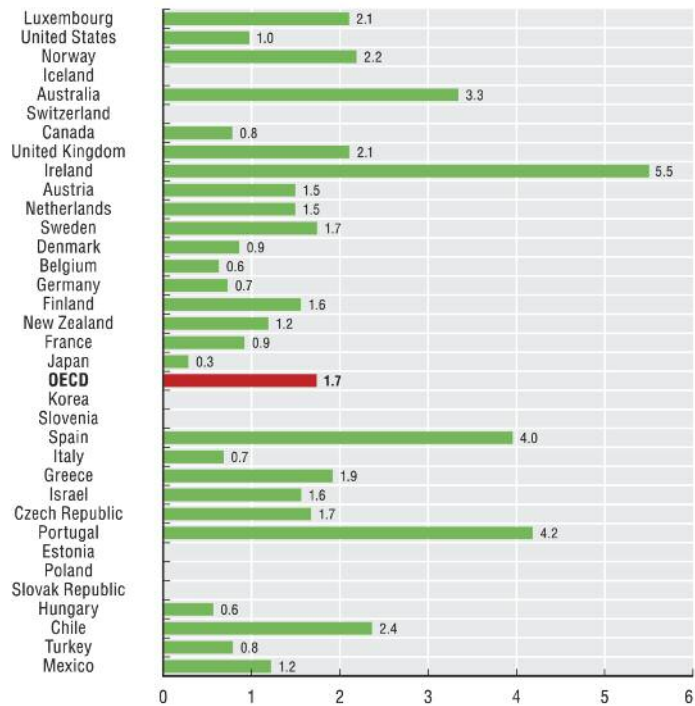


GE1.1. Median equivalised income of OECD countries varies between USD 5 000 and 34 000

Panel A. Annual median equivalised disposable household income in USD at current prices and current PPPs in 2007
(↘, rounded at nearest 1 000)

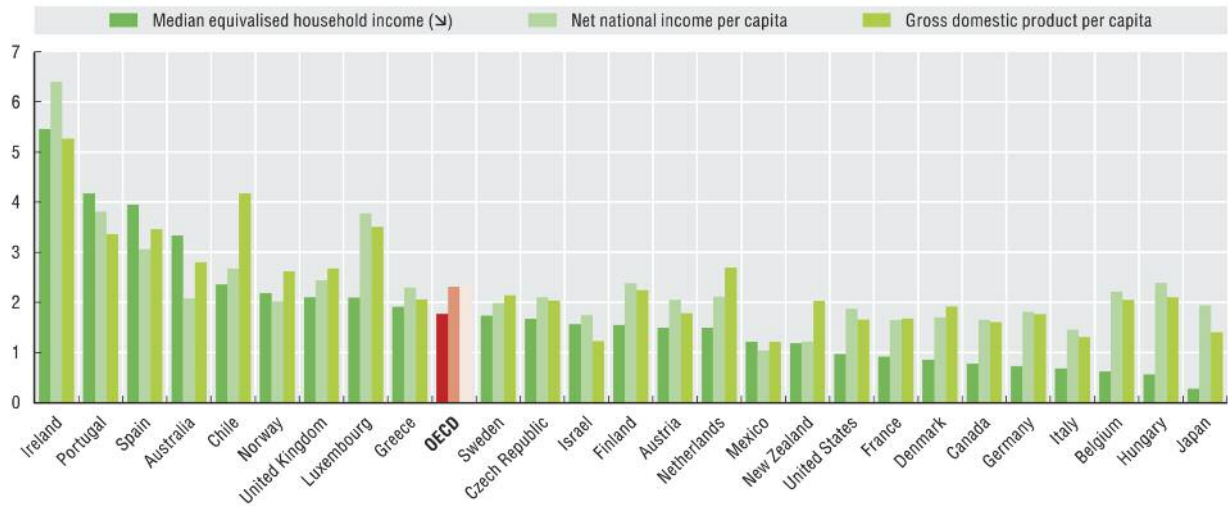


Panel B. Real average annual growth in real median household income, between mid-80s (or mid-90s) and late-2000s (or mid-2000s), percentages



GE1.2. Household income grows slower than national accounts measures of material well-being

Real annual average growth in median household equivalised income, NNI per capita and GDP per capita, between mid-1980s (or mid-1990s) and late-2000s (or mid-1990s), in percentages



Source: OECD Database on Income Distribution and Poverty (www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality) and OECD National Accounts Database (www.oecd.org/statistics/nationalaccounts).



There is something deeply ironic about Abbott's reverence for the American model in defending many of his government's proposed "reforms." After all, America's economic model has not been working for most Americans. Median income in the US is lower today than it was a quarter-century ago – not because productivity has been stagnating, but because wages have.

The Australian model has performed far better. Indeed, Australia is one of the few commodity-based economies that has not suffered from the natural-resource curse. Prosperity has been relatively widely shared. Median household income has grown at an average annual rate above 3% in the last decades – almost twice the OECD average.

To be sure, given its abundance of natural resources, Australia should have far greater equality than it does. After all, a country's natural resources should belong to all of its people, and the "rents" that they generate provide a source of revenue that could be used to reduce inequality. And taxing natural-resource rents at high rates does not cause the adverse consequences that follow from taxing savings or work (reserves of iron ore and natural gas cannot move to another country to avoid taxation). But Australia's Gini coefficient, a standard measure of inequality, is one-third higher than that of Norway, a resource-rich country that has done a particularly good job of managing its wealth for the benefit of all citizens.

One wonders whether Abbott and his government really understand what has happened in the US? Does he realize that since the era of deregulation and liberalization began in the late 1970s, GDP growth has slowed markedly, and that what growth has occurred has primarily benefited those at the top? Does he know that prior to these "reforms," the US had not had a financial crisis – now a regular occurrence around the world – for a half-century, and that deregulation led to a bloated financial sector that attracted many talented young people who otherwise might have devoted their careers to more productive activities? Their financial innovations made them extremely rich but brought America and the global economy to the brink of ruin.

Australia's public services are the envy of the world. Its health-care system delivers better outcomes than the US, at a fraction of the cost. It has an income-contingent education-loan program that permits borrowers to spread their repayments over more years if necessary, and in which, if their income turns out to be particularly low (perhaps because they chose important but low-paying jobs, say, in education or religion), the government forgives some of the debt.

The contrast with the US is striking. In the US, student debt, now in excess of \$1.2 trillion (more than all credit-card debt), is becoming a burden for graduates and the economy. America's failed financial model for higher education is one of the reasons that, among the advanced countries, America now has the least equality of opportunity, with the life prospects of a young American more dependent on his or her parents' income and education than in other advanced countries.

Abbott's notions about higher education also suggest that he clearly does not understand why America's best universities succeed. It is not price competition or the drive for profit that has made Harvard, Yale, or Stanford great. None of America's great universities are for-profit-institutions. They are all not-for-profit institutions, either public or supported by large endowments, contributed largely by alumni and foundations.

There is competition, but of a different sort. They strive for inclusiveness and diversity. They compete for government research grants. America's under-regulated for-profit universities excel in two dimensions: the ability to exploit young people from poor backgrounds, charging them high fees without delivering anything of value, and the ability to lobby for government money without regulation and to continue their exploitative practices.

Australia should be proud of its successes, from which the rest of the world can learn a great deal. It would be a shame if a misunderstanding of what has happened in the US, combined with a strong dose of ideology, caused its leaders to fix what is not broken.

-Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics and University Professor at Columbia University, was Chairman of President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers and served as Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank. His most recent



book, co-authored with Bruce Greenwald, is Creating a Learning Society: A New Approach to Growth, Development, and Social Progress.

He delivered a lecture on the aforementioned subject at Sydney's Town Hall in which Mr Gambhir Watts, OAM and President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia, was invited as a VIP guest.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, www.project-syndicate.org



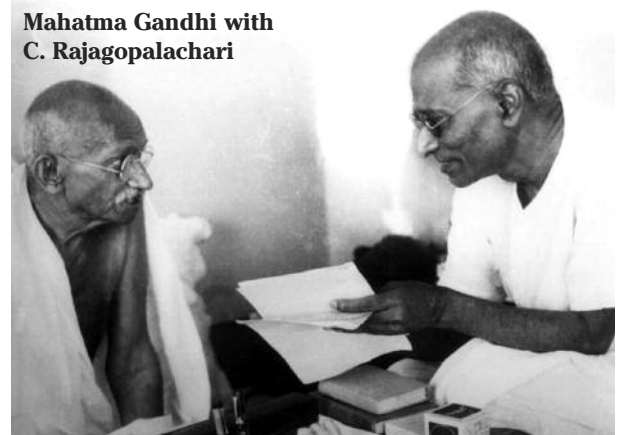
Family and Community

The virtues and aims that prevail among us in India no doubt obtain among other people also. The measure and the forms differ. But there is no harm in nursing our virtues as our own peculiar excellence, provided we are careful enough to preserve humility, and avoid national vainglory and the unpardonable folly of a contempt or dislike of others.

The particular shape that the generality of culture takes in each nation is due to its location in the physical world, its religion, philosophy and history. Some of the elements get emphasized in one nation more than in another. For example free and frank expression of feelings can be observed in one nation while restraint and reticence markedly prevail in another. The variation in emphasis in different countries does not affect the value of the element. On the other hand, it adds to the pleasure arising from international contacts.

The development of arts, entertainments and sports that add joy to life varies in different nations. They take pleasing variations in form. These generally go by the name of national culture and attain fame even to the exclusion of the more important things that go to make different cultures. The semantic ambiguities attaching to the word 'culture' cause considerable confusion. Near ideas going by the same name cause greater confusion than well-recognized multiple senses of the same word. The nearer two different ideas are to one another, the more important is the difference to be kept in mind. It would be good always to give different names to different things so as to keep the ideas clearly defined and distinct as in the case of the letters denoted by the symbols in the Nagari script. The voiced and the aspirated letters are clearly distinguished from the basic letter. The sounds are near to one another but the symbols are deliberately made quite different from one another. But this principle of clear and distinct representation is not always observed and a lot of confusion prevails for instance as to what is South

Mahatma Gandhi with C. Rajagopalachari



Indian culture or Assamese culture. The musical forms and dances are often taken to be Indian culture or Assamese culture, and only they—which is a grave mistake.

Indian culture is predominantly self-restraint: sharing your substance with the poor, chastity, the rigours of widowhood, austerity, sanyas, all-round religious tolerance—these forms and aspects of restraint make up Indian culture, not our musical forms or Bharata naatya. Music and dance are not unimportant, but everything can be overdone. What is overdone loses beauty. Refinement's foundation is restraint.

Kula dharma is the culture of the group or caste. The Gita has this phrase in Chapter I, 40th sloka.

Similarly the pattern of behaviour prevailing and recognized as good in our motherland as distinguished from what prevails among other people may be called Desha dharma. Desha dharma is an organic growth which it is our duty to respect and which we should not treat as mere Indian superstition or under-development or eccentricity. It is the distinctive feature of life in India, whatever political or other changes might have occurred or may occur in the course of history.



The national pattern of behaviour, our Desna dharma, may be looked at as seen in the family, as seen in the caste or jaati, as seen in the region, a unit holding different castes supplementing each other's occupation, and as seen in the larger community called the nation.

The large joint family is a special pattern of ours. It is an institution which gives a distinctive feature to life in India. The institution is still alive, not quite wiped out by the impact of the West and its cult of individuality. The family in India is not just man, wife, and minor children. It includes very grown up sons, and their wives, grandsons and great grandsons. It consists consequently of numerous cousins and their wives and children. The word for a near cousin in our languages is 'brother.' There may be varying degrees of affection among them or even the opposite of affection. But the obligations imposed by family Dharma are binding, and demand fulfilment over this wide circle; and failure brings about social obloquy and self-accusation. Self-accusation and shame are the acid tests of what is the prevailing culture and pattern of conduct.

The sizes and restraints of the joint family are relieved by a Westminster Statute included in this Commonwealth pattern: the right to get away for the asking is recognized. The joint family is a socialist institution within itself and at the same time, the individual is a potentially free person. The joint family is perhaps the chief characteristic of Indian life differentiating it from the Western way of living.

Our marriages are entered into and arranged very differently from what is done in Western countries. Changes are inevitable in this as in other matters as a result of international contacts and economic compulsions, but the basic pattern is still there. Marriage is not an affair of the individuals. It is a family affair and very much that. Its rituals if vernacularized would indicate only a contract. But it is an inviolable contract of partnership. Inviolability is indeed its chief characteristic.



It will lead us into a very lengthy and inconclusive debate if we enter into a discussion as to whether our arranged marriages are better than the so-called love-marriages of the West, and how much substance there is and

reliability of quality in what we call love and attraction in the Western pattern. It would be enough if we note and admit the difference in the pattern. Arranged marriages do not exclude considerations of individual fancies and preferences. The general formula in India is: every one should lead a married life and it should not be left to chance and romance.

Now we come to the most important element in the organization of our society. It is not a single jump in India from the family to the nation. We have in between, the community or the jaati. It is not a vague something which is often forgotten. It is a very concrete reality and never allowed to be forgotten. The community is a larger circle than the joint family and it greatly partakes of that same character. The jaati is a larger family circle. The obligations of mutual help and respect are real though necessarily thinned out by reason of extension over a wider circle. The principle is that one's duties do not end with one's wife and children; it does not end with son and father, grandfather and cousins. It extends to the members of the jaati, to all those who 'belong' to one, as being in his group of potential relatives, though there may be no traced or traceable blood connexion. It is not just an artificial extension. It is a circle which includes likely relationship through marriage. It is associated with a very real sense of identity and mutual liability. So much so, that anything seemingly done in the public services on account of that connexion is in the present day looked upon as nepotism. Nepotism it may be under modern notions of administrative purity; but all the same Indian culture demands that a man should use his influence and share his prosperity with members of his jaati. In adversity he is entitled to expect assistance and material help and sympathy from members of his community. Failure is looked upon with great disfavour, may be silent these days, but none the less real. This element of our culture, if disentangled from the need for purity in public administration and restricted to personal assistance and private sacrifice, can be looked upon as a loose form of trusteeship governing conduct in one's group. Out of this, Gandhiji's conception of the trusteeship form of socialism was evolved. Individualism, neglectful of the wants of others in the community, is treated not merely as selfishness, but as something allied to a father's neglect of his son or refusing to share in his misfortunes and difficulties. Failing to be helpful to members of the large joint family circle or to members of one's community is treated as a very base form of selfishness.

There is a whole chapter in the Kural about one's duties to his people in the sense of the jaati circle. All this is found in the corresponding chapters of Sanskrit literature. It is Indian culture, the duty of sharing one's prosperity with one's community,

what may be appropriately called decentralized socialism, without the compulsions of statist polity but enforced by effective social odium on failure. The duty of looking after the tribe and the duty of looking after the local community, a larger circle than the tribe and related to place rather than blood, are both emphasized in our shastras and in Sanskrit and Dravidian literature. And we can see the obligations working even now in the present times, although we have in the name of national unity a tendency to see the dark side of such obligations and attachments and give to this decentralized non-statist socialism in automatic action, the names of nepotism, parochialism, communalism, etc.

Helping oneself is selfishness. It generally escapes criticism. Helping one's family is called nepotism by those who do not belong to the family. Helping the community is called communalism by those who fall outside the jaati. Helping the local community covering every one in a territorial unit irrespective of jaati is given the derogatory names of parochialism and provincialism. We give a term of abuse taking up for disapproval what the sense of obligation does not include, rather than feeling comforted seeing that it includes a wide circle outside of one's self, and works out an effective kind of decentralized socialism. We fail to consider that if every one in prosperity felt the obligation even as limited to his circle, the entire nation would be satisfactorily covered in this voluntary way, leaving a minimum to the state to fill any gap left out. There are fortunate and prosperous men in all communities and all of them would, if encouraged, be willing to be unselfish each in respect of his own circle. They would do this very willingly, much more willingly than pay taxes to the welfare state.

Where the sanction is social resentment, the smaller the circle wherein intimacy is real, the More effective is the sanction. As we attempt to extend the circle to cover a wider area, the sanction and the performance both get reduced. The question therefore is how to utilise the traditional position to the best advantage for the general community. Shall we try to enforce the obligation on the individual in respect of the entire whole and re-concile ourselves to lapses and failures? Or shall we utilize the natural force actually prevailing in smaller circles and add it all up to make it serve the whole?

The culture of family extension can be treated as a special pattern belonging to India. We may see in it something to be proud of and worthy of preservation. Unfortunately it has been considerably weakened as a result of the impact of Western individualism and perverted movements of so-called social reform. A fierce battle was waged in the nineteenth century against the Hindu joint family and the numerous crowd of 'dependents' which Indian culture encouraged. The battle was



waged in the name of progress. As a result, the decentralized socialism that prevailed in older days and made up a welfare state without being so called has largely disappeared. Perhaps we may see light yet and revise our opinions and revive and strengthen these so-called reactionary virtues of helping people around us and acquiring merit in the eyes of the gods and saving the welfare state a lot of trouble.

We have and hold something of value. We fail to appreciate it as we should. We are not grateful and happy for having it, but are unhappy because we do not have something else also. We see a man thinking of others than himself, who are related to him in some way, restraining his egotism and sharing his substance with them cheerfully. But we are not pleased with this. We quarrel with him for not sharing it with those not related to him by blood. We forget arithmetic and fail to remember to how little the share will be reduced if that were done, justly and not casually. We see a man sharing his prosperity and opportunities with others in his community or town or district. We do not congratulate him on that account. We blame him for his ideas and attachments not going beyond his large family and jaati circles or beyond his district. We forget the natural laws of propinquity and of emotions. We fail to be pleased with what we have and even refuse to see it and dwell with bitterness on what we do not have, and believe that that bitterness will help us.

Recalling my earlier thought that culture is mainly, if not wholly, the rule of self-restraint and, along with the state and the disciplines enforced by it, culture maintains order in all societies, let me take a step forward and explain what historians have often stated about what we owe to the caste system in India. India had probably the largest number and very big time-lengths of intervals between one effective government and another. There have been a great many periods during which the people had neither central nor regional governments exercising effective authority. All these periods of what may be called a no-government condition could not possibly have been tided over but for the self-restraints imposed by our culture, the joint family, and the jaati



discipline. Not only was order maintained, but trade and arts flourished, the fine arts as well as the common artisans' work so essential for life. The absence of government made no great difference. A mere figure-head of a king was enough to do duty. Sometimes even that was not found necessary. Philosophy was not neglected, public health maintained itself tolerably well under the caste discipline, contracts were entered into and fulfilled and property was respected and was at least not so insecure as it was in other countries during similar periods of anarchy. Life depends on property, contracts and security of possessions. All this was managed by culture wherever and whenever there was no law in the Austinian sense. Charities were founded, and markets and business went on, whether there was any government or not. The people did not move about in nomadic confusion because there was no ruler or government to maintain order. The family and the caste were firm anchors and the ship of society survived and was able to go on in spite of the absence of effective governments during long and repeated periods. The nation did not break up, but held together by reason of the castes and the joint families and the dharma of the nation. There was at all levels something that held people together in good behaviour—the kula dharma, the jaati dharma and Bhaarata dharma. Culture not only made life fuller; but in India, during many long periods of anarchy, it did duty for kings and officers who vacated their posts.

There are no written records to prove and illustrate this functioning of culture as a government. By its very nature the fact was unrecorded. Dharma, that is, restraint, was taken for granted; and, so to say, family culture and community culture functioned as government, as part of unquestioned nature. The family and the caste were both

unquestioned facts, and carried on their functions without noise and restrained and maintained national life even as physical laws governed individual life. The body does not keep a register or have a written code of laws. It works and proves itself and its laws in silence. So did our family and community culture and the restraints they enforced work without police or bureaucratic fuss. No records having been left of their achievements, we have to discover and appreciate them only by

historical imagination. I do not believe culture managed affairs on such a vast and effective scale among any other people in the world and through such long periods of government-less civilization. I have not been

trained as a systematic historian to dwell on and explain such a subject at length, adequately exhibiting and illustrating all the points involved. I leave it to able scholars to do what can be done in this direction. Modern forces have made short work of many things that went into the Indian way of life. But notwithstanding the onslaught, certain things do survive and the deeper layers of our way of life do continue and may yet get new life and strength and shoot up. The question may be asked whether it is not good that the old pattern of family and community discipline operating through culture has been largely substituted by state discipline. We may have an ideological opinion on the subject as well as a realistic view, and these may differ from each other. The tyranny of the community may by some be considered worse than that imposed by any form of state control. The opposite opinion may be held by others. But realistically the answer would depend on what sort of people make up what is called the state. One argument is always in favour of cultural control. It is exercised by people who know much more about you and much more intimately, than the state bureaucracy can ever know. They are people who can make necessary distinctions and exceptions. There is more flexibility associated with that discipline than even judge-controlled executive authority. More on this subject may take us to current politics and may be left to people to develop in their own reflective minds.

-Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, popularly known as "Rajaji" or "C.R." was a great patriot, astute politician, incisive thinker, and one of the greatest of Indians. As a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, as an ardent freedom-fighter, as Chief Minister of Madras, as Governor of West Bengal, as Home Minister of India and as the first Indian Governor-General of India he rendered yeoman service to India and left an indelible impress on our contemporary life. Rajaji's books on Marcus Aurelius, the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads are popular. In Mahabharata and Ramayana he displays his inimitable flair for storytelling and applying the moral of stories to the needs of modern times. The thought-processes of this patriarch retained their sharp edge, while the notes of his silver tongue did not lose any of their charms even when he was a nonagenarian. He passed away in 1972 at the age of 94.

(Concluded)

Source: 'Our Culture' book by C. Rajagopalachari, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bombay (Mumbai), India



World's Largest Democracy Votes

814 million voters, 930,000 polling stations, 1.19 million EVMs

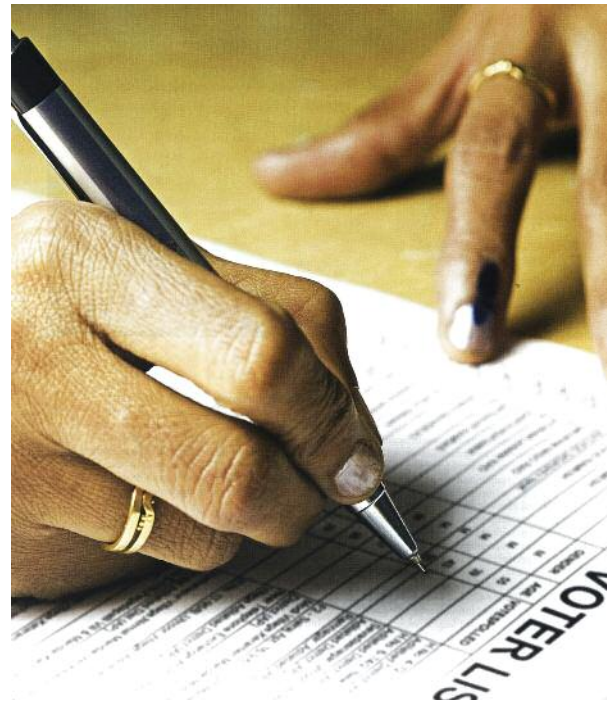
The 2014 General Elections can be described as the biggest humanly managed event in the world

India is globally recognised as a thriving and vibrant electoral democracy. Its foundation was laid by the far-sighted framers of the great Constitution. Over the last six decades, it has been nurtured by parliament, judiciary, political parties, media and above all, the people of India. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has contributed its might to keep it on track through these 60 years.

When the founders of the Constitution adopted universal adult suffrage reposing faith in the wisdom of the common Indian to elect his/her representative to the seat of power, the Western world was aghast at our audacity. While some called it a giant leap forward and a bold enterprise, others termed it as 'foolhardy' and 'an unparalleled adventure'. The reason for their scepticism was clear. At that point in time, 84% Indians were illiterate, living in abject poverty in a caste- and communalism-ridden society.

It did not take long for India to silence its critics with a highly successful first General Election 1951-52. In the process, India has proven Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's famous statement that a country does not become fit for democracy it becomes fit through democracy.

One of the reasons for democracy taking roots in India quickly was a fiercely independent Election Commission that has ensured free and fair elections each time. Over the past six decades, ECI



The list of registered voters in each Parliamentary constituency is revised annually in India

has conducted 15 general elections to the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) and over 350 elections to State Legislative Assemblies, facilitating peaceful, orderly and democratic transfer of power. Free and fair elections conducted with a level-playing field has ensured that the leaders belonging to the marginalised sections of society like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, farmers, women and minorities got an opportunity to head national and state governments and to important positions.

In sheer size, the Indian elections may be mind-boggling. The Indian voters exceed the voter





population of all countries of any continent put together. The current general elections to the Indian Parliament being held in 2014 can be described as the biggest humanly-managed event in the world. With 814 million voters, 930,000 polling stations, 1.19 million Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and 11-12 million polling and security personnel, the world is witnessing the biggest election in history.

The biggest challenge is the diversity of India in all its dimensions, be it geographical (deserts, mountains, plains, forests, islands, coastal areas) or being a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society. This makes inclusivity of every section and every individual a special concern. Depressed and deprived sections of the population, the handicapped, minorities (religious, cultural and linguistic) all have to feel confident and comfortable going to the polling stations. It is the responsibility of the ECI to deliver free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections, ensuring inclusiveness and participation. Terrorism, militancy, left-wing extremism, caste and communal tensions are the issues to be addressed effectively.

The Election Commission uses all types of technology to ensure efficient management of the elections. Fully computerised voter rolls and online registration of voters have helped reach every adult Indian citizen. Geographic Information

System (GIS) helps in deciding the location of the polling stations, while Global Positioning System (GPS) enables tracking of movement of the political parties and the security forces.

The most significant technology initiative, however, has been the use of EVMs that few countries have dared to adopt. We deliberately use a simple technology for these standalone, not-networked machines to guard against even the slightest possibility of manipulation of results. ECI considers it the wonder machine of Indian democracy. Even High Court has termed it as 'the pride of India'.

With the recent introduction of Voters Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), the transparency has improved further. Ensuring a level-playing field for all contestants is a major concern. The party in power has all the resources at its command which could give it an unfair advantage. Therefore, ECI acts to neutralise it right from the day the election schedule is announced. This is done through the Model Code of Conduct, a voluntary code evolved with the consensus of political parties in India.

Despite the lack of statutory backing, the compliance is immense. Public opinion is the moral sanction for its enforcement while booth capturing and intimidation of voters by the musclemen is now history. Participation is the key to the success of democracy. With low voter turnout and low percentage of voters of the winner, even the legitimacy of the elected representatives comes into question. Therefore, to make democracy truly inclusive, ECI has setup a Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) division to reach out to the voters through multi-media campaigns, especially addressing youth and urban voter apathy.

Every state election is preceded by a scientific survey of Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Practices (KABP) of voters before launching voter awareness programmes. This initiative made phenomenal impact, in terms of recoil registration and turnout in each in partnership with civil society and the media state election.

One of the historic developments in this context has been the declaration of January 25 every year as the National Voter's Day (NVD) from 2011. The purpose has been to increase the enrolment of voters, especially the newly eligible ones. By the fourth NVD, the additional voters have crossed the 100 million mark. Many other countries have shown interest to adopt this model.

The success story of Indian elections has led the aspiring democracies around the world to seek and share knowledge, skills and expertise at ECI's disposal. Responding to increasing global



The most significant technology initiative has been the use of EVMs that few countries have adopted

demands, especially from Afro-Asian and Commonwealth countries, the Commission has established the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM) that serves as a training and resource centre for national and international participants. In three years of its existence, the institute has imparted training to election managers of over 40 countries, besides, of course, thousands of domestic master trainers. While the ECI has gone from strength-to-



The Election Commission's Mascot Mr Votu during a voter's awareness campaign at India Gate in New Delhi



strength, some lurking concerns still trouble us. The foremost is the role of black money in elections that upsets level-playing field and vitiates free and fair elections. The increasing number of candidates with criminal cases is also worrisome.

ECI has proposed several reform proposals aimed at cleaning up the electoral process so that the foundation can be laid for good governance and a

corruption-free polity. Some of these proposals deal with criminalisation of politics, regulation of campaign finance and internal democracy within political parties. Once these reforms are implemented, the biggest democracy in the world will move a step closer to becoming the greatest.

-Dr SY Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India

Parliamentary elections of India

Some interesting facts and figures about the biggest electoral process in the world

When Elections Take Place?

- Every five years, unless the House is dissolved earlier.
- Called earlier by the President
- Upon dissolution of Lok Sabha, if Government loses confidence of majority of members and there is no alternative Government to take over.

2014 Elections shall be the 16th.

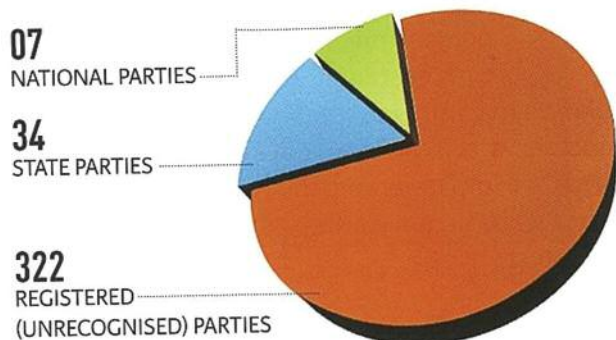
- The 1st General Elections were held in 1951-1952.

Political Parties

- Conduct of elections largely dependent on their behaviour
- Should be registered with the Election Commission of India

Political Parties That Participated In The 2009 General Elections

- National Parties
- State Parties
- Registered (Unrecognised) Parties



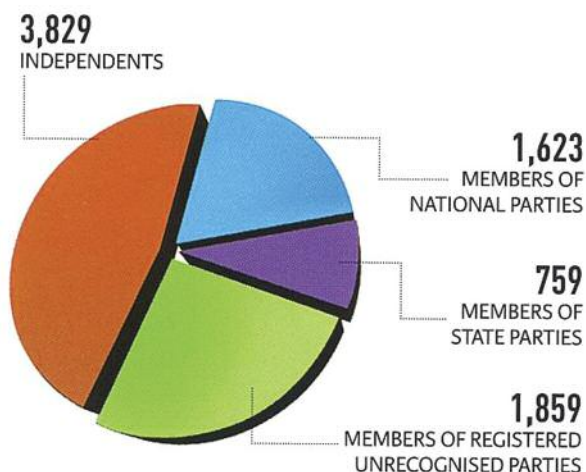
The Electoral Process—Deciding The Battlefields

Division into Parliamentary Constituencies

- India divided into 543 constituencies.
- Based on number of seats allocated to each of the 28 states and seven union territories on the basis of population.
- Size and shape determined by Delimitation Commission of India.
- One member elected to Lok Sabha from each constituency, filling 543 of 545 seats.
- Two members nominated by the President from the Anglo-Indian community.

Who Can Vote?

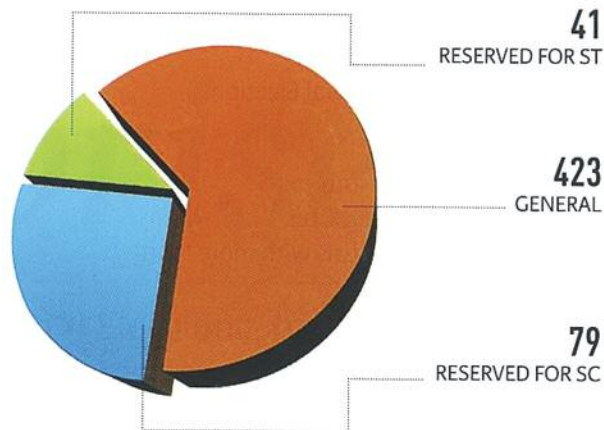
- Any Indian citizen over the age of 18 on January 1 of the year and who is an ordinary resident in the constituency concerned.
- Based on universal adult suffrage.
- Eligible elector to register in respective constituency.
- Indian citizens living abroad can be enrolled at the address given in their passports.



Candidates

Who Can Contest?

- Any Indian citizen registered as a voter who is over 25 years of age.
- May belong to a party or independent.
- Every candidate has to make a security deposit.
- Deposit is INR 25,000 for general candidates



and INR 12,500 for SCs and STs.

- Candidates to file affidavit about their assets, liabilities, criminal background and educational qualifications.

What's New

None of the Above (NOTA)

- Introduced in 2013 in State Assembly Elections.
- It's the last button on the EVM.
- Voter can press this button if he/ she does not wish to vote for any candidate.

Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

- Prints a ballot slip showing the name and symbol of candidate to whom vote has been given.
- To improve voter satisfaction.

Electoral Participation

Electoral Rolls

- Lists of registered electors in each constituency.
- Revised annually.
- All rolls computerised; include electors' photos.

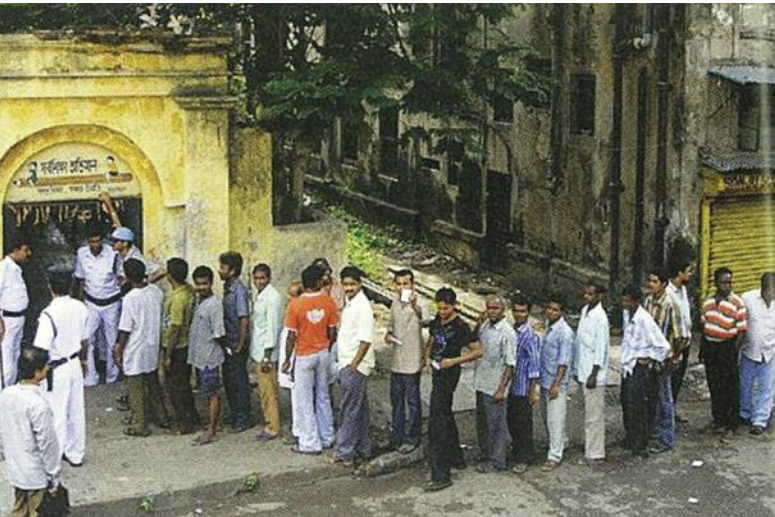
EPIC

- Electors' Photo Identity Card.
- Provided upon registration to each elector.
- Free of cost.

SVEEP

- Systematic Voter Education and Electoral





Participation.

- To improve electoral participation and to build up a culture of participative democracy.
- Integral to election management in India.

Polling Management

Electronic Voting Machines

- Voting by secret ballot
- Used since 2004 General Elections

Polling Stations

- Usually in public institutions.
- Within 2 km of every voter.
- No polling station deals with more than 1,500 voters.

Postal Ballot

- Certain voters entitled to vote by post.
- Includes those on election duty, service voters and certain others.

Proxy Voting

- Option to vote through proxy or through postal ballot is available to service voters in the Armed Forces or to members belonging to a force to which the Army Act applies.

Counting of Votes

- Done after completion of all phases of polling.
- Under the supervision of returning officers and election observers.
- Counting for all 543 constituencies done on a single day.
- Results declared within a few hours.

Interesting Facts of General Elections 2009

- Highest polling station: Auleyphu in Leh (15,300 m)
- Maximum votes polled by a candidate: 8,32,224
- Minimum votes polled by a candidate: 118
- Maximum candidates in a constituency: 43
- Minimum candidates in a constituency: 3
- Maximum voter turnout in a constituency: 90.32%

- Minimum voter turnout in a constituency: 25.55%
- Largest constituency (by area): Ladakh (J&K)—1,73,266.37 sq km
- Smallest constituency (by area): Chandni Chowk (Delhi)—10.59 sq km
- Largest constituency (by size of electorate): Outer Delhi (NCT of Delhi)—31,03,525 electors
- Smallest constituency (by size of electorate): Lakshadweep—37,619 electors
- A polling station was set up in Junagadh district in Gir Forests of Gujarat for one elector.

World's Largest Democratic Exercise

2009 Elections

- 8,070 candidates
- 363 registered political parties
- 10 million personnel on poll duty
- 834,919 polling stations
- 717 million registered electors
- 2,046 observers
- 1,39,284 micro observers
- 46,90,575 polling staff

2014 Elections

- 9,19,452 polling stations
- Nine poll days
- EVMs: 9,08,643 control units
- 11,83,543 ballot units
- 74,729 videographers
- 40,599 digital cameras
- Election Expenditure by Central Government—8,466 million
- 1,080 counting centres
- Five phases
- Spread over one month
- 814 million registered electors

Source: Election Commission of India

Election Enterprise

As India witnesses its biggest-ever General Elections, tour operators are offering poll packages to attract foreign visitors by combining tourist attractions with political rallies and candidate interactions.

Politics, glamour, religion, drama and grandeur... The 2014 General Elections in India are turning out to be the biggest potboiler of this decade. There are new fashion trends surfacing and a variety of political merchandise is being retailed.

From Aam Aadmi brooms to NaMo brand of cell phones, the election season is fast turning out to be the biggest celebration of Indian democracy. However, one industry that is gearing up to market the poll frenzy is the tourism industry. With the world sitting on the edge to watch 'The Great Indian Election', tour operators in India are doling out poll packages to attract tourists. Packages ranging between \$1,200 and \$1,800 per person for a six-night-seven-day trip combine visits to tourist attractions in India and promise interaction with representatives of political parties and participation in political rallies.

For instance, under a Delhi-Agra-Jaipur package, a tourist could visit various sites in New Delhi, attend political rallies and spend the day interacting with representatives of political parties



while enjoying evening visits to the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh and Hawa Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

In Alappuzha backwaters of Kerala, campaigning is on a different level. It's a great experience to watch paddy fields dotted with flags of political parties and polling officials carrying ballot boxes in boats. Since 2004, when poll tourism was first introduced here, several groups of foreigners have flown down to witness this innovative style of political campaigning. Witnessing huge turnouts at political rallies, banners, hoardings and gigantic cutouts of political leaders in the southern regions of India, the entire election is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many foreigners.

In Gujarat, a tour operators' team had approached the Election Commission of India to seek approval



Tourists will be taken to political rallies in various parts of the country

for foreign tourists to visit poll booths which was turned down due to security reasons. As of now, around 30 tour operators in Gujarat and Delhi have joined hands to get foreign tourists to India, making themselves visible through social media platforms. In fact, some claim to have got positive response from countries like Ukraine, Indonesia, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uganda, France, Italy and Canada. “We had initiated this project during Gujarat elections in 2012 and got positive response. We had more than 90 tourists from Ukraine and Germany visiting the state. This year, we have three confirmed groups visiting from the UK, Germany and UAE. This concept is going to be a big hit in future,” says Lav Sharma from Akshar Tours in Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

However, most inquiries have concentrated to Delhi-Agra-Jaipur circuit. Arun Chowdhary, managing director, Travel Care, a Jaipur-based tour operating agency, gives a more realistic picture. He

says, “Beginning April, the tourism sector in India witnesses a downward trend. Therefore, to boost tourism we try and come up with such packages. To make it sound interesting and novel, we are trying to connect it to the election

frenzy! Since the package is lucrative, people get tempted and book. Moreover, terming it as poll tourism adds another dimension to it. A number of NRIs are showing interest in the elections this time.



And with Easter holidays around, they are flying to witness the polls.”

Lovesh Sharma, director, sales and marketing, Jaipur Marriott Hotel, says, “It is an innovative idea as it gives people an opportunity to see the country and know how, being the largest democracy in the world, it conducts its elections.”

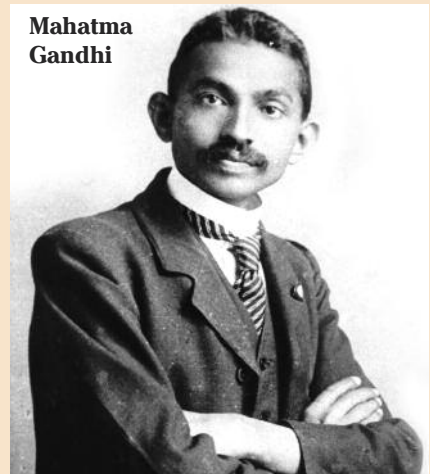
- Pallavi Thakur Bose

Source: India Perspectives, May-June 2014



Tourists can visit destinations like Hawa Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan and Alappuzha backwaters in Kerala, India

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



Mahatma Gandhi



With Gokhale in South Africa

Both men had a common passion for abolishing caste and other inequalities within Indian society. The relationship between his family and Gandhi lasted more than a lifetime.

Gandhi solved all the disputes and settled quietly in the ashram. The storm however was about to break. Far away in a place called Champaran in Bihar, poor peasants were being forced by European planters to grow indigo on their land. They were also forced to sell the entire crop at a fixed price, which proved to be a great burden on them.

Gandhi, who visited Champaran was overwhelmed and disturbed by the plight of these people. When the people heard that a "Mahatma" had come to their district, they besieged him with their woes, and the crowds became so huge that Gandhi was ordered to leave by the police superintendent. Naturally, Gandhi refused, and was ordered to appear in the court, which he did, followed by thousands of supporters. The magistrate postponed the case, which was later withdrawn.

Here at Champaran was Gandhi's first experiment of active Satyagraha or passive resistance. He spent time educating and organizing the villagers, sending their children to school, teaching them to imbibe clean, hygienic habits and at the same time fight for their cause.

A commission was appointed to enquire into the cause of the struggle and a settlement was reached. Gandhi's honesty and integrity always had an impact. Sir George Rainy, a member of the committee, remarked, "Mr. Gandhi reminds me of the Apostle Paul."

Returning to Ahmedabad, he found himself in the

midst of a labour dispute. The workers in the textile mills, about five hundred of them from all communities, requested a Dearness Allowance as they had worked throughout a plague epidemic in the city. Anasuya Sarabhai, who worked amongst them and knew of their grievances signed the petition. She had written to Gandhi for his blessing before taking this step against her own brother Ambalal Sarabhai, who was a leading figure of the mill owners.

-To be continued...

Mrinalini Sarabhai, an internationally recognized dancer and choreographer is a director as well as an author of scholarly books, novels and children's books. She was Chairperson of the Gujarat State Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation Ltd and is one of the trustees of the Sarvodaya International Trust, an organization dedicated to promoting the Gandhian ideals of Truth, Non Violence, Peace, Universal Brotherhood and Humanitarian Service. She is closely associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for the past more than three decades. The Bhavan has published her book 'Sacred Dance of India', 'The Mahatma and the Poetess', a selection of letters exchanged between Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu edited by Mrinalini Sarabhai.



Source: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by Mrinalini Sarabhai, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India



Untold Stories of King Bhoja

Madanarekha Vindicated

But do you really believe that such people live in this world today? Even if they do, they will be one in a million. Talking of women, don't you know that they are the source of all untruth?

You will kindly pardon my saying that they cannot be trusted at all and I cannot give you passage."

Said Madanarekha: "Venerable Sir, you are really wasting your time and talent on a matter which does not deserve a minute's consideration. But why don't you put me to the test? Wait for some time as I told you. If you are still not satisfied, I swear I will return to you. The earth and the waters, the echo and the ether, the sky and the Aurora Borealis are witness to my pledge. What more do you want?"

Unable to talk further, the Brahmarakshas replied: "Well, to a certain extent I am satisfied with your assurance. But I am not willing to leave things at that.

I shall, therefore, add my conditions too. If you fail to return as promised, you shall be subjected to that sin that accrues from the killing of a man while sleeping soundly on a public road." She agreed.

Released by the Brahmarakshas, Madanarekha hurried to the Brahmin boy's home. Reaching there, she tapped on the door when the boy opened it and saw her face by the dull candle light and was surprised. Without calling her inside, he asked:

"What makes you come here now?"

"Don't you remember my promise to give you the first pleasure of my company on the wedding night?" asked Madanarekha.

"My God! You are a princess and my father's disciple. What made you become such a desperado? Shiva! Shiva! If well-placed women like you start behaving like you what will happen to the world? Is it right for girls like you to come like this? Won't such behaviour lead to the ruination of the community?" Feeling embarrassed, Madanarekha thought: "This fellow speaks as though he were a great shishta. I should teach him a lesson."

Said she: "My friend, don't you remember how you felt about me the other day? But how long since have you changed your mind? I can understand your trying to pass off as a righteous man if you talk like this to other women. Don't I know what a cad you are? You have indeed become clever."

"You are the princess. You can afford to talk in any manner you like. I am after all a poor Brahmin boy. I cannot help listening to it. By reason of this fact, I cannot give you a suitable reply. Apart from that, 'even if I do, will the king and other people support me? Do not try to further unsettle me. Return home," said the Brahmin boy.

-To be continued...

V.A.K. Ayer

Source: *Untold Stories of King Bhoja, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*

Bhavan's Dimdima

Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 'Dimdima' is one of the most renowned magazines for children in India. Dimdima is a Sanskrit word which means 'drumbeat'. In the days of King Ashoka road shows named 'Dimdima' were held to disseminate news of the king's victory.

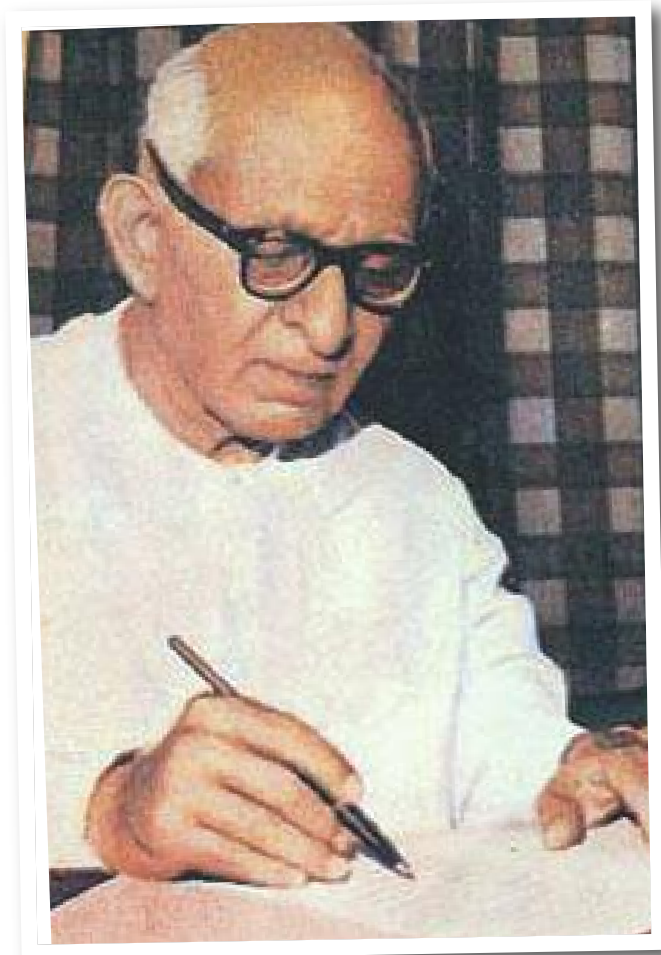
Created by a group of communicators for children including teachers the colourful magazine 'Dimdima' caters to the needs of readers between 8 and 16 yrs. Dimdima must be a part of children's learning environment and when Dimdima is around, it is just a matter of time for them to pick up the reading habit thus empowering them to open the treasure house of knowledge in the coming years. Drawing inspiration from the huge success of the portal, 'www.dimdima.com', Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan started Dimdima magazine to expand its horizons. With its simple and lucid language Dimdima provides infotainment to its young readers. Readers can put on their thinking caps and contribute stories, paintings, poetry and jokes to the magazine.

Available for purchase from:

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia, Suite 100 / 515 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 1300 242 826 (1300 BHAVAN) Email: pr@bhavanaustralia.org





Kulapativani

Co-Existence

If annihilation is to be ruled out, the only alternative is co-existence.

With India, peaceful co-existence does not imply avoidance of war risks to an extent when national security might be eroded by threats; but it stands for the elimination of the threats themselves. To secure peaceful co-existence, therefore, there should be pressure of necessity, that is, it must serve the self-interest of nations not to embark on aggressive wars, nor to intervene in the internal structure of other nations. On the other hand, there should be sufficiently powerful international pressure not to let aggressive nationalism run amuck so as to endanger the growing interdependence of nations or to raise a new menace to the world.

Dr K.M. Munshi
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

The test of Bhavan's right to exist is whether those who work for it in different spheres and in different places and those who study in its many institutions can develop a sense of mission as would enable them to translate the fundamental values, even in a small measure, into their individual life.

Creative vitality of a culture consists in this: whether the 'best' among those who belong to it, however small their number, find self-fulfilment by living up to the fundamental values of our ageless culture.

It must be realized that the history of the world is a story of men who had faith in themselves and in their mission. When an age does not produce men of such faith, its culture is on its way to extinction. The real strength of the Bhavan, therefore, would lie not so much in the number of its buildings or institutions it conducts, nor in the volume of its assets and budgets, nor even in its growing publication, culture and educational activities. It would lie in the character, humility, selflessness and dedicated work of its devoted workers, honorary and stipendiary. They alone can release the regenerative influences, bringing into play the invisible pressure which alone can transform human nature.





From the pages of Bhavan's Journal, June 23, 1963

What Else?

Thou that art not known nor felt in experience
By the Seers of great wisdom nor by celestials –
Thou that art the source of life to all diverse beings,
Our healing balm that cures me of life's afflictions,
Purest space that came forth from dense darkness,
Dweller in the great holy shrine, Siva –
O Bliss immaculate, beyond the ken of gunas,
What else can they lack who have neared Thee?
Perfect fullness, flawless Ambrosia,
Mount of endless flaming light!
O King who came as the Vedas and its meaning,
And did enter the portals of my being,
Breaking all bounds like the rushing torrent,
Siva, dweller in the great holy Shrine,
Sovereign Lord, who has made my body they abode,
What else can I now beg of Thee?

*-Saint Manikkavachakar
(From Tiruvachakam by Ratna
Navaratnam, a Book University volume)*

Centenary Tribute: Sentinel of Culture

V. Krishnaswami Aiyar of Madras was a lawyer who had contributed to the national movement with finance and moral assistance from the 1893 Congress. He was in agreement with Gokhale in the feeling that Britain was not a very bad master and that by sheer persistence in asking for Reforms, the share in the Administration of the country could be manned with Indian elements. Krishnaswami Aiyar so much agreed with Gokhale that after the Surat split in 1907, when everybody felt floundered on the rock of disappointment, he suggested the idea of a convention to meet and carry on the work of the Congress, undismayed by the efforts of the Extremists to dislocate the organisation. Gokhale hugged Krishnaswami Aiyar and said: "We too have read the constitutional history; but when the time came for application of our knowledge, it was you who could show the resourcefulness". So, in 1908, the Madras Congress was a successful congress of the Moderates who welcomed the Minto-Morely Reforms. Owing to the domestic necessities and failing health due to diabetes, Krishnaswami Aiyar

accepted a judgeship of the Madras High Court in 1909, which was short lived because the then Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley, wanted him to fill in the place of an Indian Member of his Executive Council. Gokhale advised Krishnaswami Aiyar to accept the Membership, for working the Reforms in a measure that would provide satisfaction to the public and the British authorities. He yielded to the pressure, and his brief period of administrative work was strong and efficient.

Notes and News: Bangalore Kendra

His Highness Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar, Governor of Mysore, inaugurated the Bangalore Kendra of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and also the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Central Organisation at a function at the Town Hall, Bangalore, on the 8th instant.

Sri S. Nijalingappa, Chief Minister and Vice-Chairman of the Bhavan's Bangalore Centre, welcomed the distinguished guests. H.H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sringeri offered his blessings. He stressed the need for preserving our glorious tradition and culture and trying to blend them with modern civilisation.

The governor said that the need for the experience of history and the wisdom of philosophy and realisation of ethical and spiritual values had never been greater than today.

Kulapati K.M. Munshi was felicitated on his attaining 75th year by the distinguished guests and he was presented with a memento on that occasion.

◀ ◀ ◀ *Flashback*



taxation & business guru

Taxation Guru - using their knowledge and expertise to stay ahead of the every changing taxation legislation.

Whether you're a company, partnership, trust or sole trader, you need help with Super, Salary packages, Fringe benefits, Investments and deductions.

Call the Taxation Guru, the power to help you make the right decisions.

We endeavour to take the burden off your shoulders and make life easy by providing a broad range of tax related services.

Contact us at:

Suite 100, Level 4, 515 Kent Street, Sydney 2000

t: 1300 GURU4U (487848) & +612 9267 9255

e: gambhir@bmgw.com www.taxationguru.com.au



The power to help you make the right decisions

(02) 9267 9255



www.taxationguru.com.au

Ram-Leela available from www.erosnow.com as of 1/5/2014



READY FOR MORE MASTI?

Stream entertainment from your favourite websites fast with Telstra's Global Bundle

Get 200GB of high speed broadband, unlimited international calls to home phones in 32 countries, plus unlimited family calls in Australia for \$100/mth. More data, more calling, more value – more masti!

visit parramatta or rouse hill (Punjabi), or chatswood stores

1800 283 103 telstra.com/global

Telstra Home Bundle - Global

200GB Broadband

High speed modem included for new Telstra home broadband customers.

Unlimited calls to India

Includes calls from your home phone to mobiles and home phones in India.

Unlimited family calls

With our Family Calls Benefit, add up to 4 eligible mobiles onto the same bill and get unlimited voice calls (within Australia) between all those phones.

\$100/mth

Plan term: 24 months

Min. cost \$2,459

Includes a \$59 Activation fee for new Telstra home broadband customers.

IT'S HOW
WE CONNECT



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW: Service not available to all areas, homes or customers. Family Calls - If you have an Ultimate Plan, New Ultimate Plan or Ultimate II Plan, calls from your mobile service are not included. The Spectrum device and TM are trade marks and © registered trade marks of Telstra Corporation Limited, ABN 33 051 775 556. Image courtesy of EROS International.

MC/14 TEL0687