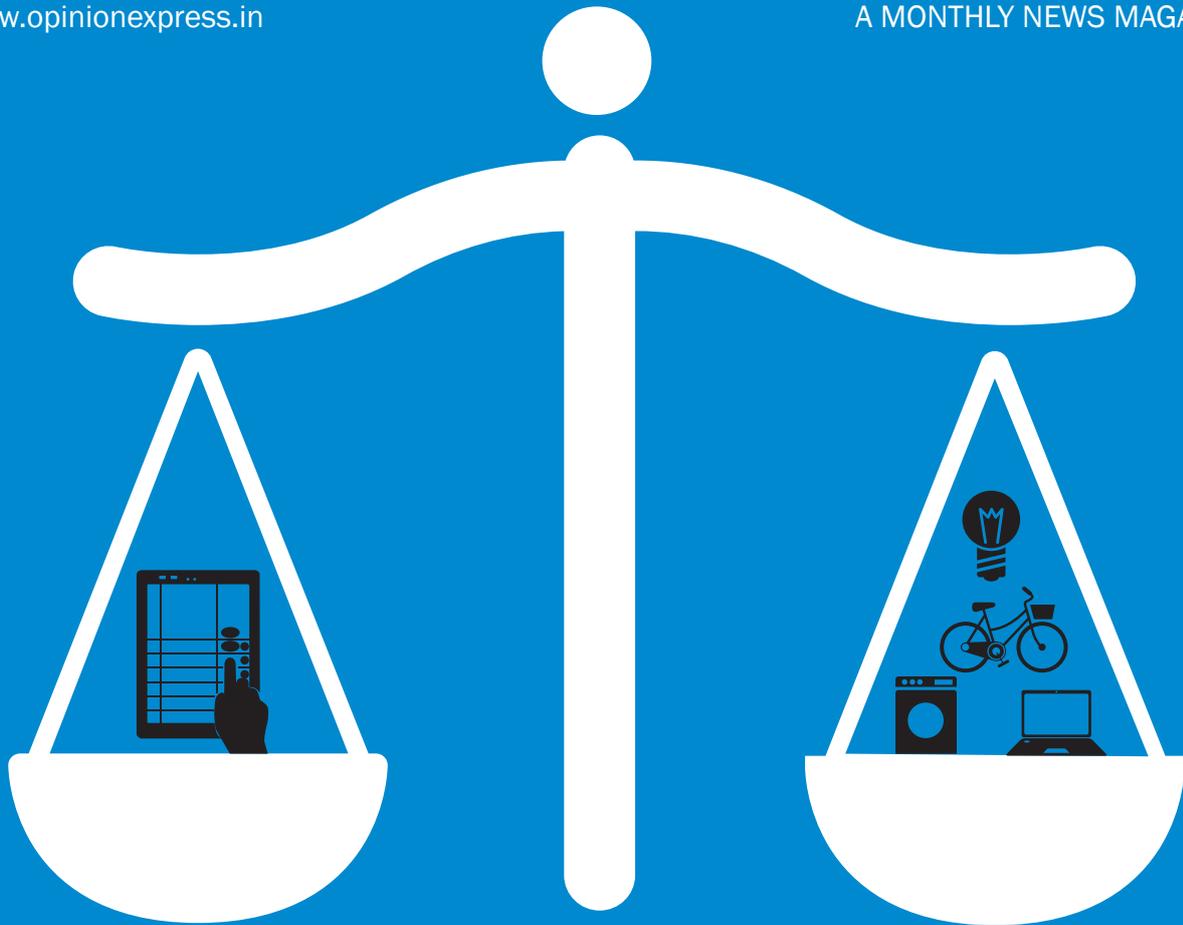


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Cover Story

FREEBIES

In India, political leaders consider themselves the incarnation of god. The reckless way these leaders spend public money is just unacceptable in an orderly society

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Freebies are a ticking time bomb

India has already suffered a great deal of damage because of freebies. Unfortunately, all the regional parties, and to some extent, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress, indulge in irresponsible populism and mad welfarism. While there can be justification for free education and healthcare, there can be no justification for the distribution of grinders, washing machines, television sets, laptops, subsidised pilgrimages, free electricity, and farm loan waivers.



Freebie culture is blamed on political elites only however, bureaucrats drafting policy are left scot-free. The Judicial system conveniently ignores its responsibility to correct the course since it will displease the political class and off course, the media will never discuss the issue since the government advertisement inflow will be hurt. The poor taxpayers of the country enjoy the visual site of watching their own elected government ripping hard-earned money to be distributed to large sections of the population seeking the comfort of sitting at home since the government has no vision to generate employment for a dignified living. It is all about failed governance and bribing voters to overcome this monumental failure.

In fact, the country has already suffered a great deal of damage because of freebies. The results are for all to see. A recent RBI study said, "We can identify a core subset of highly stressed states from among the 10 states identified by the necessary condition i.e., the debt/GSDP ratio. The highly stressed states are Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal." GSDP is the state GDP. The states with the highest debt-to-GSDP ratio in 2021-22 include Punjab at 53.3%, Rajasthan at 39.8%, West Bengal at 38.8%, and Kerala at 38.3% and Andhra Pradesh at 32.4%.

Latin America's 'Lost Decade' followed. Growth, at 5.6% in the 1970s, shrunk to 1.3% and stagnated for another decade. By the 1990s, inflation had reached 1,000% in countries like Brazil, and the poor suffered exponentially. Large economies including Mexico, Argentina and Brazil languished, and up to half of Latin Americans slid into poverty. It will augur well for India and its political stakeholders to imbibe the lessons of Latin America and how the first generation of fiscal reforms introduced in Latin America introduced political stability in the early 2000s. Going down the same path as Latin America may result in a 'lost decade' for India also.

Since getting elected is not a license to kill, the elected representatives must not act arbitrarily. The system of monarchy and practicing democracy have a clear distinction wherein in the latter system, the leader is accountable for all the actions while in the office including the finances and its management. In India, many regional and even national leaders consider themselves the incarnation of god. The reckless way these leaders spend public money is just unacceptable in an orderly society and there have to be reasonable restrictions to be imposed on them while they systematically corrupt the society by offering freebies over quality governance, so as to safeguard the macro interest of the society and the growth of the country.

—Prashant Tewari,
Editor-in-Chief

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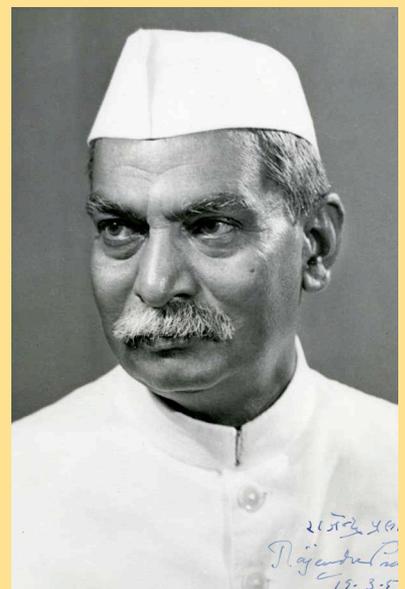
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FREE RUN

How freebies are eating into the country's precious resources



Prashant Tewari

India has already suffered a great deal of damage because of freebies. Unfortunately, all the regional parties, and to some extent, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress, indulge in irresponsible populism and mad welfareism. While there can be justification for free education and healthcare, there can be no justification for the distribution of grinders, washing machines, television sets, laptops, subsidised pilgrimages, free electricity, and farm loan waivers.

Freebie culture is blamed on political elites only however, bureaucrats drafting policy are left scot-free. The Judicial system conveniently ignores its responsibility to correct the course since it will displease the political class and of course, the media will never discuss the issue since the government advertisement inflow will be hurt. The poor taxpayers of the country enjoy the visual site of watching their own elected government ripping hard-earned money to be distributed to large sections of the population seeking the comfort of sitting at home since the government has no vision to generate employment

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Real income growth of the bottom 30% of Indians slowed down from 1992 when India first began 'opening up' and 'liberalising' its economy by encouraging the private sector. Since everyone has a vote, that means politicians cannot ignore them. This is why they must promise income support or subsidies, whether in cash or kind. These sops ensure that a majority of Indians can stay afloat in a fiercely difficult economic environment. Without this, they might throw governments out of power, or even begin to question what media and public culture feed them. A democracy that is controlled by a corporate-dominated ruling class requires popular sup-

port for its rule to continue. The sops and freebies to the poor buy the requisite votes. It is a small price that India's affluent have to pay to ensure the economy continues to disproportionately reward them.

The political parties in India try to outdo each other in luring the Indian voters with assorted goodies called freebies. This trend has gained more momentum in recent times with the political parties being innovative in their offerings as the 'traditional free water and electricity is no longer sufficient as election goodies. The political dialogue built around freebies is fraught with danger as it shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree. The unviable pre-election promises adversely affect the informed decision-making by voters. This calls for fixing the gaps in the design, execution and accountability of freebie culture.

In fact, the country has already suffered a great deal of damage because of freebies. Unfortunately, all regional parties, and national parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress, indulge in irresponsible populism and mad welfarism. While there can be justification for free education and healthcare, there can be no justification for the distribution of grinders, washing machines, television sets, laptops, subsidised pilgrimages, free electricity, farm loan waivers, and so on. It is not that nobody earlier warned against the consequences of populism. It is a "race to the bottom" and "a quick passport to fiscal disaster."

FREEBIE THREATENS TO HURT INDIA'S STORY

The results are for all to see. A recent RBI study said, "We can identify a core subset of highly stressed states from among the 10 states identified by the necessary condition i.e., the debt/GSDP ratio. The highly stressed states are Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal." GSDP is the state GDP. The states with the highest debt-to-GSDP ratio in 2021-22 include Punjab at 53.3%, Rajasthan at 39.8%, West Bengal at 38.8%, Kerala at 38.3% and Andhra Pradesh at 32.4% whereas the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act recommended a debt-to-GDP ratio of 20% for state governments (40% for the Centre) by the financial year 2022-23. This level of debt is extremely concerning and is largely the result of committed expenditure and subsidies under populist



schemes coupled with slow growth in revenues.

Most of the states, however, post a healthy picture of their finances which is aided by the fact that much of the borrowing that funds these freebies happens off-budget, beyond the pale of FRBM tracking. The States borrow on the books of their public enterprises, by pledging future revenues to the State as a guarantee. Effectively, the burden of debt is on the State exchequer, albeit well concealed. The debt-GSDP ratio of Punjab is the worst — and worsening.



Instead of being concerned that the state debt to GSDP ratio has not gone below 40% for the past 6 years, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government instead announces that around 51 lakh households won't pay any electricity bills from September. This is in accordance with the AAP's election promise of 600 units of free power per billing cycle starting from 1 July 2022.

A case in point is Latin America which provides key learning lessons on populist politics. Populism was active during the 1920s through to the

1970s, when the working poor united behind icons like Brazil's Getúlio Vargas and Argentina's Juan Perón over their dissatisfaction with industrialisation. Populist governments resorted to inflationary financing to grant benefits to the poor. By the 1980s, uncontrolled public spending resulted in excessive fiscal deficits, unsustainable public debt and intractable inflation. Latin America's 'Lost Decade' followed. Growth, at 5.6% in the 1970s, shrunk to 1.3% and stagnated for another decade. By the 1990s, inflation had

reached 1,000% in countries like Brazil, and the poor suffered exponentially. Large economies including Mexico, Argentina and Brazil languished, and up to half of Latin Americans slid into poverty. It will augur well for India and its political stakeholders to imbibe the lessons of Latin America and how the first generation of fiscal reforms introduced in Latin America introduced political stability in the early 2000s. Going down the same path as Latin America may result in a 'lost decade' for India also.



CORRECTIVE ACTION AND STEPS

The problem with freebies is a political one; the way out is simple: all parties (at the Centre and the State level) sit down together and draw a list of don'ts, a negative list of things that none of them would do. With states running astray, it is the responsibility of the Centre to work together with States to advocate fiscal conservatism while ensuring States still retain their freedom in the spirit of Federalism. This requires the Centre to walk a tightrope and requires strong visionary leadership at the helm. More emphasis and confidence should be placed in the legislation already in place to check fiscal spending which is the FRBM Act.

Judicial Intervention: Constructive debate and discussions in parliament are difficult since the freebie culture has an impact on every political party, whether directly or indirectly. Therefore, judicial involvement is required in order to propose measures.

ECI Model Code of Conduct: The Election Commission of India can anticipate enforcing the Model Code of Conduct for Guidance of Political Par-

ties and Candidates effectively to regulate election manifestos in order to prevent the manipulation of informed voter behavior.

ROADMAP

Since getting elected is not a license to kill, the elected representatives must not act arbitrarily. The system of monarchy and practicing democracy have a clear distinction wherein in the latter system, the leader is accountable for all the actions while in the office including

the finances and its management. In India, many regional and even national leaders consider themselves the incarnation of god. The reckless way these leaders spend public money is just unacceptable in an orderly society and there have to be reasonable restrictions to be imposed on them while they systematically corrupt the society by offering freebies over quality governance, so as to safeguard the macro interest of the society and the growth of the country.

UCC: an indispensable step toward Gender Justice in India

“There are numerous provisions under Muslim personal law that victimize women and do not give them the rights women of other religions enjoy.”

Sameer Jena

The debate on “one nation, one code” is going on in the country amid discussions on many other issues. The narratives seen in newspaper columns heard in drawing rooms, and bolstered by specific statements by political and religious leaders are indicators of moves to put in place a uniform civil code. The subject is not new to Indian politics – it has been at the center and side-lines of political and legislative debates for more than a century and a half. It has long featured on the agenda of the BJP, now the ruling party, and found mention in its manifesto for the last general election.

Recently the Gujarat government announced that it has decided to form a committee to implement the uniform civil code in the state. In May this year, Uttarakhand government appointed a Committee of Experts under the chairpersonship of retired SC judge Ranjana P. Desai to draft and implement UCC. Some other state governments are also taking initiatives in this direction. Assam and Himachal Pradesh, both ruled by the BJP, also have supported the idea of a UCC. Though several state governments and political leaders have backed the UCC saying that it will bring equality, some organizations such as the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and All India United Democratic Front have termed it unconstitutional and an anti-minorities move. As a lawyer, I believe that the Muslim community should be at the forefront of supporting a uniform civil code. The objective of one code is that it will end discrimination in religions.





While penal codes apply equally to everyone in the country, citizens belonging to different religions and denominations follow different personal laws in matters relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody and guardianship of children, inheritance and succession, and adoption, which are not even codified in most places. It is certain that the UCC is going to have the most positive impact on the problems and issues related to women's rights. Although efforts have been made in past to make changes in the personal laws of all communities in the interest of women, with a handful of successes over time, a lot still remains to be accomplished. In fact, personal laws are deep-rooted in the societies they are practiced, fundamentally based on old customs, beliefs, and patriarchal religious interpretations, and are not easy to abolish as they usually appear.

On the ground much of the situation is unclear about UCC – Muslims feel that it is interference in their religious affairs, whereas it talks about gender parity and equal rights for all. The code has nothing to do with any one religion, it speaks of uniformity.

On the ground much of the situation is unclear about UCC – Muslims feel that it is interference in their religious

affairs, whereas it talks about gender parity and equal rights for all. The code has nothing to do with any one religion, it speaks of uniformity. At a time when the country is highly polarized along religious lines, any reform is propelled to be envisaged an onslaught on Islam by a mass of Muslims. Detractors argue that it will rob the nation of its religious multiplicity and would be violative of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. In fact, they deem that state action to bring in the UCC is contrary to the quintessence of democracy.

Looking at the status of women in society, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar said that the progress of a community is measured by the degree of progress that women have achieved. If we want the upliftment of any society, then we have to work towards the empowerment of the women of that society. For this, there is a need for a robust legal



system, which can protect women's interests and provide them with equal rights and justice. No doubt that the Muslim community is most in need of a uniform civil code. Keep in mind that in a community where women do not get equal rights legally, there can be no thought of social justice. If the Muslim community wants to give up its orthodox thinking and make a place in the mainstream and aspires to better the future of its children, then it must first give equal status to its women. A uniform civil code can be a great start.

Imagine polygamy, a misogynistic and patriarchal practice, under the disguise of religious practice in a secular country in the twenty-first century. It is abhorrent – morally, socially, and legally, and must be banned but the fact that it's legitimized makes it problematic. Albeit triple-talaq is banned (in the context of the talaq-e-biddat),

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talaq-e-hasan is still valid. In other religions, marriage can be dissolved only through a court of law. Due to the lack of accountability of the judiciary for the

prevalent divorces among Muslims, women always have to live in an atmosphere of fear. In cases where women get divorced through 'khula' (the situation in which the wife initiates divorce proceedings) remain at a loss. Women were not entitled to maintenance after divorce under The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, although the court has given this right under sections 125–128 of the CrPC, 1973. Vile practices such as Nikah halala have not ended in the community yet.

Child marriage has been a part of Muslim personal law and the courts and administrations are handicapped in these cases. The age of majority is not fixed; girls are allowed to get married as long as they have attained puberty. Although the right to freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right, it doesn't permit violation of women's



rights and cannot be invoked to justify discrimination. Legislatures require to ensure that violations of women's rights resulting from child marriage are not legitimized through discriminatory personal laws. Governments have an immediate legal obligation to eliminate discriminatory provisions in personal laws and to harmonize all laws on child marriage with international human rights standards.

The matters related to inheritance and succession are also complex in Muslim personal law – there is a lot of discrimination between sons and daughters in ancestral property. The share of a female heir on the property is half of that of the male heirs. There is no provision for the protection of the rights of daughters after marriage in the ancestral property and the rights of the wife in the property acquired after marriage are undefined. Although, this law has been changed in some states in

These issues are more related to human rights than religion and indicate that women are long-standing victims of prejudice in the community. Muslim women, however, face perhaps the greatest challenges due to multiple layers of discrimination rooted in religion, gender equality, and rule of law, yet even after 75 years of independence.

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These issues are more related to human rights than religion and indicate that women are long-standing victims of prejudice in the community. Muslim women, however, face perhaps the greatest challenges due to multiple layers of discrimination rooted in religion, gender equality, and rule of law, yet even after 75 years of independence.

Our Constitution makers had envisioned a uniform civil code through Article 44, so that every citizen would have equal rights and the unity and integrity of the country would be strengthened, but it could not be achieved until this day due to pseudo-politics. If a uniform civil code can be enforced in Goa, then why it can't be in the rest of the country?



By implementing a uniform civil code for all the citizens hundreds of religious- and customary-based laws in practice will be revoked, which is very essential for a progressive nation. At present, different laws are applicable for different religions, regions, and communities and most of them are patriarchal, regressive, and against the interest of women in society. Common law for dissolution of marriage through court would be applicable to all. Offspring, both male and female, will have equal rights in ancestral property, and discrimination based on religion, caste, region, and gender will end. In case of divorce, both the husband and wife will have equal rights in the property acquired post-marriage. There can be a proper legal arrangement for a reasonable and fair provision and maintenance of a woman who has not re-married and is not able to maintain herself after divorce.

In respect of bequests, donations,

distribution, adoption, etc., the same law would apply to all Indians, regardless of their religion. This would enable a comprehensive and unified law at the national level and would be equally applicable to all citizens. The separatist mentality arising out of having separate laws on the basis of caste, religion, and region will culminate and societies will be able to move fast toward building a united nation. Having different laws leads to unnecessary litigation and engages valuable resources, infrastructures, and government machinery, which can be redirected to focus on other priority issues of the country.

The Constitution lists the UCC among the Directive Principles of State Policy, which makes it a desirable objective, but it is not justiciable — that is, they are not subject to trial in a court of law. According to Article 37, “The provisions contained in this Part shall not be enforceable by any court, but the principles therein laid

down are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.” Article 44 is one of the DPSP, described in Part IV of the Constitution. Article 44 says, “The state shall endeavor to secure a uniform civil code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.” Just as the observance of the Constitution is the fundamental duty of all citizens, it is the moral duty of the government also to implement the Constitution 100%. In a secular country, there is no place for separate law on religious grounds, but we still have Hindu Marriage Act 1955, The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, and Special Marriage Act, 1954 in force. There is a bazaar of family laws based on faiths showcased in our so-called secular country. The situation is worst in other areas of family matters such as child custody/support, paternity, succession and inheritance, and adoption/foster care. There can be no two opinions that a secular nation needs to have secular laws which are gender-just. Until the time a uniform civil code is not implemented, it does not seem appropriate to call India secular.

Different laws based on religion, region, caste, and gender existing in India are like smoldering smoke in the extinguished fire of partition, which can explode and break the unity of the country at any time. It is necessary not only to maintain secularism but also to keep the integrity of the country intact. The day a draft of the uniform civil code will be prepared and the public will know its benefits, no one will oppose it. This will help end fundamentalism, communalism, regionalism, and linguism. Given that Hindu Code Bill has been amended almost to its full and women and men already have almost equal rights under this code, Hindu women may not get many benefits from a uniform civil code. However, Muslim women will get the maximum benefit from it, considering gender-based inequality in practice in their community.

The court cannot ask the government to enact, amend, or repeal a law, but it can express its position and is doing the same time and again. If the BJP-led government really wants to move towards a uniform civil code, then it will have to first win the trust of everyone and put forward a draft that can be discussed from home to Parliament.

The author is a lawyer based in Delhi.

UCC can bring lasting peace and unity in India

By Prince Prasanna

The introduction of a private member bill on the implementation of a uniform civil code (UCC) across the country witnessed vociferous protest from the opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Friday. Article 44 of our constitution says that “The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.” And what is constraining to implement UCC in our country is the personal laws. Personal Law is the law by which an individual is governed in respect of various matters such as principles relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, inheritance, guardianship, succession, etc. These personal laws in India are based on religion. And what UCC is trying to guide is that irrespective of their religion everyone should be governed by same laws with respect to marriage, inheritance, divorce, adoption etc. The bone of contravention here is that it may come in way of Article 25 ‘Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion’. And also the cultural rights of minorities.

What UCC can do?

The greatest thing UCC can do is that to bring justice to the age-long sufferings of women in every community. Every religion joins hands when it comes to the suppression of women. But what should be noted is that UCC cannot end the patriarchal system of society, it cannot prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is still practised in some parts of our country, it cannot prevent domestic violence from happening, and the most important thing is that UCC can never adopt Article 15 of our constitution which says “Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth” in the minds of our people as it said so.

As some may say that Equality before law can be achieved but is it true so? Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Secular is all there written in our constitution but is it there in the hearts of our people? Will a Hindu parent marry their son to a Muslim girl if they love one another? or vice versa? Is it possi-



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ble for a lower caste to marry a so-called higher caste in today’s India even after 73 years of adoption of our constitution? So merely a law cannot change the tradition of our society (in some cases), our people themselves should develop these rich values of fraternity and secularism and the State should promote this through value-based Education and through its secular activities.

What can be done?

And this is what our 21st law commission reports “Resolution of this conflict does not mean the abolition of difference. This Commission has therefore dealt with laws that are discriminatory rather than providing a uniform civil code which is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage. Most countries are now moving towards recognition of difference, and the mere existence of difference does not imply discrimination,

but is indicative of a robust democracy.”

Rather than going for Uniformity, we can appreciate the diversity of our nation as all community within a religion does not follow the same culture. Even though it looks complex for our judges to interpret law accordingly to those personal laws, no one size fits all approach should also be considered unless and until those are not discriminatory in nature. Removing those unjust practices like recently in triple talaq cases and property for women sounds better and safe than UCC. As the Father of our constitution Dr. B R Ambedkar, while formulating the Constitution had said that a UCC is desirable but for the moment it should remain voluntary, and thus Article 35 of the draft Constitution was added as a part of the Directive Principles of the State Policy in part IV of the Constitution of India as Article 44. It was incorporated in the Constitution as an aspect that would be fulfilled when the nation would be ready to accept it and the social acceptance to the UCC could be made.

Our constitutional makers sought some sort of unity in diversity and that’s the reason they have kept UCC in directive principles of state policy as well as Article 351. But they never mentioned on what grounds a common civil code should be made. Some say that UCC can bring unity among the people but marriage, succession, adoption etc are purely personal and how can it bring unity among the community? Before implementing Article 44, there are other DPSPs that are untouched by our leaders like Article 47 -prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks! We have been fighting for the upliftment of women and social justice since 17th century. And still, we cannot overcome the curse of Indian society – caste. Hence it is proved that a hundred laws may not prevent injustice and laws cannot reform the hearts of the people. The part of the government is done, now it shall be the duty of every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.



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A Chinese Trap and Pakistan's Game plan After FATF Exit

Srijan Sharma

Last year Indian Air Force Chief said that Pakistan is changing its strategy and had indicated a new developing strategy which is denoted by “Triple R”. i] The triple R here means rearticulate, reorganize and relocate. The changing military strategy of Pakistan is a result of certain geopolitical changes or opportunities which began forming after the Taliban takeover last year. However, with FATF exit recently, It may solidify and New Delhi has to push up its guard to deal with changing Pakistan's conventional and unconventional mixed game plan.

The Changing Strategy

There is not one regional or global level development but multiple developments spin in the past year which kept the matchstick burning in Islamabad. The first one is the fall of Kabul. Islamabad saw Kabul's fall as an opportunity to attain strategic depth against India. Second growing Pak-China nexus. Since the past year since the pandemic has begun and China's exercising provocative and aggressive maneuvers at the borders to create pressure on the other front which Pakistan saw as an opportunity to create two-front tensions





for India. The growing Pak-China cooperation had also resulted in breaking some defence-related deals with Pakistan like Submarines and drones[ii]. A few instances of build-up in the PoK like infrastructural and military are also some visible signs of Pakistan China increasing cooperation[iii] and Pakistan's intent to grow its capabilities with help of China. The third is the recent exit of Pakistan from FATF which would be instrumental in giving some financial openings to Pakistan's deep state. Things would be worse if gets added with the Chinese flavor of cooperation. Nepal elections have concluded, though the present PM Sher Bahadur has emerged as the winner K.P Sharma's deceitful political tactics may complicate things while forming and stabilizing the government and that might not be good news for New Delhi.[iv] As an obvious implication, crisscrossing of proxy dealings and terror funding viz-a-viz Nepal would surely get a boost. China's political lobbying would also get a good opening in Kathmandu. The recent appointment of Asim Munir as Pak Army chief who is called "Mulla

Islamabad's comfortable repositioning and Beijing's wait for an opportune moment is something for which New Delhi has to watch out in the coming time. At the global level, the Central Asian region would again come under Pakistan-China strategic considerations to squeeze New Delhi's footprints.

General" because of his radical approaches moreover, he is a straight arrow who knows how to sharpen the tip of the knife and hence New Delhi has

the watch the Af-Pak region with more caution. Both hostile neighbors, one is freed from long-standing shackles and the other is patiently waiting to assert its political and military charm. Islamabad's comfortable repositioning and Beijing's wait for an opportune moment is something for which New Delhi has to watch out in the coming time. At the global level, the Central Asian region would again come under Pakistan-China strategic considerations to squeeze New Delhi's footprints. Earlier, Islamabad's regional and global syncing with China was disrupted with a series of sanctions and watch on Pakistan which was further at least to some extent still complemented by its own issues at home. However, by freeing a tied hand, Islamabad would soon create something out of its franklin monster menu and revamp defunct unconventional and conventional machines against India. Perhaps, it would have consonance with what the IAF chief last year said about the "Triple R strategy". The Triple Rs- Rearticulation, Reorganize and Relocation becomes a key here for Pakistan to revamp its military and opera-



tional postures against India especially involving China factor in it. It is also imperative to understand what exactly this acronym means:

Decoding Triple R

The Triple R stands for Rearticulating, Reorganization, and Relocation

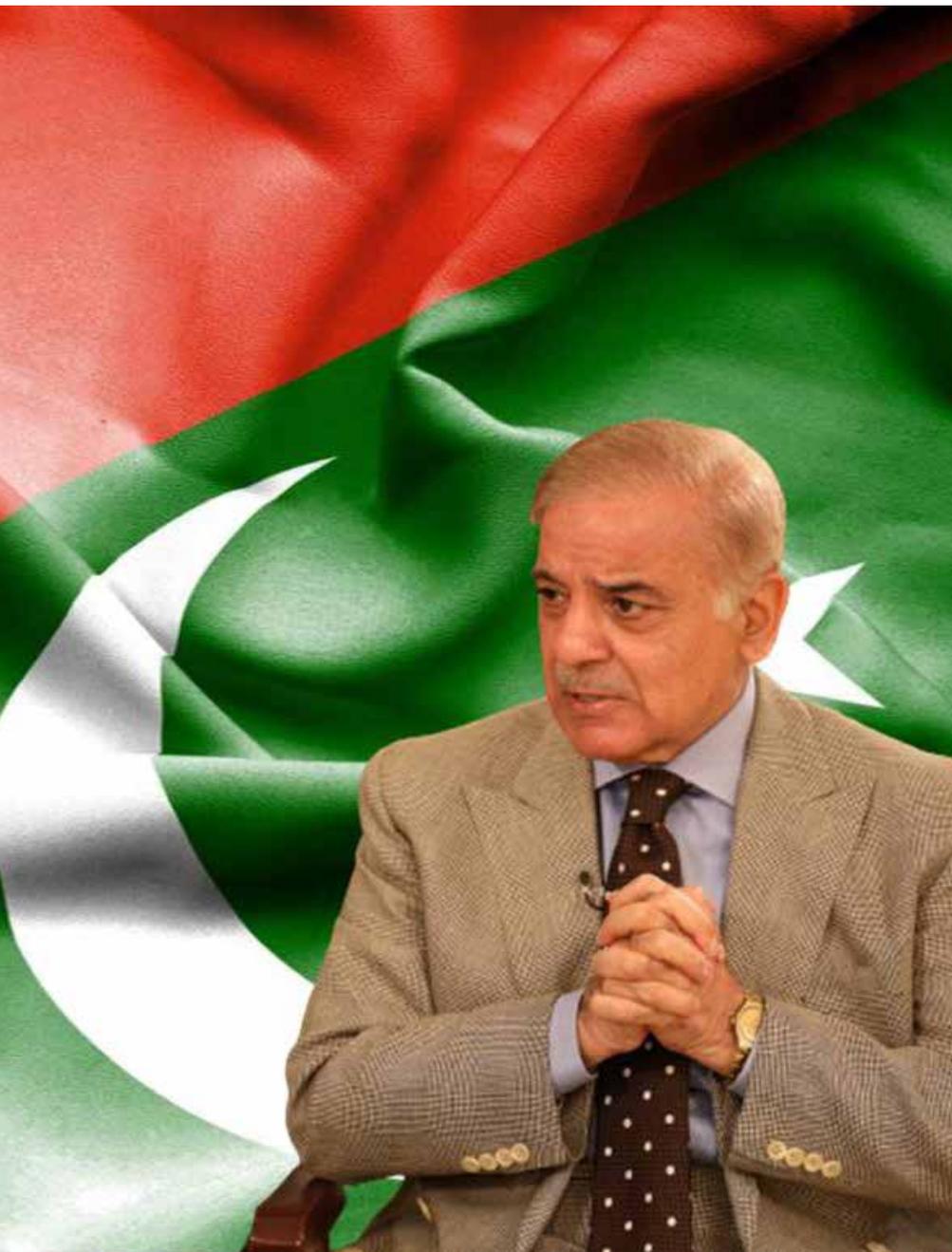
Rearticulate- Rearticulate the older conventional and unconventional strategies with new defence deals and military equipment to increase and upgrade operational capabilities against India. Given the fact that the Chinese are increasing their strategic acumen in the central Asian region with Russia which would eventually exacerbate Pak-China diplomatic friend hood in the Central Asian region to squeeze New Delhi's rapid efforts of increasing diplomatic

Pakistan would not leave any stone unturned in articulation especially in its terror networks and covert operations. Small-scale attacks in Jammu & Kashmir are quite visible in the recent past.

influence in the Central Asian region. On the unconventional front- Pakistan may increase their attempts to weave out new terror outfits in deep inside or

clandestine locations in Afghanistan against India(a part of strategic depth strategy), revamping terror modules and making new ways for crisscrossing borders for infiltration and subversion purposes. Pakistan would not leave any stone unturned in articulation especially in its terror networks and covert operations. Small-scale attacks in Jammu & Kashmir are quite visible in the recent past. Though, given some contradictory or adverse developments in Af-Pak region- Taliban and Pakistan army faceoff along with TTP threat[v], Islamabad may approach with caution that might delay some plans but cannot be ignored at New Delhi's end.

Reorganize- After rearticulating its conventional and unconventional arms, Pakistan will look at how to reorganize



its military presence at the borders. Strategically, Pakistan seems to have begun with it by starting a new airport at PoK which may have involved some reorganization work of the military or strengthening of military presence along with terror outfits. It can be said that Infrastructural developments may see a rise in the coming time.

Relocate- Relocation works parallel with reorganizing work. As indicated above Pakistan may weave terror outfits, it is possible that Pakistan relocates its terror camps near or deep inside Afghanistan or scatter them deeper so as to avoid detection. Relocation also involves the relocation of military assets near borders which may involve Chinese military assets to gain strength at the war and operational fronts.

Pakistan's Revival Exercise and a Chinese Trap

Pakistan's exit from FATF is most likely to put Pakistan in a revival exercise with China's backing. This exercise indicates that Pakistan would not leave any stone unturned in re-establishing the sync with China and playing diplomatic circus at regional and global levels especially against India. Islamabad more or less would now concentrate on reviving and re-strengthening the military structure. Pakistan a few days back made some strong choices of bringing Asim Munir as Pakistan Army Chief, this makes the picture slightly clear that Pakistan will go on to make some more choices which are absolutely hard. Islamabad would also start rapid efforts in making its military and national se-

curity apparatus capable to capitalize on possible opportunities emanating from the current geopolitical landscape. The indication is also towards possibilities of serious threats emanating out from Pakistan's re-strengthening exercise at the unconventional front because Pakistan uses an unconventional front maximum against India. The recent clash at Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh indicates that China is planning to lock India in a protracted conflict inspired by Mao's strategic thinking at the borders to hinder its resources capitalization and utilization at a juncture where India has assumed immense strategic significance and G-20 is at New Delhi's doors, here Beijing also aims to disturb India's external and internal strategic environment. In such circumstances, New Delhi has to develop a long view of the strategic realities of a Chinese trap and Pakistan's nefarious intentions to flare up the cross-border terrorism post their FATF exit. It is now required to boost all fronts (conventional and unconventional) increasing the number of fleets and military equipment and defence procurements to make our war capabilities superior and strong. Maybe New Delhi has begun spreading its vigilant web across the South Asian region and deploying effective deterrence and combative countermeasures to thwart the Chinese trap, the recent visit of R&AW Chief to Sri Lanka to caution and discuss security and strategic issues, especially on the issue of Chinese research ships which are most likely meandering in the Indian Ocean[vi] which led to the postponement of our ballistic missile test. This indicates at the New Delhi's part that New Delhi has started its heavy brainstorming to counter a slightly relaxed Pakistan and impatient China.

About the Author

Srijan Sharma is a national security analyst specializing in Intelligence and security analysis. Worked as a Research Assistant in India's oldest and most prestigious think tanks- the United Service Institution of India. He has also extensively written on matters of security and strategic affairs for various institutions, journals, and newspapers. Currently, he is a guest contributor to the JNU School of International Studies. He has also served as Defence Editor for a journal.

The rise of the e-dragon: Rise of China as a dominant Power in the Electrified Globe

Energy has been one of the most dominant factors shaping the geo-political environment across continents. The changing dynamic changes like the Armenia-Azerbaijan tensions or the Ukraine-Russia conflict, have shown the world its vulnerabilities, specially when it comes to energy needs and global supply chain of the semi-conductor industry, badly effecting the auto-industry.

As the world started recovering for the aftermaths of the pandemic, this energy shortage broke the spine of almost all nations due to the un-controlled swings in the international oil-markets,

thus forcing the nations to shift from a fossil-fuels to renewable energy. The falling prices of the renewable energy sources which have fallen to an extent of more than 80-85%, that makes it even cheaper to traditional fuels like coal and crude.

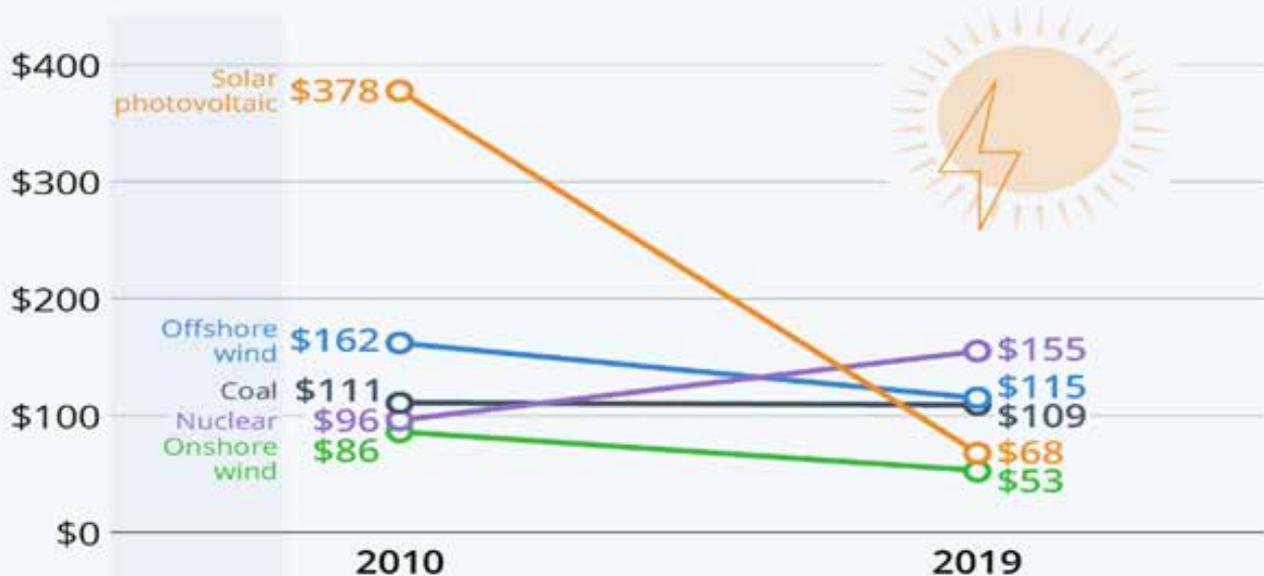
The Communist Party of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was very far sighted in perusing its renewable energy demand in pursuit of overcoming its energy necessities to manage its internal power needs of the 2nd largest user of energy globally, providing space to the Communist Party of China (CPC) shows its strength to its neighbours to

diverge the focus of its angry population towards external entities and actions.

This is a result of the far sightedness of the CPC's Leader Hu Jintao that prepared its industries to fly later by attracting investments from all across the world by setting up what is known as the Special Economic Zones or the SEZ's. The rise of China as a global power in the solar energy segment has been a result of the deals signed by the PRC while taking advantage of the falling state of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the nation with the largest reserves of Cobalt in the world, to take control of the cobalt mine almost 15 years prior

The Falling Cost of Renewable Energy

Price per megawatt hour of electricity, by source*



* Global weighted average of levelized costs of energy (LCOE), without subsidies. Source: OurWorldinData.org

Source: World Economic Forum and Statista



as to when the world realised the need Solar Energy which supplies the crucial element “Cobalt” for the production of Solar Equipment by exchanging petty programs for the people of DRC.

The dominance of PRC is a clear indication of the how the country has strategically made the entire globe dependent on it for such a technology and also the raw material used to manufacture the same. The story of the Chinese nation is a case study for all, showing the way to the global community that how cheap labour could also be a threat to the investors might.

The establishment of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) headquartered in India and the vision of “One Sun One World One Grid” or the OSO-WOG presented by the honourable PM of India is not only seen as a plan to counter the monopoly of China in the market but also an effort to de-couple the economic exploitation of countries like DRC by the “Mighty Dragon” .

While both Dr. Singh and Mr. Modi have been forward-thinking and their focus on the solar industry’s strategic and economic relevance. Dr. Manmo-

PRC and India both lagged behind other countries in the solar business 20 years ago. Back in 2003, PRC’s contribution to global solar production was just 2%. At now, PRC accounts for 80%. Chinese enterprises dominate the global solar industry, making up eight of the top 10 firms.

han Singh proposed this idea of establishing “Solar Valleys” in India more than a decade back , India has fallen far behind PRC’s solar manufacturing and

(“solar”) technology.

PRC and India both lagged behind other countries in the solar business 20 years ago. Back in 2003, PRC’s contribution to global solar production was just 2%. At now, PRC accounts for 80%. Chinese enterprises dominate the global solar industry, making up eight of the top 10 firms. PRC has gone from having a little rural-oriented solar programme in the 1990s to potentially becoming the world’s greatest renewable energy source today.

The production of polysilicon, ingots, and wafers, three essential components of solar panels, are all essentially monopolised by the Dragon . It produces virtually all of the world’s solar ingots and wafers, and controls sixty-four percent of the polysilicon supply. Around 80% of India’s solar panels and other equipment are made in PRC. In 2018-19, India imported more than USD two billion worth of solar equipment’s.

The PRC provided their companies with almost everything they can for free to keep them alive unlike the American counterparts, due to which the number of solar manufacturing units consider-



ably fell in the United-States.

To promote production of solar power equipment within the country, Solar Energy Corporation of India had solicited bids from interested parties, with the expectation that the winning bidders would establish a solar manufacturing unit within its borders, alongside a solar energy project, for which Solar Energy Corporation of India would guarantee long-term power purchase agreements.

To attract large sums of money, private investors need the government's full backing in the form of incentives and policies. To compete with Chinese solar producers, India might either establish a number of state-owned enter-

prises (PSEs) or expand existing ones (perhaps this is what Nehru would have done).

This administration, if unable to think and behave like Nehru, could at least mimic Xi Jinping's style of leadership.

To break our reliance on Chinese-made solar components, India must establish a domestic solar supply chain, solar manufacturing, and solar research and development environment.

The Indian government has set the goal of constructing 175 Giga Watt of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022. To achieve this goal, the United States would need to annually add 25 Giga Watt of solar manufacturing ca-

capacity through 2030. There has to be a major push by the government to create a Solar India. We've missed a lot of buses in the past. We can't miss this bus for the world.

In the modern world transitioning from an era ruled by the dependence of crude to the world of green energy, where the climate change has become a cause of great concern it is necessary for the global community to safeguard the means of energy needs by not only breaking the monopoly of PRC but by standing against the economic and social abuse by the mighty dragon on the tiny nations like the DRC. The issue is of a great geo-political importance and of survival in the future as well.

Turning of the Tide: A Geopolitical Quandary for the West

Ainesh Dey

It is no secret today, that the world has experienced profound geopolitical implications, on the larger pretext of a drastic change in international equilibrium. Gone are the days of the Cold War tinged with the hegemonic influence of the

The United States and its European allies, popularly referred to as the “West”, to rest in the annals of history for time immemorial, thereby leading to a significant strategic polarisation of world politics. The dawn of the 21st Century witnessed a remarkable resurgence of new players, once tamed by the West, as present hallmarks of interna-

tional order.

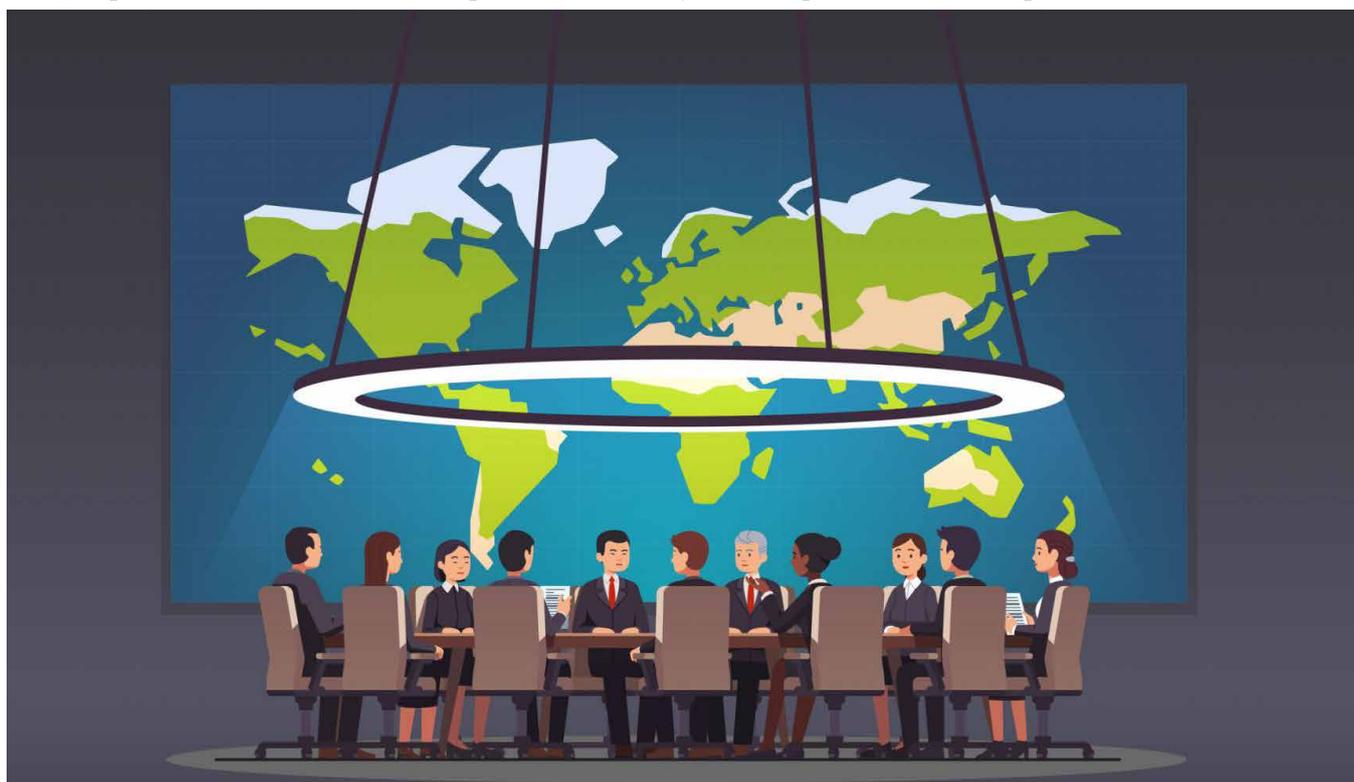
Touted as the “Eastern Horizons of Power”, the Asian and African subcontinents have carved a niche for themselves in the changing political climate. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided the premise for the pronounced role of regional giants like China, being the epicenter, and the effort to resort to newer forms of diplomacy, more specifically the aspect of “vaccine diplomacy”, adopted by Asian titans like India, have shaken the very foundations of the existing notion of unipolarity. Therefore the proposition of a dramatic shift of the once puissant Western sphere of influence is highly pertinent and hardly is there a presence

of a speck of skepticism, in my humble opinion.

The Decline of the West: The Historical Rhetoric and Present Implications

Joseph Nye, an American intellectual, writing in 2010 stated that “the rise and decline of nations have always played a significant role in a more historical assessment of international relations”, hinting towards the need to understand the very subtle nuances of the twin processes of rise and fall. Taking into account this very context, it is imperative to delve into the past in order to relate to the present.

The premises of the World Wars





and the Cold War might have led to an institutionalization of international order skewed toward the United States and the Soviet Union. Little did one know, that the very demise of the USSR in 1991, and the consequent emergence of the very notion of “Unipolarity”, was to place the West in a perilous position?

Despite instances of unsolicited Western interference during the Gulf War in the 90s, unfolding of conflicts in Haiti, Zaire and Yugoslavia, the latter being eminent for the “Bulldozer Revolution”, that overthrew former President Milosevic, a crumbling reputation of the West and America’s notion of “Pax Americana”, was to become even more evident.

Moreover, the failure of diplomacy, with regard to the situation in Afghanistan, continues even to this day especially in the context of the return of the “Taliban” regime, and the consequent consolidation of global terrorism, commencing from the 9/11 attacks in the US, raised an unfavorable public uproar and the consequent diminishing of the role of the West in global politics, thereby propelling her to complete geopolitical conundrum.

The Rise of Asia: An overview of the gradual implications

Surveys conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2011, showed that the percentage of individuals who believed

that China would replace the US as the major global power rose from 40% to 49%. Moreover, the case otherwise, in favour of the US, fell from 44% to 36% , resembling the very foundations of a possible anti-western outlook, especially after 2011, as suggested by the researchers, given the context of the 2008 financial crisis.

However, instances of China not being the sole economic superpower, have also been manifest. Extensive research conducted, shows that public opinion in countries like Mexico, Poland and Britain is not totally skewed toward the Chinese perspective and the support of the same fell to 37% in 2013.

On the contrary, the emerging Asian economies of India and Japan are at par. Furthermore, the rise of regional alliances such as the BRICS and ASEAN has also portrayed a sense of multipolarity and equal division, rather than excess economic monopoly.

The more recent phenomenon of politico-economic globalisation, therefore remains inclusive of the trend when more and more states would develop their respective sets of policies and schemes, bearing in mind the larger global interests

In light of a new political order, there is a demand for a blend of international welfare and new models of supranational government and co-ordination of the overall global processes placed on the pedestal of ideological pluralism.

The Present-Day Scenario:

The year 2022, has witnessed a greater sequence of events that has led to a significant change of strategic perception. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, the subsequent unfolding of the Russo – Ukrainian and Israeli- Palestinian conflicts, and most importantly, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, eyebrows have been raised, and incidences of political blame game have surfaced.

Certainly with the renewed tensions and the relative prevalence of an atmosphere of a “Second Cold War”, the geopolitical sanctity of the West can no longer be glossed over. The shift to Indo-Pacific is a unique international strategy of the world to turn to newer centers of power. With raging issues of climate change, mental health and the need to annihilate global terrorism, the Asian, African and Latin American Subcontinents have played an integral in substantially laying down international benchmarks for the same.

With India surpassing the United Kingdom on certain economic parameters and the continued influence of China and Japan along with the broader levels of dialogue at regional organizations such as the SCO, BIMSTEC and the aforementioned BRICS, ASEAN and MERCOSUR, it could be called that 21st Century is steadily moving towards decreased Western interests, and in a nutshell, a policy of de – Westernisation, altogether.

Want to Stop Gender Violence? Then Ask the Right Questions

By Ruchi Saini

“Live-in relationships are a wrong practice and are leading to crime. These ‘educated’ girls are paying for this... It should be completely banned”, were the words of the Union Minister of State for Housing about the murder of twenty-seven-year-old Shraddha Walker. Shraddha was strangled by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawala after a heated argument in their Delhi flat, who then chopped her body and kept it in the refrigerator. According to the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, the murder is a part of “a well-planned conspiracy taking place in the country to target Hindu girls through Love Jihad. Lakhs of Shraddhas become victims”.

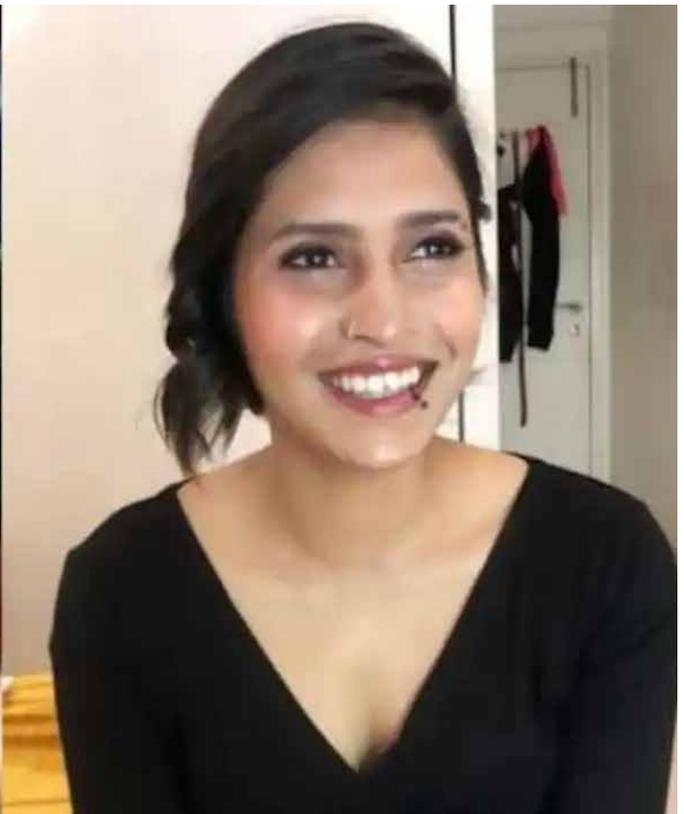
A ghastly case of violence against women has yet again been appropriated by right-wing and patriarchal apolo-

gists to further their parochial views around women, religion, and modernity. The aim is to send a clear message to the modern, independent, and educated Indian woman - “Transgress the codes of the Hindu patriarchal society, and risk becoming a victim of gender crime”. These codes include the importance of the heterosexual institution of marriage and the prohibition of inter-religious marriage as a safeguard for women from violence.

Unsurprisingly, none of these claims stand their ground when verified. According to the latest round of the National Family Health Survey in India (NFHS 2019-21), approximately 30% of married Indian women faced domestic and sexual violence, and no significant difference was observed in violence reported by Hindu and non-Hindu married women. Additionally, out of the respondents who reported ex-

periencing physical abuse, the vast majority belonged to poor and uneducated backgrounds. Clearly, being married or less educated does not protect women from violent crimes in India, and neither does the perpetrators’ religious affiliation.

The problem is that when it comes to violence against women, we simply do not ask the right questions. If we are serious in our commitment to understanding and preventing gender crime, then instead of asking what could Shraddha have done to prevent her murder, we need to ask what is it that empowered Aftab to gruesomely murder a woman who left her family for him. Also, what is it that disempowered Shraddha, despite her independence and education, to suffer the abuse inflicted by Aftab before her murder? As long as we continue to ask the wrong questions, we will get the wrong an-





swers. Far from enabling us to understand or solve the problem of violence against women, the answers will work towards reifying existing gendered and sexist social structures that facilitate such abuse.

It is not the female victim's lifestyle choices, but rather the norms, beliefs, and motivations of the male perpetrator that are the source of gender violence. Another equally important source is a society that is quick to assign blame to victims, whether it is the clothes they were wearing, their marital status, or religious affiliation. For those wondering why Shraddha did not lean on personal and professional networks to escape the abusive relationship, I suggest that they take a cursory look at the Islamophobia, victim-blaming, and slut-shaming unleashed on social and print media post of her murder. Even death could not protect Shraddha from the callous and misogynistic scrutiny of our society, such is the fate of innocent victims of violence in our nation!

In my current research study with female students at a public uni-

versity in India, many shared how the personal and professional support systems available to victim-survivors of gender violence are plagued with rampant sexism, misogyny, and prejudice. This awareness often stops them from formally reporting abusive cases or sharing them with their friends or family. Equally significant is our national obsession with the "drama and trauma" constructions of violence, evident in the sensationalizing of Shraddha's murder case. This obsession draws the focus away from less attention-grabbing, yet equally insidious manifestations of verbal and psychological violence inflicted on women and children in Indian families on an almost everyday basis.

Let us not reserve our rage exclusively for fatal victims of gender violence, or those with visible marks of physical assault such as bruises, cuts, etc. Let us also rage for the wife who endures verbal abuse from her husband to keep the family together, the daughter-in-law who endures economic deprivation because of social conditioning, and the trans friend disowned by their fam-

ily because of the prioritization of social mores over the child's happiness.

At the end of the day, a perpetrator of violence is not created in a vacuum. Instead, it is a combination of personal, situational, and sociocultural factors that enable an individual to commit violence. Instead of blaming the victim or pathologizing the perpetrator, we need to ask ourselves: What aspects of a heteronormative and patriarchal society help sustain these horrific acts? Equally important is the challenging task of questioning the extent of our complicity in sustaining psychological or verbal violence in our families, workplaces, or interpersonal relationships. It is only then that we can start building the foundation of a truly egalitarian nation that provides a safe space for its women and gender minorities to thrive, prosper, and contribute to national success.

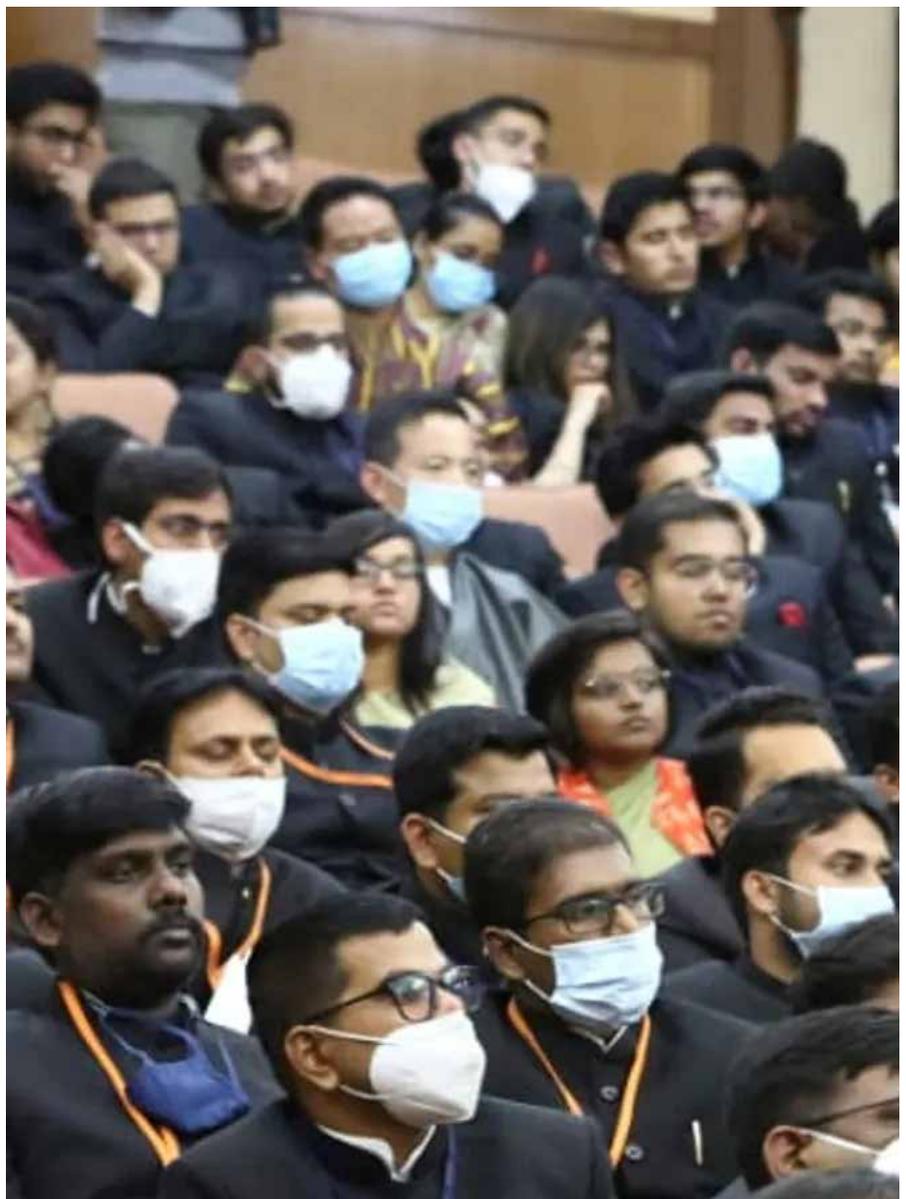
Writer is a research scholar at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her current study investigates how universities shape female students' experiences with gender violence in India.

Constitutional and bureaucratic reforms—the urgent necessity in India

By Atul Sehgal

The last eight years have been momentous in India's tumultuous history as an independent nation. They have seen India's image soar high in the world and the nation gains geopolitical importance and respect. The Narendra Modi Government has to be complimented for the visionary steps taken to accelerate the nation's overall development. But when we see the progress and pace of this process, we feel humbled by the comparison with our neighbouring country China whose economic status was at par with India till 1992 when the per capita GDP of both countries stood at around USD 350. But China's rapid progress after 1995 saw its economic growth surge to catapult it to the status of the world's second-largest economy in less than 30 years. Today China's economy is nearly six times that of India and its per capita GDP is also that much higher at around USD 12500.

If India is to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025 and the world's #2 economy by 2047, it has to do different things. China is certainly not the model for such things. China is a totalitarian state which has reached a high stage of development through a nondemocratic approach, an approach not in line with the natural pattern of human development. But more specifically, it is India's weaknesses and lacunae in its administrative setup which require to be removed. Unfortunately, this matter has not caught the attention of the extant



government so far.

A government functions through its administrative machinery, the bureaucracy and the laws and rules that apply to the working of that bureaucracy. But if the laws and rules are antiquated, obsolete and obstructive to progress, what results can we expect? The Indian bureaucratic apparatus is modelled on the archaic Indian Civil Services Act of 1861 which was enacted by the vain-glorious British after crushing India's war (mutiny) of Independence in 1857. The British Parliament decided that India will be governed by proper Acts and laws made there through a bureaucratic framework that will systematically serve their ends—exploitation and economic plunder of their colony. The vertical hierarchy bureaucratic system designed by the British was the result of above thought. And it served them excellently till they left the shores of India in 1947.

This system was unfit for sovereign India and should have been discarded

The British Parliament decided that India will be governed by proper Acts and laws made there through a bureaucratic framework that will systematically serve their ends—exploitation and economic plunder of their colony. The vertical hierarchy bureaucratic system designed by the British was the result of above thought. And it served them excellently till they left the shores of India in 1947.

when India began its journey as a sovereign state. Both India's Constitution which was a patchwork out of the Indian Independence Act 1935 and the British time Acts needed to be thrown to the dustbin and replaced by a Constitution and Acts in sync with India's cultural milieu to serve as an effective and progressive governance apparatus.

It is not difficult for anyone to observe that corruption and inefficiency have plagued Indian bureaucracy all through and even during the last 8 years when the political leadership is far more honest and committed than that before 2014, our bureaucracy is not producing good results and shows practically the same old inept and corrupt behaviour.





Despite some creditable steps taken by the government—repeal of many redundant minor laws, the promulgation of IBC, establishment of the GST and digitization of many processes, fast economic growth has eluded us due to antiquated administrative and judicial systems unfit for free India. The present political dispensation in India has taken some unprecedented, bold measures to give a push to the development process but bigger, bolder and broader reforms cry to be carried out. These will produce far-reaching changes in our legislative, executive and judicial systems to give a vibrant, new India in which the pulse of the people will throb in sync with these systems.

It may be mentioned in this connection that nowhere in Western Europe or other developed worlds do we find the vertical hierarchy bureaucracy. It is either a horizontal spread or hybrid type of bureaucratic structure in evidence in most of the developed countries. The vertical hierarchy model of bureaucracy is a sucker model as it attaches to the

higher administrative echelons more power and less accountability.

We must change this bureaucratic system in India sooner than later. This should be preceded by Constitutional reforms to give a new Constitution suitable for a progressive sovereign India, a Constitution which will also be in line with the original draft prepared by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar but mutilated and spoilt by the intrigues of the top political leadership at that time. It must be stated here that India is the originator of political democracy of purest form—in the form it was first blueprinted by Lord Manu in the primeval scripture Manusmriti. This scripture also delineates the proper laws that need to be promulgated in a democratic state for perfect governance. The original draft of our Constitution had taken threads from Manusmriti and some other prominent Indian scriptures but regrettably, the machinations of the British and their Indian stooges undid what good work had been done in the first drafting of our Constitution. No wonder,

the final Constitution only facilitated the continuation of the archaic British time Acts even in independent India. It needs to be emphasized here again that all these Acts were made for India as a British colony to be plundered and were entirely unsuitable for India as a sovereign state.

I can state with confidence and certainty that a new Constitution and Acts in line with the above suggestions along with a reformed bureaucracy in line with India's pristine political ideology will catalyze India's development, giving it a momentum of economic growth even faster than that of China. It will be in sync with the native culture of Indians and will give this ancient nation its strong pristine identity. It will speedily establish India as the sole economic and geopolitical superpower, its rightful place in the comity of nations—a place it has proudly maintained for millennia in the course of global history.

(Writer is based in New Delhi and can be contacted at atul4956@gmail.com)

CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYMENT IS A BIG TROUBLE

By Arpit Sharma

Contractual workers or temporary workers is not an unfamiliar term for us as this kind of recruitment has been in practice for the past many decades by private companies as well as the governments of the day also. It is apparent that the private firms are profit motive driven and thus they use the tool of appointing non-permanent employees. But this means of appointment is a hindrance to India's spirit, where the cynosure is People's welfare rather than profit-making.

On one hand, the Central Government is moving with the process of disinvestment and surrendering several posts, but on the other side, state governments have started portraying a new example by regularising the contractual workers which is a remarkable step.

Need for getting rid of contractual culture

Contractual workers though appointed by the government, have always been treated as irregular employees with no security of tenure and reduced wages in comparison to permanent em-

ployees. The irony lies in the fact that permanent and non-permanent employees both have been working alike, devoting their time and spirit to their work but they are being paid differentially. Contractual employees also do not have any access to medical care, provident fund facility and any sort of pension. Their working period also generates a 'state of confusion' about whether they will become permanent or not and whether their contract will be renewed or not. Especially youth have to face this major setback because while waiting in the hope of getting a shift to the permanent grade they turn over age for several competitive exams. Many times, state governments have vacancies for permanent staff but instead of filling those positions they hire individuals on a contractual basis thus putting the fate of thousands and lakhs undecided and in a way exploiting them financially, physically and mentally also. When an individual doesn't know how long he/she will be continuing with a particular department, affinity won't be developed and the fullest potential may not be utilized.

Plausible response of States

In such circumstances where the

permanency of work is denied in most spaces, state governments of Odisha, Punjab and Rajasthan have responded by regularizing non-permanent employees. This is a quite bold step that several states feel is difficult to take due to obvious financial reasons.

In Odisha, CM Patnaik announced not only regularizing 57000 contractual employees but also abolishing the contractual appointment system. He used the term a golden moment in the history of Odisha'. Similarly in Rajasthan, more than 1 lakh employees will be taken under the permanent staff category and in Punjab about 25,000 employees will be regularized. Surely this move will lay a burden on the state exchequer {like Odisha will have to suffer a sum of 1300 Crores per annum} but this move will facilitate the lives of many families and will add new colors to their lives also. We should also remember that money is not the ground which should be compared with the people, and this move should not be observed as an extra expenditure rather we should look at it as a must expenditure.

This move even has socio-political consequences. In a way, this action must have created an impact on the employees who were impermanent but also on the already regular employees whom the state is committed to working for them. This will have a long-term political impact on society. It will gather praise and will be welcomed by several communities. Also, it will boost the monetary stability of middle-class people since employees of Groups C and D will become permanent.

However, this is just the beginning and several employees in different states are on a contractual basis. For only name's sake, they are government employees else their lives are really miserable. Permanency in employment is important not just to win the confidence of workers but to provide them freedom from fear of getting fired and for pursuing their aspirations also.



DOWNSIDERS OF ONLINE GAMING

Ayushi Raghuwanshi

With the expansion in the user base of online games worldwide, grave concerns have come to light in the recent past. There are several risks which are associated with online transactions and needless to mention that gaming involves transactions online. Exacerbating the situation there has been a rise in crimes committed with the intent of meeting the financial expenses/debt incurred during gaming. To top it all, a mental disorder due to online gaming has

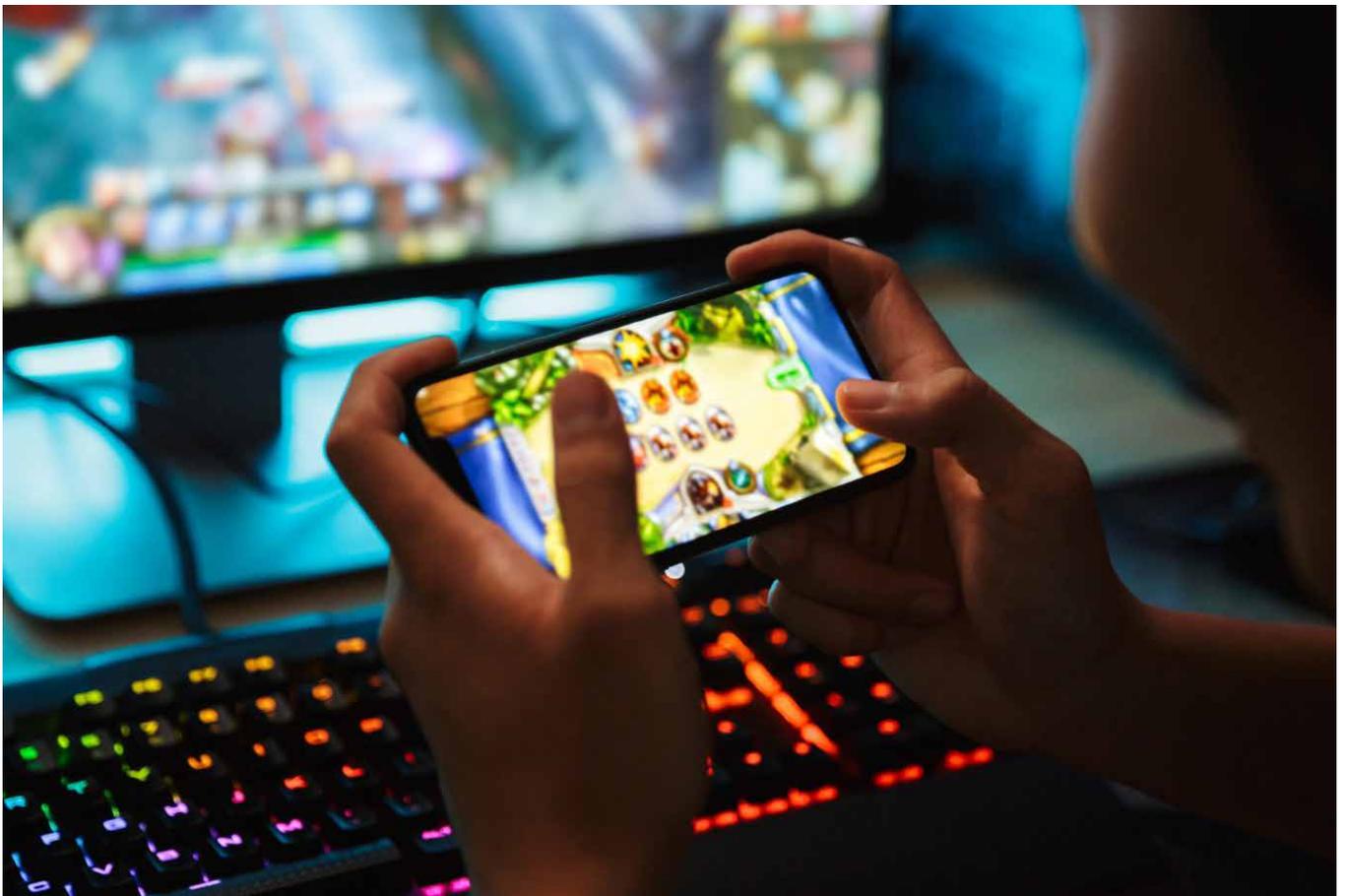
now been officially added to the list of disorders in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems by WHO (World Health Organization).

Online gaming disorder

The World Health Organization (WHO) responsible for taking care of International public health described video game addiction as one of the official mental health disorders by adding 'gaming disorder' to "International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems" or "ICD-11"

which has been effective from January 2022. ICD organizes health data on a global scale and has applications worldwide covering all health conditions.

WHO described 'Gaming disorder' in ICD-11 as a "pattern of gaming behavior ("digital-gaming" or "video-gaming") characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences."



According to a study published in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health 2020, about 3.5 percent of Indian adolescents suffer from Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). The rate is 0.5 per cent higher than the global average .

On a global scale, the gaming disorder was found at 3.05% according to 2021 systematic review and meta-analysis which brings the figures of the people suffering from gaming disorder to around 60 million people or even more .

“According to a WHO report, addiction to online games is equal to substances like cocaine, drugs and gambling. This is a kind of temporary psychotic stage in which the gamer forgets about the conscience and just follows the instructions,” said Shamsi Akbar, former research officer, the Department of Geriatric Mental Health, King George’s Medical University .

Consequential crimes

The disorder is associated with aggressive behavior when not allowed to play games. Many instances have come to light in the recent past in India which made headlines in the newspapers.

In Lucknow, two minors addicted to online gaming committed crimes

In Lucknow, two minors addicted to online gaming committed crimes because of online gaming. One stole Rs 4.5 lakh from his own house to play the game and the other killed his mother .

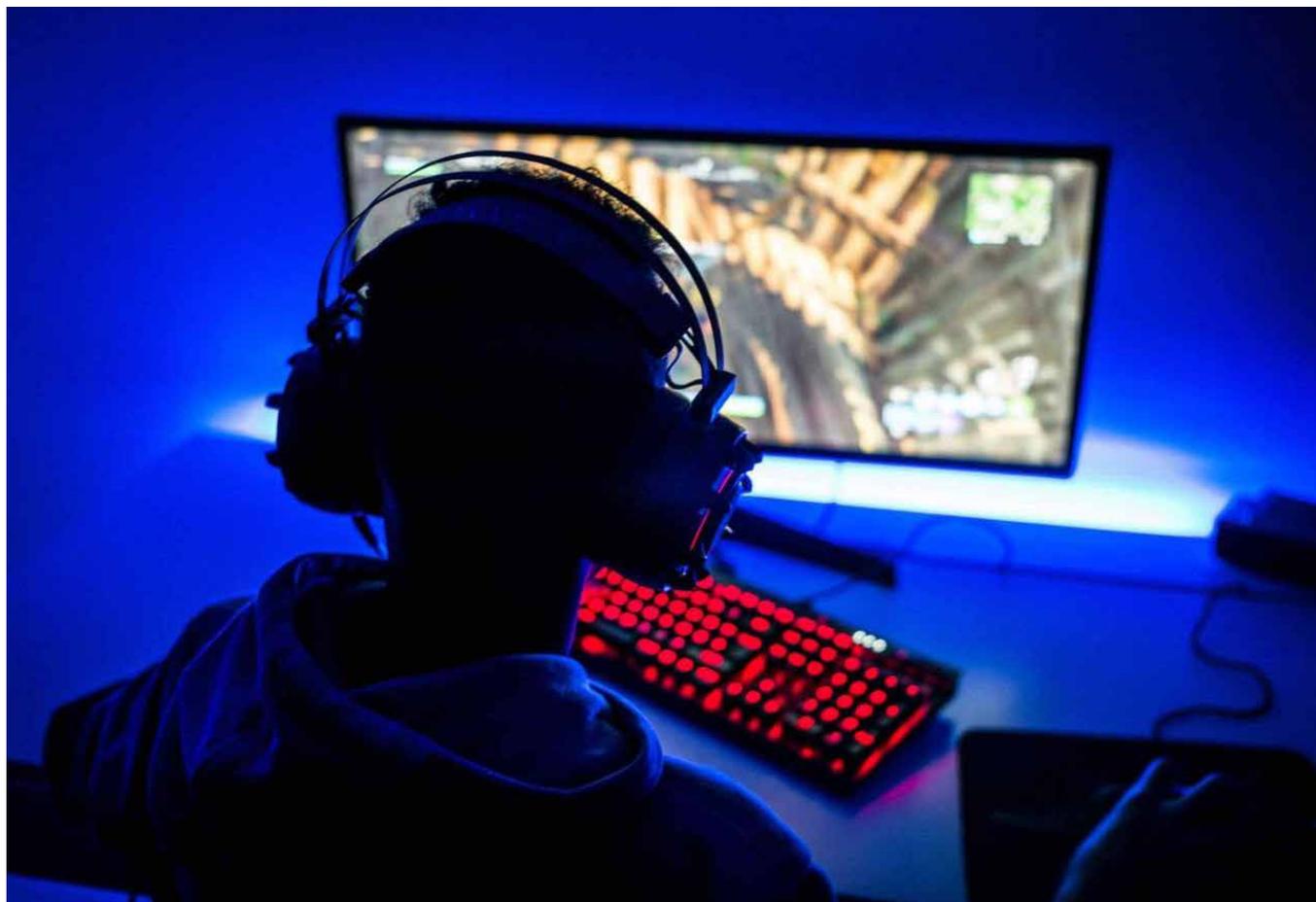
because of online gaming. One stole Rs 4.5 lakh from his own house to play the game and the other killed his mother . In another incident, a minor from Hyderabad lost Rs 36 Lakhs which was his family’s entire life savings while playing an online game . In yet another incident a college-going student faked his abduction and demanded Rs 1 lakh from his family when he lost money in online gaming .

One such instance in Madhya Pradesh where a 26-year-old man withdrew a sum of Rs 8,51,000 from his maternal grandfather’s account to meet his debt incurred in playing online satta in IPL led the High Court of Madhya

Pradesh to issue orders to the Law and legislative department of the Union and the State of Madhya Pradesh to examine the legality of such online gambling schemes .

The players are resorting to crimes in order to pay the debt that is being incurred in different forms due to online gaming. More often the crimes are against their own family members. The crimes include stealing money, staging their own abduction/kidnapping, resorting to robbery, hurting their own family members etc. Numerous cases are being reported where people have lost money from the bank accounts through credit/debit cards and their own children are responsible for such transactions. An instance in which a woman reported online fraud of Rs. 25,000/- turned out that her minor children used that money for in gaming purchase .

The number of such extreme cases is on the rise but the number of those who are addicted to online gaming may be far more than the cases which are brought to light. In most of the cases, until the behavior of the addict becomes violent, it is overlooked “If you clear one level, you are introduced to another challenge. This keeps the young people captivated round the clock, and they get





socially alienated ” and that is how this never ends.

Online gaming behavior

Online harassment in the form of trolling, offensive name-calling, threats of physical harm, stalking, doxing etc during online gaming has been observed. The harassment takes a toll on the mental well-being of the players leaving them upset, disrupting their personal relations with people, their performance at work or studies etc. 71% of the harassment qualifies as “severe abuse” which is inclusive of stalking, physical threats and continual harassment according to ADL (Anti Defamation League) .

Some key findings of ADL report-

- Three in five (60%) respondents between the ages of 13 and 17 experienced harassment in online multiplayer games
- The biggest increases in harassment included women (49% said they’d been harassed in 2021 compared to 41% in 2020), Black Americans (52% in 2021 compared to 31% in 2020) and Asian Americans (38% in 2021 compared to 26% in 2020)
- A quarter of young people reported hiding their identity at all times to avoid harassment online, while 40% said they sometimes hide their identity.

It is a common and fallacious perception that gaming and technology is the arena of men. Women are therefore not welcome to participate and consequently face attacks with sexist slurs out of spite of winning or making any mistake. Many games are designed to depict only men as players and objectify women.

Sexism in Online gaming

It has been found that 20% of female gamers in the gaming industry have been victims of sexual harassment from other gamers. The harassment has been in the form of rape or death threats and comments objectifying them. Around 59% of women hide their gender on online gaming platforms to avoid this harassment and sexism .

It is a common and fallacious perception that gaming and technology is

the arena of men. Women are therefore not welcome to participate and consequently face attacks with sexist slurs out of spite of winning or making any mistake. Many games are designed to depict only men as players and objectify women. Thus women choose to hide their identity and gender to avoid being called out and harassed. Many women give up participating in online gaming as a result of such encounters. This leads to the ostracization of women from the industry.

Other Risks Involved

Today games majorly involve social interactions through online chats, instant messaging, conversing, etc and intruders attempt at taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of the software and gather personal information, credit/debit card information, steal identity etc. There are several other risks related to online gaming like Malware downloads, cyberbullying, data breaches, cross-site scripting, Ddos attacks etc.

In a Nutshell

Immediate attention from the gaming industry is required to aid in mitigating the risks at their end to ensure the smooth and risk-free functioning of the games. This is imperative for the industry to thrive and is also in the interests of the players.

(Writer is a practicing advocate)

Data Is The Real King

By Chet Kapoor

It's been well-established that Gen Z – those between the ages of 18 and 24 – are “digital natives.” Their lives are driven by tech and they have a low tolerance for user experiences that don't live up to their expectations of performance and speed.

But real-time isn't just being demanded by a demographic slice of India's population. It's a necessity across the board. Winning organizations take data, process it, and use it to deliver an instantaneous experience to the customer – whether that customer is an internal logistics manager, warehouse worker, or a 20-something posting on social media.

Think about an organization where, at each moment, a recommendation engine is talking to every part of the business – sharing immediate data on live sales and inventory, the purchasing pipeline, and all the context that impacts the business (market conditions, supply chain issues, even weather). This is a goal that many if not all, enterprises should strive for.

Organizations that rely on processing data in batches and depend on analysts to review dashboards cannot deliver data-driven actions when it matters most – and they will be left behind.

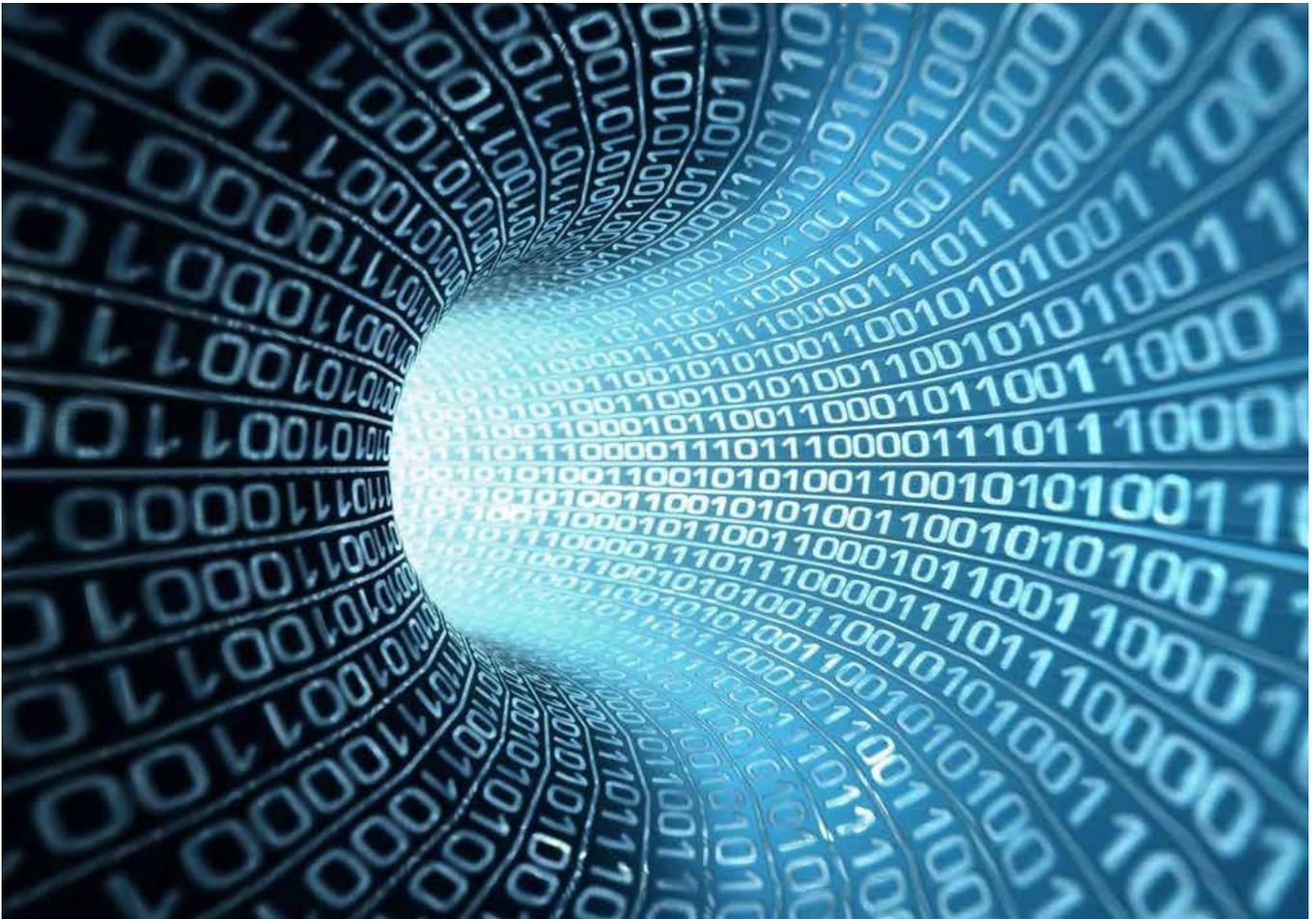
The great news is that today, the right technology exists to enable every app to meet every customer with smart, real-time action. Let's take a look at

what real-time data can do and how to activate it in every app, for all kinds of customers.

Where real-time data is today

Consumers love apps that meet them at the speed of life. Take Starbucks as an example. The Seattle-based coffee company's app, with 31 million users, is the second most popular point-of-sale app, behind Apple Pay.

When a customer orders a drink via the Starbucks app, they expect it to be ready within minutes. They also expect real-time updates throughout the ordering process. And when a customer comes into a store, they get real-time recommendations, based on ordering





preferences, past purchases, and even the season. Behind the scenes, Starbucks needs to ensure it has all the right ingredients, someone there to make the drink, an estimate of when the order will be ready for pickup, and the technology to communicate when the order is ready. All of this needs to happen in real-time.

It isn't just consumer apps that have evolved. BlackBuck has developed a digital freight and fleet management platform that simplifies the process of booking freight loads, providing shippers of all sizes instantaneous access to the right truck, at the right time, for the right price.

Starbucks, Blackbucks, and so many other enterprises can't deliver these experiences – or reap the rewards they offer – without the right technology.

The open data stack

The term “real-time” has been around for years. “Reactive apps” were promoted as the next big thing in the early 2000s. But the technology wasn't there yet.

Today we have the right technology stack to enable every app to meet every customer with real-time action. It's not

magic anymore. So how can organizations go about building the right foundation to do this?

First of all, it's critical to have a database that's optimized for customer context and instant access to data. It's how you take advantage of your real-time data “at rest.”

NoSQL databases are optimized for modern data applications that require large data volume, low latency, and flexible data models (“NoSQL” stands for “not only SQL,” which means these databases can store and retrieve data using a variety of languages).

Invented by Facebook in 2007, Apache Cassandra is an obvious choice, with its high throughput and ability to support apps that are globally distributed and always on.

Secondly, customer behaviors and actions need to become visible and available to all applications across an organization. This is where streaming technology comes in. A best-of-breed streaming system should not only pass events along from one service to another but store them in a way that keeps their value for future usage. The system also needs to scale to manage tons of data and millions of messages per

second – the kind of performance that real-time apps demand.

Apache Pulsar is an advanced, open-source streaming and messaging technology that's ideal for handling real-time data. It was built for the high throughput and scalability that many data-driven applications require.

And finally, organizations need a way to empower their developers to make the most of real-time data. They need a layer of APIs (application programming interfaces) that lets them build apps with freedom of choice and without operational distractions. Stargate, for example, is an open-source data API layer that sits between applications and the database, and offers a variety of endpoints for developers to build with.

We've thought a lot about these components at DataStax as we've built the real-time open data stack that just works. When enterprises can activate data in real-time applications keep improving, more value is delivered, faster, and amazing experiences are delivered to customers—whether they are workers getting up-to-the-minute inventory information, or Gen Zers posting a new dance video on Josh.

Today's Bihar has failed to the idea of Dr. Rajendra Prasad

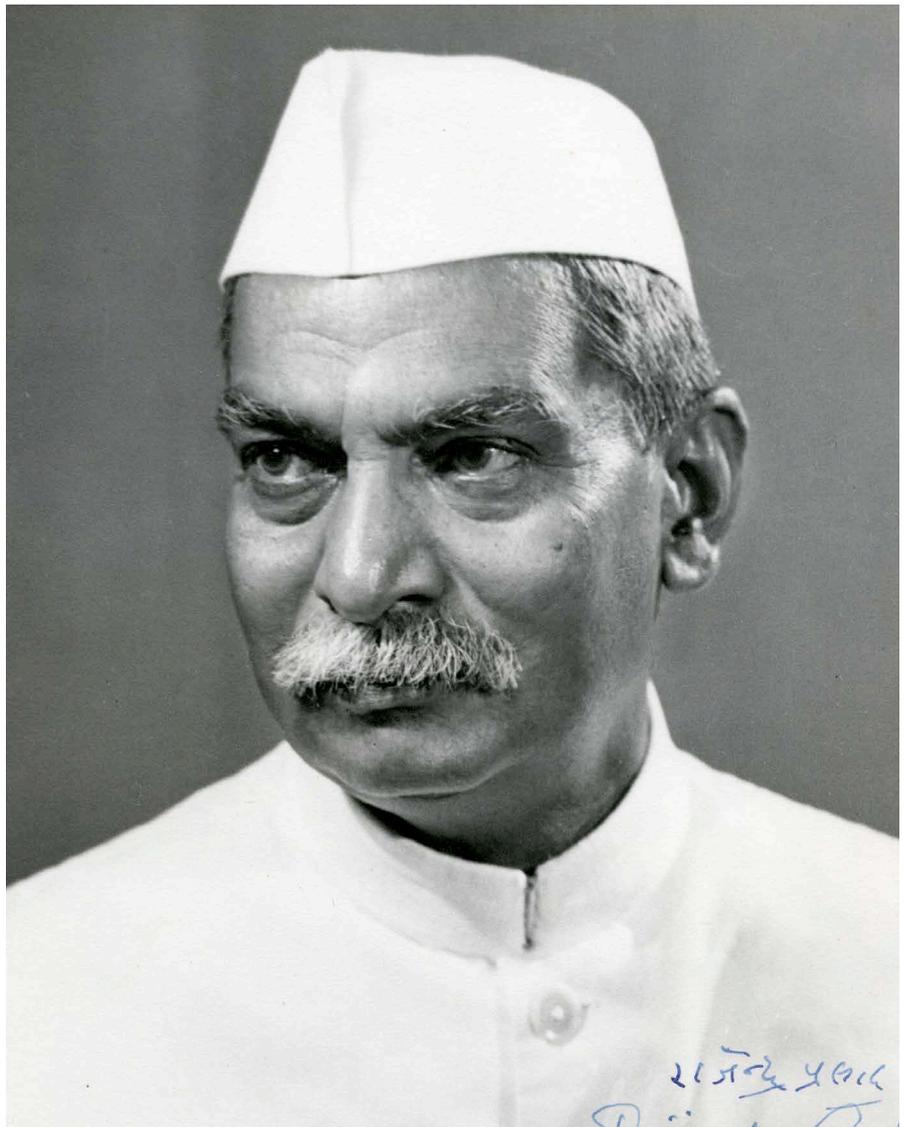
By Prashant Tewari

The illiterate and casteist political leadership has ruined the future of over eleven crore native Bihari's. The Bihari pride is severally dented by these few family centrist feudal political parties claiming to be the champion of social justice for their people. The state has given the legendary Dr Rajendra Prasad, a role model for both the political class and common people but alas, nobody seems to be inspired by him. Instead, we have seen the most pathetic leadership emerging from Rajendra Babu State which has plunged it into permanent darkness.

Pride of Bihar Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born in a village in Bihar but his sheer hard work and brilliance have overpowered the boundaries of his village to scale national recognition. He was a brilliant student and obtained his legal degree and later a Doctorate in Law from Calcutta University. He was very successful and had a lucrative legal practice at Calcutta and Patna High Courts. Quoting Dr Rajendra Prasad in his own words "I had a very rich background and belonged to a scholarly family".

Dr. Prasad was drawn early into the non-cooperation movement for independence, became a comrade of Mahatma Gandhi and was imprisoned for a number of years during the freedom movement. He was President of the Indian National Congress during the years 1934, 1935 and 1939. Dr. Prasad was a devoutly religious person who had great respect for the ethos and traditions of Hinduism.

Rajendra Babu was a fiercely independent and strong-willed leader. It led to clashes with Pandit Nehru on several occasions. The differences started even before the birth of the Indian Republic, with the Hindu Code Bills. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar presented the draft in October 1947 in the Constituent Assembly



and Nehru strongly supported the Bill. They wanted this Bill to be part of the Constitution. Under this, a rule code for all Hindus was to be created. As the President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad intervened. He believed religion in society is equally important as anything else and wanted to have a Uniform Civil Code for all Indians.

For the first Presidential election, Patel and the Congress party wanted

Rajendra Prasad to be the President. Nehru, at that time, favoured the then Governor General Rajagopalachari to be the first President of the nation. Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari had not participated in the Quit India Movement and hence was not popular with the Congress party cadre. Patel and Prasad had a strong hold on the organisation, even more than Nehru. Congress party chose Rajendra Prasad as the President of India. The Constituent



Assembly elected Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the first President of India unanimously.

In yet another disagreement over the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, being invited to inaugurate the Somnath temple, Nehru advised the President “against participating in a significant function which unfortunately has a number of implications.” Dr. Rajendra Prasad ignored Nehru’s advice and added, “I would do the same with a mosque or a church if I were invited.”

The first President’s contribution to the freedom movement and the stabilisation of Indian Democracy were immense. He steered the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly sagaciously and helped the unanimous adoption of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Prasad established good democratic traditions during the twelve long years he occupied the Rashtrapati Bhavan. He was a simple, elegant, unostentatious person and conducted himself with humil-

ity and dignity. Dr. Rajendra Prasad turned out to be perhaps India’s Great President.

Fake socialism, JP movement anarchy, Mandal Raj & the horrible decay of Bihar

The rise of OBC politics leads to the decay of Dr Rajendra Prasad’s vision of a prosperous Bihar. Be it Lalu Yadav & Company, Nitish Kumar, and a host of caste-based leaders have systematically destroyed Dr Rajendra Prasad’s golden state. The false promise of development supplemented with social justice fueled the aspirations of backward classes, and merit was sacrificed which led to the total collapse of the system in the state. The caste politics propelled several Robinhoods of respective caste in several districts of Bihar, it facilitated the largest migration seen in recent times from Bihar to different states seeking dignified life. Employment opportunities vanished and the Bihari pride has

to take shelter outside the range of the hinterland. It is a different matter that a large portion of Bihari’s has made success in India and even outside India but the pain of leaving the motherland is felt even today.

The golden age of Bihar was led by Shri Krishna Sinha, also known as Shri Babu, the first chief minister of the Indian state of Bihar (1946–61). Along with the Desh Ratna Rajendra Prasad Sinha is regarded among the ‘Architects of Modern Bihar’. He was known as Bihar Kesari for his lionlike roars when he rose to address the masses. However, In the Hindi heartland, people do not cast their vote but vote for their caste. Bihar’s reigning chief minister Nitish Kumar is no stranger to this brand of politics. Coming from the lineage of Ram Manohar Lohia, he too has once been a flag-bearer of Mandal. A Kurmi by caste, he stands on the second rung of the OBC ladder. During his previous tenure, he has worked strenuously towards empowering the lower classes, as



well as appealing to socially privileged voters through his Vikas Purush persona. The Mandal Commission polarized the OBCs and forced them to unite politically to achieve their rights. It was in this era, that Lalu Prasad Yadav turned into a political hero in Bihar. This moment became the watershed moment for Bihar and from there, Bihar lost everything that it had to feel proud of its heritage.

However, socialist icon, Ram Manohar Lohia slammed the Congress government for obstructing the implementation of the backward class's reservation. According to Lohia, "In India, the basic unit of stratification is caste and not a class. This pervert philosophy of Lohia has crippled the Bihar society with caste over merit criteria, leading to a comprehensive institutional collapse of the state's politics, bureaucracy, judiciary and media. The institutions were intoxicated by caste opium and the results are clearly visible in every nook and corner of the state.

To add to the wounds, JP Movement destroyed the education system of Bihar. JP targeted universities, and colleges in Bihar, which aroused the young population to sway away from education, and indulge in reckless gooda politics. The rest of the country focused on

industrialisation was desperately waiting for an opportunity to source cheap labour. The JP movement became a classical model for the supply of young illiterate Bihari population to the entire country.

From a materialistic point of view, the condition of backward groups has not improved except of the few political families, rather it fuelled incompetence and lack of merit in the entire system. The bureaucracy which was considered a private domain of the upper castes opened up for those who were not socially privileged or came from humble backgrounds due to their position in the caste hierarchy. However, according to the bureaucratic representation report released in November 2014; the SCs, STs and OBCs account for less than 10 percent of the Central Higher Bureaucracy.

But things have improved from a psychological perspective in the political sphere. After being dominated for four-five decades in the post-independence era, finally, the backward classes unified through the Mandal movement and selected their own candidates in the local bodies, assembly, and parliament. Of course, the lack of quality governance can be traced at every level where caste-based positions are forcefully oc-

cupied by democratic means through the sheer power of the number of votes rather than the talent.

With someone from their own community safeguarding their interests, psychological empowerment was achieved to an extent. But the merit in governance became the causality, an epidemic that ruined the state of Bihar permanently. Here it is important to mention that everyone must get the right to prosper in a flourishing democracy, the poorest of the poor must be given an equal platform by the state to compete in a dignified life. In Dr Rajendra Prasad's words, "In attaining our ideals, our means should be as pure as the end". So the current generation of native Bihari's must have to take a tough call to follow the line drawn by Dr Rajendra Prasad or ruin their life following current leadership focused on non-meritorious, casteist, corrupt, mafia, and selfish leadership. Now is the time for the people living in Bihar to do serious soul searching whether they want to reinvent the wheel or live in the status quo position. Invoke Dr Rajendra Babu legacy or go deeper into the black hole, the choice is with Bihar.

(Writer is Editor-in-Chief, Opinion Express)

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The journey of passion continues with your blessings as we enter our 20s

Feudalism vs Democracy: A Case Study of Pakistan

By Nadir Ali

Pakistan has maintained powerful and disciplined military and intelligence services since its inception, owing to its need to counter India, its largest enemy. In addition, fragmentation and a lack of coordination among civil institutions permitted the military to meddle in the state's most important internal and international concerns. Another factor is that the national psyche's acceptance of tyranny played a key role in justifying military involvement in civil institutions.

Meanwhile, When Pakistan became embroiled in domestic political and constitutional challenges less than a decade after its founding, the military leadership took advantage of the situation and established a military government that has since been repeated. Extremist ideology, a weak constitution, disdain for the land and countrymen, intolerance against outsiders, a lack of faith, focus, and power greed have all

contributed to our country's demise. We failed to establish ourselves as an economic heavyweight in the Islamic world as well as on the continent of Asia, both economically and ethically.

However, Pakistan is officially a democratic country, yet feudalism, cronyism, and family dynasties dominate the political structure. No one can call it a democratic state since there's no accountability or merit. All of our political leaders are feudal mafias that have swamped our parliament, are neither leaders nor concerned about their constituents. Votes are cast for dumb reasons rather than merit or efficiency. Pakistan's prosperity and progress are dependent on the implementation of real democracy, which includes all of its ideals and practices.

However, because the British left us with so many problems, whether we liked it or not, we needed to keep a robust military for our existence, security state military interests prevail in strategic talks as well as in critical do-

mestic and international matters. And that it's only normal for the military to take precedence over civilian authority in a security state. Military colleges and sub-institutes in Pakistan are more disciplined and unified than famous civil institutes, making it easier for the military establishment to take control of the political system and dominate both domestic and foreign affairs.

Military is an entity that protects national security, but it cannot participate effectively in politics since politics requires expertise, which can only be gained by years of public sector employment. Military interventions have always resulted in turmoil, which leads to a political structure that is undeveloped. Political progress is only possible if political institutions are stable.

Pakistan's military is the country's most powerful and well-organized organisation, having taken power four times since its founding. The first military interference in civilian affairs occurred shortly after Pakistan's indepen-





dence, when the then-Prime Minister of Pakistan, “Khawaja Nazim ud Din,” cut the military budget by one-third in 1953. Governor “General Ghulam Muhammad” fired him at the time, and this action by the Governor General strengthened the military’s position. It was the first time the military institution had experience with civilian matters. Following this, when “Muhammad Ali Bogra” formed his cabinet in 1954, he awarded the Defense Ministry to “General Ayub Khan”, the army’s Commander in Chief, and the Home Ministry to General Iskandar Mirza.

Civilian supremacy was severely harmed by “Muhammad Ali Bogra’s” judgement. General Iskandar Mirza, Pakistan’s president at the time, was the first to declare martial law. He appointed General Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator and Prime Minister of Pakistan, but he was forcibly removed by General Ayub, who then became President of the country, and ruled the country under martial law until 1962, when he civilianized his rule and stayed in power until 1969, when General Yahiya took power, and he surrendered power to civilian leaders in 1971 after the separation of East Pakistan. In 1977, “General Zia ul Haq” staged the third coup attempt.

He served as the martial law admin-

Following this, when “Muhammad Ali Bogra” formed his cabinet in 1954, he awarded the Defense Ministry to “General Ayub Khan”, the army’s Commander in Chief, and the Home Ministry to General Iskandar Mirza.

istrator until 1985, making it the longest martial law in Pakistan’s history. When he perished in an aircraft crash in 1988, his reign came to an end. Soon after Pakistan’s defeat in the Kargil conflict against India in 1999, civil-military ties deteriorated once more. This chasm in civil-military ties prepares the ground for the country’s most recent coup. General Pervez Musharraf overthrew Sharif’s administration in the fourth coup in 1999. He was in power until 2008. He resigned as president because he was afraid of a no-confidence vote.

Other institutions in Pakistan are

weakened since military regimes rule for about half of the time. A country’s third power centre became the army chief. It morphed into a power trio, and no civilian administration can make critical internal, national, or international decisions without the COAS’s input. In Pakistan, there was a political leadership crisis, which allowed the army to have a taste of civilian life. The army establishment has vested interests in the political system, and they believe that the political leadership is incapable of resolving these issues in Pakistan’s advantage. The Army aspires to be a part of national policy and nuclear decision-making.

The army establishment frequently expresses the opinion that civilian leadership is morally and financially corrupt, and that they have no loyalty to their country. Army also wants a say in foreign policy or negotiations, particularly with the United States, China, Afghanistan, and India, as well as the nations from which they buy weapons or military equipment. When a government attempts to slash the military budget, the army institution invariably expresses profound concern.

(Writer graduated in Strategic and Nuclear Studies from National Defence University and is an Intern at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. He can be reached at hafiznadiraliz7@gmail.com)

Road safety is the last priority for Planner in India

K K Agarwal

All Indians are shocked by the death of Cyrus Mistry, an eminent businessman and scion of Shapoorji Pallonji group in a road accident. It seems that Late Mistry's car was at a speed of 130 kmph and hit a divider while trying to overtake a vehicle from the left side. It is also suspected that the road was narrowing and the divider was also slightly protruding outside contributing to the accident. The rear occupant not wearing a seatbelt including Sh Mistry, died on the spot, while the rest were seriously injured and hospitalised. There is the huge brouhaha over rear passengers not wearing a seatbelt and the resultant death which though justified to an extent seems to miss a much larger issue" Could we have avoided the accident in the first place".

As per the World Bank report, India tops the world with 11% of global death in road accidents, in spite of a vehicle population of only 2.5%. Road crashes claimed over 1.55 lakh lives across India in 2021. If we include the number of people who are maimed, we will realise that this is a tragedy of gigantic proportion and need action on a war footing. According to UN Study, India loses 3% of its GDP to road accidents every year. Imagine becoming the fastest-growing economy just by eliminating accidents and also saving many precious lives.

Police officials after the initial probe said that the deceased were not wearing seat belts, also adding that overspeeding and an "error of judgment" by the driver caused the accident. This ap-





proach of only blaming the victims will not help us in making our road safer for all. Many developed countries are able to eliminate accidents by looking at all the possible causes and trying to address each one of them. When I was living in Finland twenty years back, there was an accident at a nearby crossing and a person was injured. Within a few days, the local authorities revamped the whole crossing by introducing signals, signages, speed limit, divider etc. This type of holistic approach has enabled developed countries to achieve minimum possible accidents in spite of much higher vehicle density and allowable speed limits. I am pretty sure that India can also achieve it provided we are really sincere and give road safety the importance it deserves.

Let's try to look at all the angles which might have contributed in various measures to the accident and death / serious injury of the occupants.

Speed- In all developed countries, the speed limit is regulated very seriously by authorities because overspeeding is dangerous for other road users also. There are surprise checks 24 x 7 with the help of speed radars and vehicles found speeding are penalised.

However, we also need to also look at various causes why people are forced to drive at a much higher speed than

The government's initiative for constructing new highways is laudable however Government should ensure that all bottlenecks are also addressed on a war footing for the existing highways. We should realise that it's much better to have a road where you can drive constantly at 60 KM per hour instead of a road where you can drive most parts at 120 kmph and some parts barely at 10 kmph.

allowed. In India, it's difficult to plan the journey due to various bottlenecks. There are multiple reasons for the unexpected delays including huge queues at toll gates, potholes, slow vehicles driving in the fast lane, vehicles coming from the opposite side, stray animals, no signals at junctions, dangerous road crossing, narrow roads, changing the number of lanes, haphazard parking etc. This sometimes not only causes delays but traffic jams and then people are forced to drive fast to make up for the lost time.

The government's initiative for constructing new highways is laudable however Government should ensure that all bottlenecks are also addressed on a war footing for the existing high-

ways. We should realise that it's much better to have a road where you can drive constantly at 60 KM per hour instead of a road where you can drive most parts at 120 kmph and some parts barely at 10 kmph.

Overtaking from the wrong side- In developed countries, road users use lanes depending on their vehicle speed. In many countries, the first lane is exclusively used for overtaking. Unfortunately, In India, the first lane of all the highways is occupied by heavy-duty trucks, containerised trucks moving at very slow speeds. We have an upper-speed limit but vehicles are free to drive at low speeds without any problem. This forces all the car drivers to overtake from the wrong side, which is



not only dangerous but can lead to serious accidents. It's time we penalise all the slow-moving vehicles driving in the wrong lane. This will not only make driving comfortable but quite safe for everyone as the need of overtaking would be minimised.

Road Signage & Dividers- We have no best practices for road design, well-proven system and guidelines to ensure that dividers are placed at regular intervals with good visibility. Also, the width of the road and lane is not uniform and causing challenges for vehicles running at high speeds.

In all the developed countries, there is ample visible road signage and people are warned in advance about changes in road conditions. It's time we create and follow the best engineering practices for road construction throughout the country.

Emergency response- Passer-by, in this case, called their friends who luckily owned a private ambulance and could reach them immediately. In a developed country, there is a highly efficient network of emergency response with a trained paramedic to administer first aid, which can make a life-and-death difference in critical situations. In India, people still prefer to call their relatives instead of calling an ambulance. It's time the government takes

responsibility for creating the necessary medical infrastructure so any witnesses can call the ambulance helpline and be sure that the injured will get the best possible medical care.

Seat belt- A seat belt is the first line of defence in case of an accident. Even an unbuckled person can seriously injure, other occupants, wearing a seat belt. This is very easy to address and good to know that authorities have already started working on amending necessary legislation. The bigger issue is how to ensure that number of passengers is not more than the vehicle capacity so each one can wear a seat belt. It's a very common sight in India to see kids sitting in the lap of their parents. Their parents don't realise that these kids will act like a balloon in case of an accident and have no chance of survival. Even a child should mandatorily have a special seat in the car to make seat belts effective because every unbuckled person is not the only risk to themselves but also to other occupants. How about buses and trucks plying on the highways? None of them have a seat belt for all the passengers. It is time that government makes it compulsory for every vehicle to have the requisite amount of seat belts so that everyone is buckled.

Lastly, we need to have a reasonable

penalty for all offenses. High penalties never lead to compliance. Numerous studies have established that certainty of fine acts more as a deterrent than a huge penalty. It is not possible for a country of India's size to be monitored by understaffed police. We need to develop an army of people (Retired, Senior citizens, unemployed etc) who wish to make a difference and train them about best road practices. These people can be equipped with technology to record all traffic violations. Technology can easily be used to upload these traffic violations and penalty collection can be also automated. These people can also be easily compensated from the collection of the penalty amount. We also need to develop a scoring system to allow a negative score for each offense and then suspend the license temporarily/ permanently depending on the overall score. This can also act as a huge deterrence and force people to follow safe driving practices.

As the Indian economy is growing, we can expect huge growth in the population of vehicles. It's time we draw the right lessons and work towards Accident prevention and take necessary corrective actions to make roads safer for all of us. Then we can be sure that we are not missing the wood for the trees.

A POLITE REBEL: CHO

Manuvelraj Ponnudurai

Tamil Nadu since independence has been infamous for the Hindi agitation; Kaveri river water dispute; and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi - all these to protect the so-called 'Tamil culture'. However, this region is also famous for its vernacular 'Tamil' cinema. The medium of cinema is an important tool and Tamil cinema has produced thousands of movies with a peculiar genre; and has churned out a considerable number of politicians as well. The comedy tract of Tamil films finds an important place and comedians have been enjoying Tamil people's patronage. One such Tamil film comedian was 'Cho' Ramaswamy.

Srinivasan Iyer Ramaswamy (1934 - 2016) popularly known as 'Cho' was

a man of versatility: lawyer, political satirist, editor of a popular Tamil magazine, powerful orator, playwright, theatre and cine comedian, author and parliamentarian and in short "a persistent criticiser of political authority and their misdeeds." As a man of a creative artist, Cho pitched against the rigid policies of the Congress, Communists, Socialists and the Dravidian ideologist of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu encountered a make-over in politics in the late 1960s, due to the change of political authority from the Congress party to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and it was considered a triumph of the Dravidian movements. The two major Dravidian political parties of Tamil Nadu namely the DMK and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)

attained in 2017 the credit of uninterrupted rule of Tamil Nadu for 50 years. Though, both DMK and AIADMK are political rivals however, they have the same pedigrees from the said Dravidian movement. It is a known fact that basically, the champions of Dravidian political parties are promoters of language politics in the name of social justice which is in some respects against national integration and regional unity. Amid these political developments, particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, emerged Cho Ramaswamy.

Cho has scripted nearly 23 stage plays and all were mega hits. The formula of his plays is very simple and related to mundane subjects such as caste issues, prostitution, truth vs. money or muscle power and bribery or corruption. He was a fan of western writ-





ers such as Bernard Shaw and Charles Dickens basing some of his plot points and characters on their novels especially his *Manam Oru Kurungu* was based upon *Pygmalion* and *Vande Mataram* related to *Tale of Two Cities*. Some of his dramas like *Washingnil Nallathambi* and *Coovam Nathi Karaiyinile* are without strong plots but are based on the current political scenarios.

His venture into Tamil film as a comedian was equally incredible and acted in nearly 200 films. Cho himself has accepted that he is not a good actor despite acting in the movies directed by K. Balachander, the doyen of Tamil film-dom. But for a while, he was a popular comedian and his comedy is also limited to very few films however, his political comedy did well in some films. His *'Muhammad bin Thughlak'* (1968) a classic satirical play, was his magnum opus and smashing success that later made a popular movie as well. His political magazine, *Thuglak* (1970), was named after this play, which became a classic of modern literature for political satire, writings, editorials, essays, and cartoons.

His journalistic assignment deserves great appreciation. Apart from expressing personal views, there are only a few writers in Tamil Nadu who mock society to make people understand their mistakes and Cho is one among them. His intelligence and humour make the audience not only laugh but to pon-

der deeply about society. Through his *Thuglak* magazine, Cho vehemently criticised the implementation of the Emergency rule and Dravidian political parties especially the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu Karunanidhi and his corruption. During the Emergency period, *Thuglak* magazine got censored and when it resumed its publication, it was dared enough to publish the issue with just a black front cover as a mark of protest. It is surprising to note that he was neither arrested nor put in jail despite his continued severe criticism against the Emergency period and exposing the corruption of Karunanidhi. In fact, his perseverance made *Thuglak* magazine an institution.

As a political commentator, his views are very sharp and to the point. His opinions are not easily changed. It is to be highlighted that all his political comments were expressed them with good humour. He had great respect for Kamaraj, the former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and according to Cho the Kamaraj period of Tamil Nadu was the golden age. Cho was the only journalist who mentioned the terrorist activities of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and he rightly predicted that the Tamil Tigers would not let the Rajiv-Jayawardene accord go through. Though he had a cordial relationship with Jayalalitha later on due to political differences he entered into conflict with her. To op-

pose Jayalalitha he supported DMK and Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth.

When the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as an alternative to the Congress Cho become associated with its top leaders and he was the first person to propose Narendra Modi as a prime ministerial candidate. From his point of view, the BJP will be good if it comes to power because Modi has made Gujarat a corruption-free state. There is a lot of growth there. A common man can easily see him. As a Chief Minister of Gujarat Modi has attended a couple of *Thuglak* magazine annual readers meetings which were an unprecedented editor reader interface. PM Modi in one of his addresses stated that "I'm a fan of Mr Cho. I heard his name during the Emergency when he stood for democracy, he fought for democracy. My colleagues were giving me information during those days because I was underground at that time. I was also fighting for democracy."

Overall Cho was a great scholar more particularly a prophet in politics. He will be remembered as a playwright, and as a courageous political satire. Yet, the void he left in the Tamil intelligentsia remains gaping and stark.

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How Technology is Transforming Our Lives and What We Can Do about It

OE Bureau

Technology has become a pervasive part of our lives. From the smartphones and computers that we use on a daily basis to the automated systems that are increasingly being used in various industries, technology has become an integral part of our lives. It has revolutionized our way of living and has made significant improvements to our quality of life. However, technology has also had some negative effects, such as creating digital divides and contributing to environmental degradation. We need to consider how technology is transforming our lives and how we can use it to create a better, more sustainable future. This article will explore some of how technology is transforming our lives and what we can do to ensure that we use it responsibly and for the betterment of society.

What is the Difference Between Digital and Physical Strings?

While there are some similarities between digital and physical strings, the two concepts are quite distinct. Digital strings refer to information that is stored inside computers and other digital devices. Information can be stored in the form of numbers, letters, or pictures. The other type of strings that people are usually referring to is physical strings. In the context of this article, the term refers to a person's relationship with their digital devices, such as their computer, smartphone, or tablet. People's physical strings are formed by their actions and interactions with these digital devices. People's physical strings can be positive or negative, depending on how they use these digital devices.

How Technology is Transforming Education

Over the past few decades, technology has significantly changed how people learn. While there have been significant improvements in the way that people access education, the way that people learn has also changed significantly. This shift has been driven by the rapid development of artificial intelligence and the increased use of virtual and augmented reality. AI has become an integral part of many educational applications, such as online courses and learning management systems. Artificial intelligence has become an important part of education because it can help people learn more efficiently. AI can analyze large amounts of data and help people find patterns and connections that they might otherwise not notice. It can also suggest different courses of action for different situations. There are now AI applications that help people learn basic skills, such as how to use a computer, how to drive a car, or how to perform other everyday tasks. AI can also help people learn more complex skills, such as how to become a pilot or an occupational therapist.

How Technology is Transforming Healthcare

Healthcare is one area where the impact of technology has been particularly profound. The digitization of healthcare has led to people being able to receive medical treatment around the clock and from anywhere in the world. The availability of a wide variety of medical treatments has also enabled people to live longer and healthier lives. This has led to a rapid increase in the number of people who are aged 65 years and older. The digitization of healthcare has also led to several significant advancements,

including the development of gene therapy, artificial organs, and advanced imaging technologies. Artificial organs are an important part of the digitization of healthcare, as they let people who have lost certain parts of their bodies restore their mobility. Gene therapy is also a significant part of the healthcare transformation that is taking place because it can help people with genetic conditions.

How Technology is Transforming Society

People's digital strings have also had a significant impact on society. For example, the ease with which people can communicate and share content online has led to the emergence of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Social media is now one of the most popular forms of engagement online, with more than half of the global population logging in on a daily basis. Another important aspect of people's digital strings is the development of online Gamification techniques. Gamification is a method of applying game design theories to non-gaming contexts, such as education and business. This method of engaging people has become a popular way of encouraging people to engage with online applications and websites.

Conclusion

Technology has transformed our lives and has made life easier for many people. However, there are also negative effects that can result from the use of technology, such as digital divides and environmental degradation. It is important to consider how technology is changing our lives and how we can use it to create a more sustainable future. Technological advances have led to a dramatic transformation of our

society and the way in which we live our lives. These advances have enabled people to receive medical treatment around the clock and to live longer and healthier lives. They have also led to the emergence of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, and online Gamification techniques. However, these advances have also led to significant impacts on people's lives, such as digital divides and environmental degradation. People need to consider how technology is transforming their lives and how they can use it to create a more sustainable future.



BUY LOCAL, STAY GLOBAL

“Buy handmade, be one in a million, not one of millions”, is a famous tag line. Recently Modi jacket made the headlines too

India surely has always had a rich tangible cultural heritage of traditional clothing and artwork. Ancient India, as we know today, was highly advanced in all spheres of life - from science and technology to astronomy, astrology, art and literature, textile and handicrafts. Reference to weaving styles have been found in Vedas, and woven and dyed fabrics have been excavated in the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro. Even in those times, the Indian fabrics were exported to Rome, Egypt and China.

In the pre-colonial era, the Indian textile industry was at its peak of glory. India was known for its famous muslin cloth; wherein a full length saree would pass through the ring of a finger. But colonial rule threw the highly specialized artisans into poverty. After 75 years of independence, our cottage and handloom industries are once again regaining their long forgotten glory, as the handicrafts and handloom products are much in vogue again.

Be it hand embroidered Chikankari of Lucknow, handloom woven Banarasi weave, Paithani sarees of Ahmadnagar, Mysore silk, Kanchivaram silk, Sambalpuri weave, or Madhubani paintings of Bihar, Tanjavur paintings – the list is endless and each work speaks a volume about itself. Each state has a rich heritage and each piece is a class by itself. No two pieces are alike. The exhibitions are organized by these craftsmen both at local as well as national level, to display their artistry.

Round the year, vibrant and lively ‘Delhi Haat’ offers exquisite handicraft and handloom products from across the country, usually conspicuous by their absence in the local market. So does a fortnight-long India International Trade Fair (IIFT) of Delhi, organized by the India Trade Promotion Organization, wherein the companies in specific industry from world-over showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services; meet with industry partners and customers, study activities of the rivals, and examine recent market trends and opportunities.

Throughout this fortnight, people just throng in to lay their hands on the extraordinary, exquisite items. This reveals the people’s penchant for the handicrafts and handloom items over any common place product. These places are highly patronized, equally by the nationals as well as the foreign nationals, who are highly passionate about these ‘handcrafted’ collector’s items.

Various schemes and programmes have been rolled out by the Government to improve the working condition of handloom weavers; and for sustainable development of handloom sector, to empower them by organizing self-help groups.

Secondly, by various skill development programmes the artisans are being motivated to produce diversified products with innovative use and improved quality, to meet changing market trends and get remunerative prices.



The artisans are the pride of any nation and are held in high esteem, due to their highly proficient job. Donning exclusive items set us apart, and the best way to show our gratitude to them is by being vocal about buying local and recognizing, applauding and carrying the pride of our country on us. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to buy their products directly, as many of them are quite well versed with technology and social media. This could be easily done by pre-booking or pre-buying the product, and get it customized according to one’s taste. The exquisite items could also be purchased from organizations that work directly with clusters.

This would not only reduce our dependence on imports, but our regional economy will get a boost, and encourage our local industry. Accordingly, the recent trend is that buying local is the new global mantra. Post COVID-19 most of the countries started promoting their own products, to boost their own state economic machinery.

The opportunity for employment of our educated youth would increase, and cease the exploitation of the local communities.

The country as well as our artisans is likely to earn more, while the consumer spending remains the same.

Moreover, since “handcrafted things never go out of style,” they remain in vogue forever, and are worth the investment.



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