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Cover Story

DRAGON IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

How Indian defense establishment has meticulously planned its move to counter China

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China remains a strategic threat to India's defense establishment

The PLA -- the world's largest military force with more than 2 million active personnel -- is often described as "party-army" with professional characteristics". Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping, made a concerted effort to put the PLA under the command of the state instead of the CCP -- an initiative carried forward by his successors, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis. The ascent of Xi Jinping in 2013 marked a new chapter as he sought to inject a renewed sense of party ideology into the PLA and modernise it.



The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) announced the most extensive set of reforms for the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) in its history. These reforms sought to consolidate President Xi Jinping's hold over the Army and bring about jointness in the forces by replacing military regions with theatre commands.

Though "world-class" is not explicitly defined, a rough survey of 'PLA Daily' suggests that world-class forces are roughly similar to major military powers, including the US, France, UK, and to a certain extent in some elements, India. This points towards the ability to deploy (including air-lift) troops with agility and flexibility anywhere, including abroad, to protect Chinese interests.

These reforms align with China's expanding overseas footprint -- investments under the Belt and Road Initiative, the growing profile of the PLA Navy (PLAN) in anti-piracy operations and its first overseas military base in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa. Besides, these reforms bring the PLA on a par with the major militaries in the world in terms of force posture and joint capabilities.

The restructuring of the PLA comes on the back of an exponential increase in China's defence budget since the late 1990s. For the past decade, its military spending has surpassed the annual GDP growth, reflecting Beijing's priority for military modernisation and its global ambitions.

In 2020, its spending was \$209.16 billion (1.268 trillion yuan). According to Chinese Ministry of Finance figures, this year, the spending is expected to be close to \$208 billion (1.35 trillion yuan).

It is the PLA's cyber, space, and electronic warfare service branch. Its focus on emerging technologies points to China's recognition of the global trend that "informatisation" or information-based/data-driven combat operations are at the core of contemporary military advancement.

The SSF reports directly to the CMC and not to any of the theatre commands, enabling joint operations for all the theatre commands through the CMC, acting like their "information umbrella". Its creation has improved the PLA's ability to fight information wars vis-a-vis its adversaries.

The SSF administers two deputy theatre command-level departments: the Space Systems Department, responsible for military space operations and the Network Systems Department, responsible for information operations such as cyberattacks and cyber espionage campaigns, for which China has gained notoriety in recent years.

India's first Chief of Defence Staff, late General Bipin Rawat, had remarked that China is the "biggest security threat" facing India. India will have to take a long view of China's transformed military power and expedite and adjust its defence reforms to achieve the same results.

Implementing such reforms requires greater political management of the forces and lesser interference from the civilian bureaucracy. Moreover, optimising the limited budgetary resources, India must intensify its ongoing force restructuring initiatives, including integrating the three services and adding to its power projection capabilities.

The Russian Ukraine conflict has exposed the limitation of the United Nations to safeguard the interest of the nation when attacked by the adversary. Russia rightly or wrongly has destroyed Ukraine and the international community has remained a mute spectator. India must tighten its belt and secure maximum budgetary allocation for the modernization of its armed forces to tackle the ever-growing real-time threat of expansionist China.

—Prashant Tewari, Editor-in-Chief

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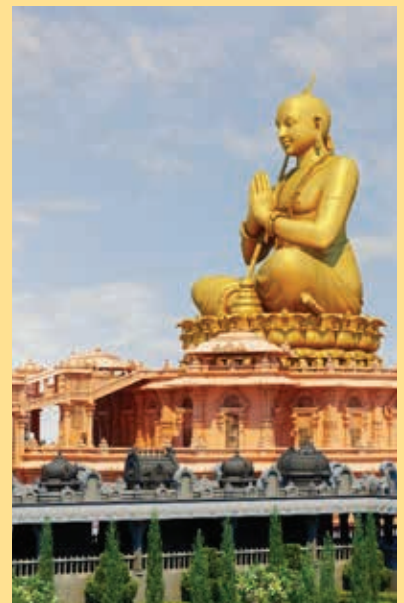


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Bhakti Saint Sri Ramanujacharya, promoted the idea of universal equality



INDIAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT SET TO COUNTER CHINESE MILITARY THREAT

How Indian defense establishment has meticulously planned its move to counter China



Prashant Tewari

In 2015, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) announced the most extensive set of reforms for the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) in its history. These reforms sought to consolidate President Xi Jinping's hold over the Army and bring about jointness in the forces by replacing military regions with theatre commands.

They also focused on moving the PLA from legacy military capabilities by creating two new services -- Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF) and Strategic Support Force (SSF). These reforms come on the back of China's military spending, which has surpassed the annual GDP growth, reflecting Beijing's priority to military modernisation and the growing role of the military in its global ambitions.

These reforms have far-reaching implications for India and the region be-

cause they are turning the PLA from a bloated and corrupt military to a capable force. They herald a significant expansion of Beijing's conventional military power and space and offensive cyber capabilities. With these reforms, China is amplifying its focus on maritime, cyber and tech-based threat perceptions.

China's increasingly assertive posture vis-a-vis its neighbours and the United States in recent years demonstrates confidence in its military capabilities. From Ladakh to Taiwan Strait, the world has witnessed a belligerent Chinese behaviour. Therefore, understanding China's assertiveness necessitates understanding the nature of these reforms and the structural changes initiated within the PLA.

Methodology

For research on this subject, official sources (PLA and Chinese Ministry of National Defence documents) in English and Mandarin have been used. Translation of the PLA's flagship doctrinal document, 'Science of Military Strategy' (2013), has been made publicly available by the Air University of the US.

Commentary by Chinese analysts available on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure portal was translated and used for this research. In addition, this paper also cites American strategic analysts' works on the PLA. The author also spoke to multiple Indian strategic experts who study the PLA's military capabilities and the Party-Army ties.

Background

The birth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 was the result of a political revolution achieved by the PLA. The military's significance for the CCP's consolidation is often underlined by PRC founder Mao Zedong's slogan given in 1927, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

Moreover, the CCP has often claimed that it represents Chinese people's interests. Therefore, the party has contended that having the PLA serving the party is "tantamount to serving the state and the Chinese people".

A formal arrangement consolidated this symbiotic Party-Army relationship after the establishment of the PRC. Under this arrangement, Chairman, CCP, was also made Chairman, Central Military Commission (CMC) -- the highest decision-making body on military af-



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fairs. Seven decades since the PRC's establishment, the CCP has relied on the PLA for unifying and governing the country, demonstrating the criticality of



the PLA. Its significant role in ensuring order was evident during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and the Tiananmen Square Crisis of 1989.

Conceived mainly as a ground force, the PLA has expanded and modernised significantly over the years. Under the chairmanship of Xi Jinping, the PLA is aspiring to become a “world-class” military by 2049 and emerge as a force steeped in the CCP ideology.

As the 18th Party Congress Work Report of November 2012 noted: “To modernise national defence and the armed forces, we must follow the guid-

ance of Mao Zedong’s military thinking, Deng Xiaoping’s thinking on enhancing our military capabilities in the new historical period, Jiang Zemin’s thinking on strengthening our national defence and armed forces, and the Party’s thinking on strengthening our national defence and armed forces under new conditions.”

As part of this, the CCP undertook a series of detailed reforms of the PLA starting 2015. The aim in PLA’s own words was to break down “systematic, structural, and policy barriers”, modernise “the organisation of the military”,

and improve “combat capacity”.

Rationale for PLA’s extensive reforms

The PLA -- the world’s largest military force with more than 2 million active personnel -- is often described as “party-army with professional characteristics”. Mao’s successor, Deng Xiaoping, made a concerted effort to put the PLA under the command of the state instead of the CCP -- an initiative carried forward by his successors, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis. The ascent of Xi Jinping in 2013 marked a

new chapter as he sought to inject a renewed sense of party ideology into the PLA and modernise it.

Taking forward Xi's initiative, in November 2015, the party announced a series of detailed reforms for the PLA. According to the CMC, the objective was to "consolidate and improve the fundamental principles and systems of the party's absolute leadership" over the PLA, and reinforcing their symbiotic relationship. As noted earlier, these reforms had been on the CCP agenda since the 18th National Congress.

While the PLA had implemented reforms earlier too, the current reforms are far more sweeping than the previous ones, given the dismantling of the existing structures and the creation of new forces. This was the first time that the CMC identified definite time-frames for these reforms: "integrated" by 2020, "informationised" by 2035, and "world-class" by 2049.

Though "world-class" is not explicitly defined, a rough survey of 'PLA Daily' suggests that world-class forces are roughly similar to major military powers, including the US, France, UK, and to a certain extent in some elements, India. This points towards the ability

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to deploy (including airlift) troops with agility and flexibility anywhere, including abroad, to protect Chinese interests.

These reforms align with China's expanding overseas footprint -- investments under the Belt and Road Initiative, growing profile of the PLA Navy (PLAN) in anti-piracy operations and its first overseas military base in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa. Besides, these reforms bring the PLA on a par with the major militaries in the world in terms of force posture and joint capabilities.

The Science of Military Strategy of

2013 had articulated the underlying thought behind these reforms.

According to it, China's strategic 'tixi' (system of systems) should be constituted from the three levels and five types of strategy: national strategy, military strategy, the services' strategy, the theatre of war strategy, and the strategies for the major security domains (nuclear, outer space, and cyber spaces).

The Chinese scholar, Yan Hui, notes that reforming the PLA is necessary as the PLA faced several problems such as "excessive scale, single arms, unsound





institutions, inconsistent organisation, and irregular military management”.

Consequently, according to him, China lagged behind other militaries in terms of modernisation. One analyst, Dang Yifei, has described these reforms as a combination of “political sobriety” and “strategic determination” to achieve combat effectiveness. Another analyst, Dai Kun, has noted that these reforms have a “high degree of responsibility,” “a scientific reform strategy”, and “a strong appeal to the times” to ensure PLA’s transformation into a world class military.

Xi has often cited the PLA reforms as a means to crack down on corruption within the military, similar to the initiative that he had launched for the CPC.

According to Xinhua, since the 18th National Congress in 2012, more than 100 PLA officers at or above the corps level, including two former CMC vice chairmen -- General Guo Boxiong and General Xu Caihou -- have been punished during the anti-corruption drive by being handed out life sentences, dismissal from service and expulsion from the CCP.

Outside China, Indian and Western experts have largely perceived this crackdown as also being aimed at purging the political opponents of Xi and thereby helping him to strengthen his grip over the party and the army.

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In 2020, its spending was \$209.16 billion (1.268 trillion yuan). According to Chinese Ministry of Finance figures, this year, the spending is expected to be close to \$208 billion (1.35 trillion yuan).

There’s little transparency on China’s actual defence expenditure, but one trend that has become clear since 2010

is that China’s internal security spending has exceeded the external defence spending, and the gap between the two is expanding with increased security expenditures to maintain stability and order in Tibet and Xinjiang provinces. In 2017, China’s internal security spending was equivalent to about \$349 billion -- compared to the official external defence spending of \$150 billion.

The most important initiative as part of these reforms was the reorganisation of China’s seven-member Central Military Commission (CMC), which is responsible for the overall management of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The CMC is both a state institution and a CPC organ. But the CPC holds de facto control over it, as the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is also the Chairman of the CMC, i.e., President Xi Jinping.

Currently, other six members of the CMC are Vice Chairmen General Xu Qiliang (from PLA Air Force [PLAAF]) and General Zhang Youxia (PLA), General Wei Fenghe (Defence Minister), General Li Zuocheng (Chief of the Joint Staff Department), Admiral Miao Hua (PLAN) and General Zhang Shengmin (PLA Rocket Force).

In January 2016, the CMC’s four general departments -- staff, politics, logistics, and armaments -- were reorganised into 15 “functional segments,



including seven departments, three commissions, and five directly affiliated bodies”.

The CCP deemed the earlier four general departments as representing the Soviet-style top-down chain of command and highly bureaucratic decision-making. In its place, the reorganised CMC streamlined the command by giving it to the respective agencies, while retaining the final decision-making authority with Chairman, CMC.

The new agencies included the general office, joint staff, political work, logistical support, equipment development, training and administration, and national defence mobilisation. Chinese sources describe the reorganised CMC as doing overall decision-making and management, while theatre commands focus on operations, and the forces (existing and newly created).

Moving towards jointness with the theatre commands

According to the ‘Science of Military Strategy’ (2013), before introducing jointness, the PLA operated in silos and was attuned to the previous-generation mechanised warfare age. The document therefore recommended the re-orientation of the PLA towards “integrated joint operations under informatised conditions”.

Indian and Western strategic experts argue that the PLA has studied the US military campaigns in Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2002), learned from them, and absorbed it into their own system.

For instance, the demonstration of the American military in joint fighting, new technologies, rapid troop deployment capability across theatres and out-of-area operations convinced the CPC and the PLA to put in place its

plans for joint war-fighting -- the PLA generals use the term ‘integrated joint command’ -- in case hostilities break out against the US and neighbours such as Japan, Taiwan and India.

In February 2016, the PLA introduced five theatre commands responsible for the territorial defence of the North, South, East, West, and Central regions. These commands differ from the US military; whose combatant commands span the globe. The new PLA commands replaced the seven military regions -- a concept dating back to the 1950s (though their numbers changed throughout history, as per the reorganisation of the regions), in which they had become too ground force-focused.

The difference between the military regions and the theatre commands is that the former were more administrative, while the latter focused on combat operations. The theatre commands re-



Pertinently, these theatre commands aimed to integrate the command of various forces, reduce the elite stature of the PLA ground forces officers, and strengthen the PLAN and PLAAF. But Indian strategic analysts note that the PLA's predominance persists. PLA ground force officers still dominate leadership of the new commands especially the eastern, western, and southern.

And they get the majority of the promotions: since the beginning of the reforms, Xi has promoted 20 officers from the ground force, ten from the PLAAF, and four from the PLAN to positions of generals. Their continued dominance suggests the promotions have been used to placate the officers, who may have resisted the PLA's joint command as it threatened vested interests, including the anti-corruption drive. So, it appears that Xi may have diluted the intensity of reforms in some places to ensure that overall the train of PLA reforms is not derailed.

“compensated by increased quality” of soldiers and equipment.

This was particularly evident in the case of the PLAN, where evolving threat perceptions from the US led the PLA to opt for long-range naval aviation and offensive submarine capability.

Establishing new forces for better “integration” and “informatisation”

Also, as part of the reforms, two new services were created: Strategic Support Force (SSF, 2015) and the Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF, 2016).

SSF: It is the PLA's cyber, space, and electronic warfare service branch. Its focus on emerging technologies points to China's recognition of the global trend that “informatisation” or information-based/data-driven combat operations are at the core of contemporary military advancement.

The SSF reports directly to the CMC and not to any of the theatre commands, enabling joint operations for all the theatre commands through the CMC, act-

The new theatre commands represent external orientation as these commands are primarily structured based on threat perceptions facing the specific Chinese border. For instance, the Western Theatre Command -- the largest command, directly faces India, focusing on the contentious Line of Actual Control (LAC).

port directly to the CMC and combined command of various forces, including the PLA ground force, PLAN and PLAAF. The theatre commands fight together under informationised conditions to achieve a specific objective or “strategic direction”, for instance, the reunification of Taiwan.

The new theatre commands represent external orientation as these commands are primarily structured based on threat perceptions facing the specific Chinese border. For instance, the Western Theatre Command -- the largest command, directly faces India, focusing on the contentious Line of Actual Control (LAC). It also oversees Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions. Similarly, the Southern Theatre Command is focused on the South China Sea, where China has an ongoing maritime dispute with Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Upending the dominance of ground forces through demobilisation

After its debacle in the 1979 Vietnam war, Deng criticised the PLA as bloated and needing disciplinary measures. He therefore ordered one of the largest demobilisations in PLA's history, with active personnel cut from over 6 million (1975) to over 4 million (1982). In the current reforms, the PLA has cut more than 300,000 personnel. Overall, since the 1970s, China has cut over 4 million personnel, mainly within the Ground Force, while enhancing the size of the PLAN and the PLAAF.

This demobilisation of troops, especially of the infantry, reflected the fundamental revision of the earlier military doctrine that China no longer required substantial ground forces to defend its territory. In other words, the reduced quantity of the PLA troops was to be

ing like their “information umbrella”. Its creation has improved the PLA's ability to fight information wars vis-a-vis its adversaries.

The SSF administers two deputy theatre command-level departments: the Space Systems Department, responsible for military space operations and the Network Systems Department, responsible for information operations such as cyber attacks and cyber espionage campaigns, for which China has gained notoriety in recent years.

JLSF: It was created to manage the implementation of a joint logistics support system. It comprises the support forces for inventory and warehousing, medical services, and transport. In addition, it works closely with the theatre commands to provide the appropriate general logistics support as required.

The outbreak of Covid-19 proved to be the first test for the JLSF's logistical



capabilities. The force is headquartered in Wuhan (at Wuhan Joint Logistic Support Base) -- the epicentre of the initial outbreak of Covid-19 in 2019-20.

It had therefore an important role to play in transporting medical personnel, equipment and other supplies, and working with the civilian companies to provide logistical support. Besides, it also delivered Chinese Covid-19 vaccines to China's allies such as Pakistan and Cambodia. Western analysts like Meia Nouwens have assessed JLSF's performance in executing logistical op-

erations during the pandemic as "reasonably effective".

China has used the newly established Strategic Support Force (SSF) to build advanced space and offensive cyber capabilities. The SSF's Space Systems Department has consolidated military space functions, including rocket launches, telemetry, tracking, control, satellite communications, space intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

The Network Systems Department has integrated and strengthened signals

intelligence, cyber espionage, computer attack, electromagnetic warfare, and psychological operations, making the SSF a formidable offensive force.

According to the US intelligence community, China's cyber espionage operations have included compromising telecommunications firms such as Huawei and ZTE, which have provided opportunities for intelligence collection abroad.

For instance, in April 2019, the telecommunications company Vodafone Group revealed that it had found secu-



rity vulnerabilities with Huawei equipment deployed for its fixed-line phone network in Italy. These vulnerabilities potentially gave Huawei unauthorised access to the carrier's internet traffic and call data.

Likewise, in August 2020, a report from the Australian government and Papua New Guinea's National Cyber Security Centre noted that the latter's National Data Centre, built by Huawei in 2018, was marred by weak cybersecurity, which exposed confidential government data for stealing.

Drones and unmanned aerial and underwater capabilities

China has pursued R&D of drones and unmanned aerial and underwater capabilities with an eye on its benefits during combat and reconnaissance. It has had some notable successes: the PLAAF recently unveiled its largest drone, the WZ-7 "Soaring Dragon" high-altitude, long-range drone. It has also developed and deployed a fleet of underwater Sea Wing drones in the In-

dian Ocean for naval intelligence purposes.

Currently, China is developing a supersonic drone WZ-8 as well as swarming drone capability. Research initiatives like these funded by China's tech ecosystem, which is blended with the military system, ensure that the PLA has the edge over the other militaries in the region and beyond.

Software-first dual-use technologies

In a similar vein, through fair means and subterfuge, China has made great strides in software-first dual-use technologies such as artificial intelligence, deep learning, and facial recognition. Besides its own laboratories, the PLA has also utilised its domestic technology giants such as Alibaba, SenseTime and Megvii for developing the needed algorithms.

The CCP has deployed these technologies for external defence as well as internal security purposes. For instance, many of these companies have been used for targeted facial recognition, artificial intelligence, big data, and genetic testing against its Uighur population in Xinjiang.

Implications of China's military modernisation for the region

Ever since the CCP undertook military reforms, Chinese foreign policy has increasingly taken an assertive tone vis-a-vis its neighbours -- India, Taiwan, Japan -- and the southeast Asian neighbours such as Vietnam.

The military reforms and modernisation of the PLA strengthen China's coercive capabilities. The reforms give the PLA the ability to fight decisive wars, and in some cases as cyber, cripple the enemy without firing a shot. This adds to the already large power differential between the Chinese military and other regional militaries, including India.

US strategic analysts Joel Wuthnow and Phillip Saunders speculate that the transformation set off by the military reforms might prove "sufficiently disruptive" to reduce the PLA's ability to launch and sustain major combat operations. But India's experience with China in the last five years has proved otherwise.

Since the ascent of President Xi Jinping, India has seen PLA's increased assertiveness beginning with the 2013 Depsang Valley incursion in Ladakh, which peaked with the ongoing border



stand-off in Ladakh.

During this ongoing stand-off, PLA's enhanced effectiveness in executing joint combat operations and moving logistics is evident by the rapid deployment of upgraded versions of armoured vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, and heavy rocket launchers, along with a host of radar systems through the combined air defence system.

Similar Chinese aggression is also evident in the case of other neighbours of China -- Taiwan; the southeast Asian neighbours with whom China has a maritime dispute in the South China Sea; and Japan, over the Senkaku islands. In response to China's military reforms as well as the global trend of militaries moving towards jointness and information-based operations, India has commenced its own set of military reforms.

These include the setting up of the tri-service Defence Cyber Agency and Defence Space Agency in 2019, appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff in 2020, and the proposed move towards theatre commands. These reforms have a longer gestation period. They will also necessarily have to tackle the protracted rivalry among the three services and the inherent resistance such jointness evokes from the services.

Maritime contestation

China's military modernisation has created an enhanced PLA Navy presence in the Indian Ocean, as seen by the regular reports of repeated docking of PLAN nuclear submarines at the Colombo port in Sri Lanka and the Gwadar and Karachi ports in Pakistan. China has also augmented its presence in the Indian Ocean by participating in

anti-piracy operations. Between 2008 and 2018, China dispatched 30 anti-piracy task forces in the Indian Ocean, established an overseas military base in Djibouti in 2016, and enhanced its blue-water naval capabilities.

With these, the PLA can project its power far beyond the Chinese mainland. China has utilised these to protect its investment under the Belt and Road Initiative and citizens overseas as acknowledged by the 2019 white paper. According to the US Department of Defence, China may be considering opening additional overseas bases that will enable the PLA to project and sustain power at greater distances.

In response to China's growing submarine operations in the Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy has substantially augmented its anti-submarine warfare capabilities -- beginning 2013, it acquired the P8i maritime reconnaissance aircraft and in 2021, the MH-60 anti-submarine helicopters from the US.

Enhanced malicious cyber activities

China's augmented cyber capabilities through the SSF is its increased offensive cyber operations, which has amplified in recent years. India and other neighbours of China have been at the receiving end of the expanded Chinese malicious cyber activities, mainly directed against its critical infrastructure.

The only way for India to protect itself is to enhance capabilities through investments in cyber security and emerging technologies. India has made cyber security a policy priority and is raising necessary safeguards to better protect itself. But the persistence of Chi-

nese malicious cyber activities requires an even greater effort and enlisting like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Conclusion: The Road Ahead for India

India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, had remarked that China is the "biggest security threat" facing India. India will have to take a long view of China's transformed military power and expedite and adjust its defence reforms to achieve the same results.

Implementing such reforms requires a greater political management of the forces and lesser interference of the civilian bureaucracy. Moreover, optimising the limited budgetary resources, India must intensify its ongoing force restructuring initiatives, including integrating the three services and adding to its power projection capabilities.

Keeping in view China's focus on reducing the role of the ground forces, India too must invest more in aviation and naval assets because they will afford India enhanced power projection capability. At the heart of China's military reforms and modernisation is its robust defence-industrial base in the aerospace, missiles and shipbuilding sectors.

Domestic defence-industrialisation, therefore, has a critical role in India's own military advancement. The government has been encouraging a greater involvement of the private sector in defence manufacturing. To encourage them more, India will have to expedite its defence procurement process and expand support innovation in emerging technologies.

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‘India moving in centripetal direction is bad news for China, Pakistan; provocation would incur heavy costs’

Vishnu Makhijani

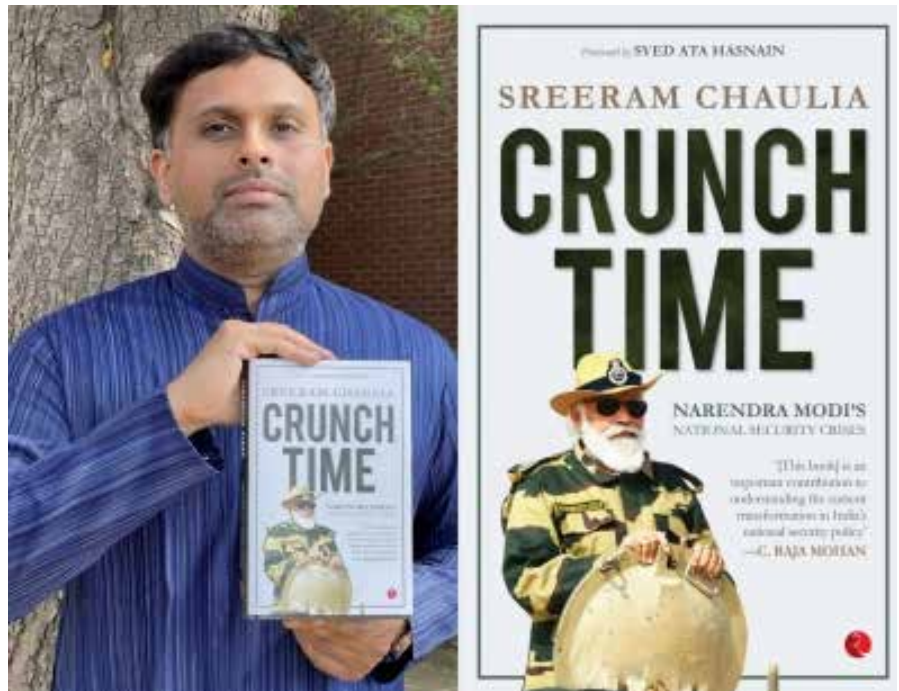
India moving in a “centripetal direction”, as reaffirmed by the results of the just-concluded Assembly elections, is “bad news” for China and Pakistan as any provocation now would see them “incurring heavy costs”, says noted social scientist and opinion maker Sreeram Chaulia, whose new book, “Crunch Time”, details the paradigm shift in the country’s national security calculus since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014.

India moving in a “centripetal direction”, as reaffirmed by the results of the just-concluded Assembly elections, is “bad news” for China and Pakistan as any provocation now would see them “incurring heavy costs”, says noted social scientist and opinion maker Sreeram Chaulia, whose new book, “Crunch Time”, details the paradigm shift in the country’s national security calculus since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014.

Even so, India must “prepare for a more belligerent and aggressive” China in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, strengthen defenses all along the disputed border and in the Indo-Pacific, invest more in the defence sector and forge “stronger coalitions” with the Quad and Quad-plus countries, Chaulia, professor and dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs at the O.P. Jindal Global University, told IANS in an interview.

At the same time, Pakistan “does not pose any existential threat to India”. The Modi government’s attempts to keep the Line of Control (LOC) “quiet” to focus on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China “ironically” could “bring about a tactical thaw for India with Pakistan”, even though “breaking the Sino-Pakistani strategic collusion is no easy task”, Chaulia maintained.

Central governments in India, before Modi’s prime ministership, “were hobbled in their approach to national security due to their internal weakness.



At the same time, Pakistan “does not pose any existential threat to India”. The Modi government’s attempts to keep the Line of Control (LOC) “quiet” to focus on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China “ironically” could “bring about a tactical thaw for India with Pakistan”, even though “breaking the Sino-Pakistani strategic collusion is no easy task”, Chaulia maintained.

Coalitions involving a motley group of political parties, excessive bargaining and blackmail by partners from regional parties at the state level, identity politics that divided India into a patchwork of ethnic, caste and religious groups, and national leaders lacking in political gravitas all these features had crippled central governments badly prior to 2014”.

“This translated into ineffective and cowardly responses when India’s security was threatened by external adver-

saries. The consolidation of a strong centre under Modi has thrown out this paradigm and presented a unified face of India as a state and a nation to China and Pakistan.

“The recent Assembly election results in Uttar Pradesh and other states confirm the trend of India moving in a centripetal direction, which is bad news for China and Pakistan. Provoking Modi’s India means incurring heavy costs for our two external adversaries now,” Chaulia asserted.

Sub-titled “Narendra Modi’s National Security Crises”, the book is published by Rupa. Here are few highlights of the conversation with the writer.

What are the implications for India of the Russia-Ukraine war?

Noting that the war “has thrown a wrench into the strategies of all powers”, Chaulia said India did not want the US and its European partners to get embroiled in a prolonged confrontation with Russia “that would distract from the clear and present dangers posed by China in Asia”.

Also, the shift in thinking in Washington and Brussels that Russia is the main threat and that the “new Cold War” is between Russia and the West “is not at all beneficial to India”, he said.

Moreover, the way in which Russia attacked Ukraine “will embolden China to attempt more browbeating, if not outright invasion, of Taiwan and smaller adversaries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines and Vietnam. So, we have to prepare for a more belligerent and aggressive China now and strengthen defenses all along our disputed borders, as well as in the maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific”, Chaulia contended.

Pointing to how the Modi government pushed back at Beijing’s expansionism through the doctrines of “security first” and “offensive defence”, he added: “Going forward, investing more in India’s defence and forging stronger coalitions with QUAD and QUAD-plus countries is the only way to face the Chinese menace,” he added.

How does he see the India-Pakistan situation panning out?

Contending that China has replaced Pakistan as the “principal threat” to India’s rise as a leading power in the world, Chaulia said that while Pakistan “can plot terrorist attacks against India”, it is “significantly weakened due to economic failure and internal fissures”.

“Pakistan does not pose any existential threat to India. Pakistan’s role is to act as a proxy or junior partner of China to keep India hemmed in within the subcontinent. Realising that the China-Pakistan axis could produce a ‘two front war’ problem, the Modi government has attempted to extend ceasefires with Pakistan and keep the Line of Control quiet so that India can divert and concentrate all its forces on the LAC,” Chaulia said.

“So, ironically, the enhanced Chi-

nese threat could bring about a tactical thaw for India with Pakistan. At least, this is the hope. But as readers will learn from my book, the mainstreaming of jihadist culture in Pakistan means that whatever effort Modi has made for peace, or at least a thaw, with Pakistan has not worked out. Breaking the Sino-Pakistani strategic collusion is no easy task,” he added.

What are the implications for QUAD?

In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, Modi has asked fellow QUAD members to remain focused on the core objective of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and just as India “cannot realistically handle a ‘two front war’ with both China and Pakistan, the US and its allies cannot simultaneously contain both Russia and China”, Chaulia said.

India’s role in QUAD now, he said “is to ensure it does not lose its direction and its *raison d’être*. The advent of a conservative government after recent elections in South Korea and the rise of bipartisan anti-China politics in Australia will ensure that no one takes eyes off the biggest challenge to the rules-based international order China”.

“The diplomatic partnerships with QUAD and QUAD-plus are key in the emerging geopolitical scenario,” Chaulia said, detailing in the book, how Modi has used military, diplomatic and economic tools to push back against China and Pakistan during four crises at Uri, the Doklam standoff, the Pulwama attack on a CRPF convoy and the incursions in Ladakh - and how India’s entire security establishment responded in a synchronised and coordinated manner.

Arguing that the reforms forged by Modi to India’s national security apparatus have been transformative in terms of improving the country’s strategic culture and overcoming the tag of a ‘soft state’ Chaulia charts how India finally moved in the direction of developing a strategic culture due to the Prime Minister’s own commitment to improving national security, and also because Indian society has shifted in a nationalistic direction.

Significantly, one of the tasks of the over-reaching Defence Planning Committee (DPC) created by government in April 2018 and chaired by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval with the chiefs of the armed forces, including the CDS, along with senior bureaucrats from multiple ministries, is the for-

mulation of a National Security Strategy (NSS) that successive governments have not been able to define since Independence but is now an emerging reality.

“The National Security Strategy has not been made public, but it is very much guiding the government in its responses to China and Pakistan,” Chaulia said during the interview.

“Unlike the US, where the legislature compelled the executive to publicly announce an NSS since the late 1980s, India does not yet have heavy parliamentary involvement and scrutiny of the executive branch’s foreign policy and national security policy. So, the NSS is a work in progress, but not declaring it explicitly does not mean our adversaries are unaware of how Modi’s India will respond if they attack us.

“Under the Doval doctrine’ (elaborated in the book), India has formulated a matrix of how to respond proportionately whenever there is a terrorist attack from Pakistan or a territorial incursion from China,” Chaulia added.

He also paid rich tributes to General Bipin Rawat, India’s first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) who died in a tragic helicopter crash on October 8, 2021, terming the creation of the post “the crown jewel in Modi’s security overhaul efforts”.

“General Rawat’s loss is a huge one, a void that cannot be easily filled. The CDS was the architect of (the) emerging unified jointness’ of the Indian Army, Air Force, Navy and paramilitary forces... General Rawat’s sad demise means there will be delays, but the far-reaching reforms Modi has triggered will go on and make India’s crisis-response mechanisms to Chinese and Pakistani attacks a lot stronger in the future,” Chaulia maintained.

He said the inspiration for writing “Crunch Time” is that “there is a Bharat which precedes the modern-day conception of India and that Modi and his foreign minister, S. Jaishankar, are reviving the millennia-old Bharatiya tradition of statecraft, geopolitical manoeuvres and risk-taking to deal with external opponents”.

“The more India becomes Bharat, i.e. its authentic pre-colonial self, the stronger India’s national security will become. China and Pakistan’s calculi in provoking India will change dramatically once they realise that Bharat is back,” Chaulia concluded.

The Russian Ukraine Conflict: What it means to India?

“Past imperialism cannot justify present day expansionism” : Palki Sharma

Charvi Devprakash

The Russian troops is unbridled in Ukraine. A mayhem no one anticipated in the 21st Century with strong institutions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the United Nations. While many have called this conflict the trigger for World War 3, none have picked up their weapons. All one can see is exorbitant economic sanctions imposed on Russia to deter it from attacking Ukraine. However, none seem to stop the Russian President from bulldozing Ukraine—even if it means the loss of innocent lives. The Russian President nonetheless believes that a world without Russia is a world not worth existing, and if he were to lose his life, he would rather lose it as a proud Russian.

The only response of the mighty nations to this hegemony is economic sanctions. Economic sanctions are fines imposed on a country, its authorities, or individual residents as a form of punishment or to offer disincentives for specific policies and acts.

Export restrictions and travel bans, as well as trade embargos and asset seizures, are examples of economic sanctions. Such sanctions, by definition, apply to those who are not easily proscribed by the sanctioning state.

Economic sanctions are a policy instrument that can be used instead of military force to penalise or deter unwanted behaviour. They're generally applicable beyond the borders of the sanctioning country, and they can be costly to their targets as global trade and economic interdependence grow.

Economic sanctions can be a brutal and inefficient policy weapon, putting insufficient penalties on targeted countries while imposing disproportionate costs on their most vulnerable citizens. The United States and the European Union, as the world's largest economy and trade group, have disproportionate sanctions powers.

Economic Sanctions against Russia:

Russia is known for its oil refineries, oligarchical power, and military exports. However, what happens when all of this comes to stand still. This is what the world today is witnessing—the Russian Economy coming to a dead stop with the Russian Ruble being valued at less than a cent.

From smaller countries like Taiwan, to superpowers like the United States of America, all countries have imposed





sanctions on Russia. While the invasion already gave rise to a devastating humanitarian crisis, it has now also become an economic crisis of a never seen before magnitude.

The US imposed fresh export restrictions on Russia's oil refining sector on Wednesday. The White House has announced a fresh wave of restrictions that prohibit the sale of key refining technologies, making it more difficult for Russia to reindustrialise its oil refineries.

Washington and its allies blocked some Russian banks from using the SWIFT international payments system, according to authorities. The list is still being finalised with EU partners.

"Wide limits on semiconductors, encryption security, lasers, telecommunications, sensors, navigation, avionics, and maritime technologies," the White House said in a statement. It was also aimed at military end-users, such as Russia's defence ministry. The US has sanctioned 24 Belarusians, including "two key Belarusian state-owned banks, nine defence companies, firms, and seven regime-connected officials and elites."

The EU's 27 member states imposed a slew of penalties on Russia, including a restriction on the sale of specified

Washington and its allies blocked some Russian banks from using the SWIFT international payments system, according to authorities. The list is still being finalised with EU partners.

refining technologies from Europe to Russia. Last Monday, the organisation announced that it will limit its airspace to Russian planes, including oligarchs' private jets.

Russia Today, a state-owned television network, and Sputnik, a Russian news service, were also blacklisted by the bloc. The EU has put a ban on products ranging from tobacco to mineral fuels, timber and wood, iron, cement and steel for Russia's ally Belarus. The EU has also resolved to freeze Russian President Vladimir Putin's and his foreign minister Sergey Lavrov's European assets.

According to Seoul's foreign ministry, South Korea has decided to strengthen export controls against Russia by barring the shipment of strategic products and joining Western countries in blocking select Russian banks from the SWIFT international payments system.

The Korean government has also resolved to push the release of additional strategic oil reserves in order to stabilise the world energy market, as well as to review other measures such as LNG resale to Europe, according to a statement released by the ministry on Sunday.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida indicated that Japan will strengthen sanctions against Russia to encompass financial institutions and military equipment exports, but that an impact on his resource-poor country's energy supplies is doubtful.

The Swiss government has announced that it will accept all of the European Union's penalties against Russian individuals and companies, as well as freeze their assets, in a departure from the country's previous neutrality.

"We are in an unusual situation," President and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said at a news conference in Bern, surrounded by the finance, de-

fence, and justice ministries. Only time will tell if such an event occurs again, he said. Swiss neutrality was preserved, but he added, "Of course, we stand on the side of Western principles."

However, what do these sanctions mean to India?

Impact on India: After two years of pandemic, the world has just begun recuperating. Amidst this, the war

comes as a shocker and is completely uncalled for. It all started when the UNSC called to vote on the Russia-Ukraine conflict on January 30th this year, where India abstained from voting. This meant that India neither condoned the actions of Russia nor came to the support of Ukraine, but instead maintained a diplomatic silence and suggested the Presidents of both the countries to resolve their matter

through peaceful dialogue and non-violence upholding India's morals of respecting sovereignty, democracy, and non-violence.

However, would such a stance prove to be detrimental to India?

India in the past eight years, under the Modi-led government has established strong diplomatic relations with



both Russia and the United States of America. Additionally, European Union is also the third- largest trading partner of India. Therefore, India must tread lightly as this is an extremely sensitive situation and one wrong step might cost us a fortune.

To elaborate on India's trade relations with Russia and Ukraine, India imports 2.05 billion dollars' worth of oil and minerals, 832 million dollars'

worth of precious stones and metals and 609 million dollars' worth of fertilizers from these countries which aids in the agriculture sector of India, which again is the backbone of India economy.

India is also Russia's largest market for weapon exports. What began as a buyer-seller relationship, has now bloomed into a robust partnership of joint research and design which has led to the development of Brahmos Cruise

Missile, Multi-role Transport Aircraft and 5th Generation Fighter Aircraft. Approximately 70% of edible oil, in specific- Sunflower oil has been exported to India from Ukraine. On an average, monthly, 2 to 3 lakh ton of Sunflower oil is being imported by India. However, post the invasion, India is exploring Brazil and Indonesia as the alternative suppliers in order to avoid huge inflation. Ukraine additionally is dependent on Indian pharma companies like Ranbaxy, Dr. Reddy and Sun Pharma for pharmaceuticals. These companies have also been unpropitiously affected.

Furthermore, war is not favourable to any economy. The Indo-Russia trade is valued at 8 billion dollars. Recently India also signed a 25-billion-dollar deal to buy natural gas from Russia. Therefore, the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the West will have a huge bearing on the Indo-Russian trade leading to inflation. Post the declaration of this 'military operation', Sensex fell 2700 points which led to panic selling among investors, further deteriorating the position of the market. Overall, a loss of 2.5 lakh crore was accrued in the market. This unforeseeable event has affected the course of the rest of the year. This would also call for adjustments in the Budget. It would affect India's Economic Interest by hampering the Global Supply Chains across the world due to today's globalized and multipolar world.

Globally, Russia exports 86% of its weapons, to countries including the European Union. Russia is also the world's third largest crude oil producer. 1/3rd of crude oil in Europe is imported from Russia. EU has now imposed a sanction on the export of oil, which has led to a 7-year-high. The major indicators of fluctuations in the market are the prices of Gold and Oil. As one can witness, the price of crude oil has reached an all-time high of almost 90 dollars per barrel and is expected to hit 125 dollars in the coming days. A rise in the price of oil, would severely impact the cost of transportation in industries heavily reliant on transportation. This added expense would lead to inflation. Therefore, the economic sanctions, although imposed on Russia, will also impact the European economy adversely. International flights are predicted to become 45% more expensive after this predicament.

However, there are a few unintended positive consequences because of this invasion. Due to importing becoming





an expensive affair, the domestic producers will get an impetus to produce quality products in India thereby empowering and actualizing to the greatest extent India's goal of 'aatmanirbharta'. Additionally, Ukraine and Russia are one of the largest grain suppliers of world. This trade-vacuum is now being bridged by India. Currently, wheat exports from India have reached a 9-year high price and is expected to experience a record grain harvest.

Concluding Remarks

Historically, India has found itself in a tiff when it comes to taking a stance on a global footing. The same was the situation even during the Cold War where India had to choose a side between US and USSR. India, similar to now, even then opted for the Non-Alignment Movement along with a few other newly independent countries. However, non-alignment is out of question in today's day and age where India has established very strong and reliable foreign relations and a non-alignment policy might prove to India's foreign policy narrative. India's abstinence this time, did not come as a surprise to most diplomatic experts and to those who are ardent followers of geopolitics as India had also abstained in 2014 when Russia invaded Crimea. While Russia called it a Pro-Russia stance and thanked India, India merely abstained. Another exam-

ple in this light is India's boycott of the Winter Olympics in China where Russia would publicly express its stance on Ukraine being called a Pro-US stance. However, this move again, was neither Anti-Russia nor Pro US. In a recent QUAD meeting held in Melbourne, Indian Foreign Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar refused to discuss the ongoing conflict, thereby maintained a balanced and diplomatic stance. This indeed is a political test for India and its diplomatic relations.

Along with the historical reference, India at this juncture cannot afford to have conflicts because 18,000 Indian students study medical in Ukraine and their lives would be at stake if India took a stance. However, with the successful completion of Operation Ganga, India has averted this risk. In the past 8 years, the country has also improved its relations with the United States of America by forming strategic allies to tackle China's expansionist strategies. Therefore, choosing Russia, would mean instigating a conflict with USA. For India, this isn't a Russia-Ukraine conflict, it is a Russia v. West conflict. Russia on the other hand, despite having one of the most powerful militaries in the world, it is not economically sound to afford a war. The only way Russia can justify this war financially is through the support of China which now aims to be a superpower in Asia. However, as stated

above, Russia's Ruble is now worth less than a cent and it is almost impossible to recover from this economic crisis.

Nonetheless, considering Russia is a time-tested and a reliable partner of India, the abstinence proves to be the only and a great strategy. Additionally, Russia is also a permanent member at the United Nations Security Council and has supported India during the Kashmir issue and in Chinese dominated platforms like the BRICS and SCO. Therefore, having Russia's support in such international forums will prove beneficial to India.

While one may choose to see a ray of hope in all this, it is a known fact that there are no winners in a war. Even though India continues to maintain a neutral stance in this regard, it is highly likely that it might invite the US economic sanctions through Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) considering India's ongoing projects with Russia such as the production of S400 and AK203 weaponries. To sum it up, this is a lose-lose situation. In a globalized, multipolar world, a strong Russia is important and so is the need for India to be a stable global power promoting peaceful dialogue and resolution mechanisms.

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Kudos to India for preventing World War III

Joginder (Jo) Singh Biring

Many Indian Govt ministers under PM Modi have shown in this Russia Ukraine conflict that they honour, value and respect their neighbour Russia and President Putin while also advising both countries peacefully de-escalate the present situation which is endangering citizens and the World.

President Putin and his Russia Govt continue protecting Russians living in Luhansk/Donetsk Ukraine and protecting the Russian land borders with their special operation which was launched 24th Feb 2022 inside Ukraine.

In the last 8 years' Ukrainian troops killed between 10,000 and 14,000 mostly civilians in cross border sniper and canon fire on Luhansk and Donetsk. The regime in Kiev is nothing but war criminals and has been a disaster for Ukrainian civilians and military alike. They formally incorporated the Azov brigade (white supremacist militia) into the Ukrainian army which has been treating all non-white citizens and students (Indian students/people can attest to that now that many of them are safely back in India!) at the borders with beatings and segregation! How much time has the west/many in the world spent time condemning Ukraine,

Zelensky and his racist regime? But now suddenly, you hate the Russian army's/ President Putin's special military operation coming in and putting a stop to that AND shutting down the bio-weapons labs that is a huge risk to not just Russia but also to China, India and the Middle Eastern Countries! Should the USA be concerned if Russia or China or India had bio labs in Mexico? (They do not!) Nobody does hypocrisy better than those many in the west!

The day before the Russian SO (Special Operation) began; Zelensky suggested that Ukraine could decide to make/host nuclear weapons again. That coupled with the NATO threat was



also the reason President Putin/Russian govt ministers had to take protective step. NATO placing weaponry in Ukraine was an act of war.

For many months Russia has underlined her red lines, and still NATO, USA/BK (Broken Kingdom) and Europe denies Russia of its security guarantees. For centuries Ukraine has been thriving alongside Russia in relative peace. Ukraine's democratically elected government was torn down by a west sponsored coup and if that is not enough, these collective terrorists now wants to place NATO's/USA missiles at their borders! The western press/politicians and the "peace marchers" have kept silent for years on war in Donbass & Neo-Nazism in Ukraine!

THE TIME SEQUENCE FACTS FROM THE WHS GROUP SMARTECHNO C8IND INTEL TROOPS IN REGARDS TO THE RUSSIA UKRAINE CONFLICT:

1. Russia/President Putin on 24th February 2022 launched a "Special

Operation" in Donbass aimed at protecting Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR), which were recognised as independent entities by Moscow on 21st Feb 2022. The western media called the operation "an invasion" they have long warned about.

The "Russian invasion" narrative was not the west's "prophecy" but rather a cover-up for a new attempt to return the breakaway Donetsk and Lugansk republics by force to Ukraine. Bringing back Donbass would have paved the way for Ukraine's NATO membership: in accordance with the alliance's rules, a country having territorial disputes cannot be admitted to the bloc.

2. The western smoke-and-mirrors media campaign speculating about Russia's "imminent invasion" began in spring 2021. The mainstream press claimed that Russia was about to invade Ukraine.

In November 2021, the "Russian invasion narrative" caught its second breath with the mainstream press and prominent social media influencers

publishing maps and "false flag" scenarios of the supposed assault. Former USA Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul launched nothing short of a tweet storm claiming Ukrainian civilians will fight to the bitter end against Russian "occupiers". For his part, Hollywood actor Sean Penn arrived in Ukraine to film a documentary about "Russian aggression".

It was a coordinated infowar operation aimed at presenting Russia's possible reaction to Ukraine's offensive against Donbass as a full-fledged invasion. The Ukrainian Jewish Comedian President Zelensky was also pushing the information operation narrative worked out for him by USA infowar consultants, Invisible War in Donbass. Just a limited number of independent journalists and freelance photographers have been working in the Donbass region, chronicling the invisible war of the Ukrainian govt against its own people. According to the UN over 13,000 have been killed in the region since the Maidan coup d'état of February 2014.





Over the past several weeks the Ukrainian military had intensified bombardment of the Donbass region, prompting the leadership of the DPR and LPR to launch an evacuation of children and elderly people to Russia.

3. The USA openly dismissed Russia's warnings about the ongoing genocide of Russian-speakers and crimes against humanity in Eastern Ukraine. For his part, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz claimed at the annual Munich Security Conference on 19th February 2022 that it is "really ridiculous" to say that "there is something like genocide" in Donbass.

4. The hospital in Mariupol was taken over by the Azov regiments after shutting down. They created the crater in the central patio, not the Russians. The building has been discovered to have been a bio weapon storage facility! The woman shown as pregnant in some pictures has by now been identified as a crisis actor used on other occasions too.

5. A statement by the former UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon from 2014 has factually stated that since 1991 Ukraine has not registered its borders with the UN, making it autonomous, but still a part of Russia.

India's neutral stance

India and Russia are located on the same land mass – so it makes lot of sense to do more peaceful trade. Hopefully India and China will come to terms and will not allow the USA/BK British/West to make them enemies.

India needs Russian energy for food and energy (oil and gas) as well as

maintaining its military. India does not need the USA or the Broken Kingdom British debt sinking little Island. In fact, the USA/Broken Kingdom British debt sinking little Island stealing India's brightest minds is actually damaging to India and its growth.

India knows what it is to be under the thumb of colonisers and has plenty of experience in that sense to recognise colonialism in all its disguises: Great Reset, Green New Deal, Sustainable Development...whatever the globalist cabal wants to call it, every country that's been damaged by their greed can see through it all. And they are all starting to band together to go against these deranged agendas, which the western public should also resist and fight against.

Russian sanctions

As the west introduced sanctions against Russia, common Russian citizens suffer. So the west seems ok with Russian people suffering, at the same sympathetic towards Ukrainian citizens. Is that not double standards.

Where are the sanctions against the many western countries who bombed destroyed and killed the millions of people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Palestine. Nobody does hypocrisy better than those many in the West!

Russia and President Putin cannot be defeated by the West or by a Ukrainian Jewish Comedian who has put his people in more peril by being a not so funny puppet clown of the West! The western media/many politicians have

a really bad memory; they cannot remember 8 years ago. That is when the USA, Obama, Clintons, McCain, Bidens and Soros, the rest of their ilk overthrew the democratically elected government with their Nazi friends. Certainly Oliver Stone has not forgotten...Ukraine on Fire.

Russia has the same interest in not having a NATO country on its borders as the USA, not having a Russian or Chinese base nearby. Live and let live... peacefully and without discrimination. Sign new peace deal with Russia without NATO/EU or western weapons/western terrorists being supplied to Ukraine.

In 2022 and beyond, we will continue making the world much more safer as well as more peaceful with our new C8 IND Smartechno Modules, Mexico/Latin America trading operations (led by our Mexico President Partner Mr. Ramon Cervantes) our new hi-tech eco farming equipment, our latest specialized import-export trading, asset protection banking modules, our new Smartechno ATECS educational modules, our new media movies productions fashion (led by Our Canada President Partner Sundeep Bilkhu and India's Ranganath Chakravarthy) and... Our globally trained Peaceful Protection Patrols as It is not hard to make decision when you know what your "True" values are. Live and let live...peacefully... without further conflicts terrorism or wars.

Writer is The Global Chairman/ Group President of the World Homeland Security

Global food crisis and withdrawn Indian Farm laws

Prakhar Prakash Misra

While the questions over the stability of world order grow intense, I am somewhat more concerned about the stability of order in India. There have been many global incidents raising eyebrows, like the annexation of Crimea and Afghanistan and the Russian attack on Ukraine, and I am at the least able to pin the whole thing on the US. Why the US is a story for another day. However, incidents like the protest against farm laws cannot be pinned on anyone. I, for one, blame how political ideologies have developed in the country.

This article is very late to the party, partly because I prefer writing on a topic once I have a thorough understanding and willingness to gain criticism and partially because you are bound to take a side politically in the initial wave of thoughts.

Why the repealed Farm Laws?

To begin with, let me first clarify why I am taking the farm laws as an example. The three farm laws aiming to liberalize the market would have allowed corporate and private investment in the trade. These investments can help establish infrastructure, improve tools, and regenerate the sector. The open-market edifice also enables the farmers to sell their products online, an essential change in an increasingly digital universe. The markets can gain healthy competition, increasing the prices for farmers currently in the intermediaries' hands. However, the questions around the minimum support price (MSP) loomed havoc in the country. The country was divided into supporting and opposing the three bills. The opposition was so much that the protests reached the Red Fort and took an awful turn. The number of farmers, thought leaders, political figures, and the Junta involved was too huge to count.

Lately, Ukraine, which is facing a tiny rebellion from within in the Donetsk and Luhansk region and a war

with Russia, is a significant contributor to the wheat demand across the globe. Russia and Ukraine export to feed 30% of the world. However, with the war, the supply chain is disrupted. Egypt imports nearly 80% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. UN world food program buys 50% of wheat from Ukraine and feeds around 125 Mn people (Source: Finshots). Although, Ukraine is only the 8th largest wheat producer, and India is the 2nd largest.

What then is stopping us from becoming a wheat exporting superpower?

According to the World Trade Organization, as a fair-trade practice, countries cannot ship a commodity if the government financially incentivizes the commodity's production in question using financial incentives. The said financial incentives depress the commodity prices and put other international producers at a disadvantage. India has already faced a complaint against the government's excessive financial sup-



port to sugar producers. The limits of these incentives are laid out in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). My point of contention is that The WTO agreed with the complaint.

Given the MSP reign and other farmers' financial support, the government cannot export wheat without raising questions about the global fair-trade practices. We might be producing more than we need, storing some, and ruining most of the wheat in storage, but we cannot simply sell it in the international market.

How do the farm laws come into the picture?

With the shift of balance in the global supply chain for wheat, the picture is very different for the farmers in India. Farmers are selling wheat at ₹2700 a quintal opposed to ₹2015 per quintal set as the MSP. The farmers are willing to sell their products to anyone but the government (Source: Finshots). And that is what the three farm laws were meant to do. Can you estimate the damage from the protests?

The government is on its toes to support these farmers selling beyond the government. After all, they proposed this order in the market. But we, the citizens of India, opposed it, thinking it was the right thing to do.

Why do I blame the political ideology of the mass rather than politics?

Indian politics is primarily driven by how the Junta wants the government to function because the politicians care about reigning longer than just a term of 5 years. However, the challenge in the Indian context is that the political mindsets/ideologies are not framed on facts, figures, or personal opinions. We are taught to respect our elders and learn from them. We learn from them so much that their political mindset, mostly set in a time ago, translates into our mindset. We support or oppose a political party not because of their work, instead of how our perspective lets us perceive it.

In one of my personal experiences, a neighbour had put only negative sentiments in their helper's mind about the affordable housing that the government was providing. The house help ended up paying more rent and not owning the property she could have. Was the scheme wrong? At least from a social and progressive point of view, it was not. Economically, it might be a curse,

Given the MSP reign and other farmers' financial support, the government cannot export wheat without raising questions about the global fair-trade practices



but it is again a discussion for some other day.

Over the years, from childhood to adolescence, we are exposed to multiple arguments and counterarguments, but we tend to support what our mom and dad say. The problem is more acute among the educated. 36% or 10.7 Mn students in 2016-17 were in science, engineering, or technology/computer science. It is not the choice to study sciences but the choice to be oblivious to how an economy functions and its basics that lead a parents' political mindset to settle in the child.

Once the farm laws started gaining attention, the Junta began taking sides, most of them empathetically connected with the farmers. After all, farmers are probably the section facing the most issues ranging from divided land holdings to natural affairs. The 86% of farmers who supported the farm laws were buried under the woke citizen's voice. Citizens, most of whom did not understand the economics and history of why farmers were selling through mandis and to the government.

What is the solution?

I am not discussing a solution to the farm problems; I am no expert at it. I am not an expert on political thinking either, but might I suggest reading beyond what you are supposed to? In the past few years, I have often found myself in a situation where I need to voice my opinion, political opinion. During these arguments, I realized how reading helps.

I witnessed a street brawl just yesterday; I don't know why these men were fighting. I was lost to hear that a friend believed that it was probably the people putting saffron flags on that same street. However, it later turned out these were two shopkeepers from competing stores who fought. I don't blame him. I blame how his political thinking grew.

If you think I support the Modi government, yes, I do most of the time, but I oppose what is not best for the country, its economy, and its citizen. I do not build my opinions on merely what people in my community think or what my parents think. This solution that works best for me might work for you too, or instead, find your path to learn before considering something as a concrete fact.

Understanding the Desertion of Spouses by NRIs in Punjab

Background of the Problem

Recent reports in the media show that Punjab is witnessing increasing cases where Non-Resident Indian (NRI) wives are duping their Punjabi husbands. As per the data provided by the NRI Wing of Punjab police, since the year 2013, more than 35000 complaints have been received, including marital disputes, property disputes, and other complaints. Both men and women filed these complaints. However, a large chunk of these complaints has been filed by women as desertion of husbands by NRI women is a recent phenomenon. Given the significant number of cases, the issue demands the immediate attention of academia, policymakers, and civil society at large.

Emigration from Punjab: Traces in History

Before moving into the details of the current issue, it is essential to look

at its roots which are buried in history. Emigration from Punjab started after the British annexure in 1849. Subsequently, Punjabi men were recruited to the army and deployed worldwide in different British colonies. Many of them settled in countries where they were deployed, while many returned. Men who tasted the life of foreign land brought back its fragrance to its local populace. Since then, tales of glamorous life abroad have occupied considerable space in the Punjabi conscience.

Moreover, after the World War II, many countries, including the USA, UK, and Canada, started programs focusing on economic development. It opened doors to the migrants from developing countries. Taking the benefit of this opportunity, a significant number of Punjabis emigrated to these countries.

Over the years, as borders around the world tightened, many of the emigrations from Punjab have been il-

legal. There are several ways to enter foreign countries illegally. One is the well-known 'donkey system', in which migrants enter the country they aim for via multiple stops in other countries. This is a popular but dangerous method that has already resulted in the deaths of many young Punjabis in the jungles of Mexico as they tried to cross the US border illegally.

Socio-Economic Phenomenon

Deteriorating economic conditions predominantly lead the current emigration from Punjab in the State. Known as the bread and basket of India, most people in the State have agriculture as their primary occupation. Punjab became the epicenter of the Green Revolution in the late 1960s. The income of the farmers in the State increased multifold. However, this increase in production reached satura-





tion by the late 1980s. Since then, with inputs costs of agriculture continuously rising and a minor increase in output, along with fragmentation of agricultural land due to increasing population, it has become a loss-yielding occupation. Besides, unlike many other Indian states, industrial development in Punjab has not witnessed much growth. As a result, unemployment rates remain high in Punjab (<https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/punjab-budget-analysis-2021-22>). Consequently, the youth of Punjab has shifted its attention to developed countries.

However, this is not the only reason. Other reasons include demographic transition in the State. The share of youth aged between 15-29 years of age in the state has been increased from 26 per cent in 1971 to 30 per cent in 2016. Consecutive Central and State governments have remained unsuccessful in generating gainful employment opportunities catering to such a large number of youth when it comes to education, employment, or providing basic amenities to lead a decent life.

Therefore, with increase in youth population coupled with slow economic growth, the solution many seek is migration, particularly to developed countries. Better job opportunities with higher pay scales, better standards of

living, and a comfortable lifestyle have been identified as primary pull factors.

In 2019, Punjab ranked second after Kerala in international out-migration. The numbers have been increasing over the past two decades. Data indicate that the number of households in the state reporting at least one international migrant has increased more than three times from about 3 per cent in 1992-93 to about 11 per cent in 2010-11. Having a sizeable number of NRIs from Punjab, the State government has established NRI Wing in August 2013, which caters to all NRI issues relating to Police.

Deserted Wives of NRIs

Over a period, with rising emigration, evolved a social malaise where NRI men started deserting their Indian wives. As per the data presented by the National Commission for Women in a seminar in 2011, there were more than 30000 cases where NRI husbands deserted Indian women. About 15000 cases were reported from the Doaba region of Punjab alone. (<http://ncw.nic.in/ncw-reports/background-national-seminar-issues-relating-nri-marriages>). These women are married by the NRI men on the pretext of taking them abroad, which in most cases, never turns into reality. Once the NRI leaves for a foreign country, the women

left in India to lead a life of misery.

Research evidence has shown that marriages are fixed mainly by close relatives or friends. Therefore, very few or no preliminary inquiries were made by the bride's family of NRI boy's background. On top of that, it has been found that on the bride's side, major attractions for such marriages include high social prestige, rich and glamorous lifestyle attached to the NRIs life abroad. Additionally, prospects of taking her family abroad push her family to arrange such marriages.

Conversely, on the bridegroom's side, reasons for such marriages include huge dowry paid by the bride's family, getting a holiday wife for their short stay in India, and getting an unpaid maid to look after their family members in India once they leave for abroad. (<http://www.jeywin.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/A-Diagnostic-Study-of-Wives-Deserted-by-NRIs.pdf>) Desertion of these women in the Indian scenario profoundly affects their physical, psychological, financial, and social condition. Such a condition practically renders their lives non-viable.

Besides, these women become dependent on their parents, and their misery increases if they are pregnant or have children. They were often forced to stay with their in-laws and tortured

for dowry. It has been stated that the actual number of such women could be much more as many of them grieve in isolation. The social stigma attached to the condition in our patriarchal society restricts them from speaking about their sorrows. They feel that they would become a laughingstock for society, and their families would be disgraced. (Randhawa, 2014).

Deserted Husbands of NRIs

However, when it comes to the desertion of Indian men by NRI women, a trend that has recently come to light, it has an entirely different set of factors at play behind the situation.

It has widely come to known that Punjab youth, forced by economic and social factors in their native State, look to settle abroad as it offers them lucrative job opportunities, better social security, and improved quality of life. However, to settle overseas, they must meet specific criteria, which involves a good IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score, among other things. When they can't score enough in the exam, their family members take an alternative route. They find a girl who scored well in IELTS, but her family either can't afford the large sum of money needed to send her abroad or don't want to spend by themselves. Therefore, they enter an informal contract where they promise to fund the girl's fee, ticket, and other expenses. And the girl, in return, marries their son. Once she goes to a foreign land, she is expected to attain permanent residence and arrange a spouse visa for her husband.

But in many cases, it doesn't work in the desired manner. Often, the couple doesn't feel connected as the distance increases. In other cases, girls tend to be involved in new romantic relationships abroad. It leads to subsequent marital disputes and sometimes, as happened recently, deserted men committing suicide.

The Legal Lacunas

NRI marriages are governed by Indian laws and laws of other countries in which any of the spouses is settled. In the case of deserted women, the existing lacunas between laws of different countries have been deliberately exploited by the NRI men. As law enforcement agencies lack clarity in defining the jurisdictional boundaries in such cases, the conviction rate has remained abysmally low (Chadha, 2016).



Research evidence also suggests that these women were, earlier, informally disowned, but in the recent past, they have started receiving ex parte divorces. In ex parte divorce, proceedings are done with the only one-party present, in this case, only men.

Also, these women denied maintenance in India on the pretext that the marriage had already been dissolved in another country. Legal complexities further increase in the cases involving the custody of children. (Pushkarna, 2003).

In contrast, there is no such research evidence to cite in the cases of deserted men. However, as discussed above, any parties could exploit the existing legal lacunas for ulterior motives.

In the wake of increasing cases of fraud NRI marriages, the Punjab government had passed the Punjab Compulsory Registration of Marriages Act, 2012, to curb the menace. Despite the legislation, the number of such cases has kept on rising since then. Thus, existing laws also demand serious scrutiny to get away with the fuzzy provisions that the NRIs seem to take advantage of.

At the Central Government level, taking stock of the situation, then External Affairs Minister of India, Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj introduced The Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill in February 2019 in Rajya Sabha. Since then, the bill has been languishing in the upper house. In March 2020, the Standing Committee submitted its report to the house after scrutiny. It has to be seen how things will unfold once the bill becomes the act.

At the international level, India is not a signatory to international conventions such as Hague Conference on Private International Law, 1980, to

collaborate with other countries to fill the gaps in international laws (Bajpai, 2013).

The Way Forward

Undoubtedly, since the issue has popped up, the State and the central government have taken many initiatives to curb the menace. However, there remain loopholes in its implementation. The first step to address the problem would be acknowledging that it is multifaceted and has layers beyond the surface. It includes social, economic, cultural, psychological, and legal dimensions. Therefore, trying to solve any one of them would do no good. Instead, the issue should be dealt with more comprehensively. Both the civil society and the government (both State and Centre) should come forward to work in greater synergies. For instance, entities like the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Commission of Women, State Women Commission, Punjab State Commission for NRIs, and the non-government organizations should collaborate and deliberate on the issue to find constructive solutions.

Also, it's high time that India should become a part of the essential international conventions to fill the gaps between the laws of different countries. For this matter, Indian Diplomatic Missions abroad have a vital role to play.

Finally, generating awareness in society about the legitimate route to settle abroad and potential risks involved while using shortcuts to emigrate will help the people make informed decisions.

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‘KHALSA’, THE IDEAL WELFARE STATE

Jagmohan Singh Raju

We for a good life and look up to Dr Ambedkar to lead us to the path of an ideal society that shall be conducive to the welfare of all. What is an ideal society? Dr Ambedkar had answered this question explicitly: “If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity.” Dr Ambedkar later enshrined these ideals in the constitution that we, the people of India, gave to ourselves on

26 January 1950. More than a couple of centuries before Baba Saheb gave a clarion call for an ideal society, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, had already founded such a society in the form of Khalsa.

Khalsa is both a way of life as well as a model of governance. By establishing Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh sought to design a modern social order that will defeat caste and the accompanying social injustices that have been a defining feature of our society. In its architecture and spirit, Khalsa is a world class

inclusive fraternity denoted by democracy, egalitarianism, justice, equality, dignity, and patriotism. With emphasis on harmonious prosperity and cooperative living, Khalsa, is the template on which the modern welfare states have evolved. Constitution of India too envisages a seamless, inclusive society like the Khalsa.

Guru Nanak’s golden principles, ‘Kirt karo, Vand Chako, Nam Japo’ are the 3 fundamentals of Khalsa. For every person, ‘Kirt’ is mandatory. There is no easy English translation of ‘Kirt’.





Kirt doesn't mean labour or slavery. Kirt embodies freedom, proficiency, excellence, enterprise, autonomy, and self-esteem. 'Kirt' is a comprehensive doctrine. Kirt guard's society against sloth, the most dangerous termite that devastates societies. Sloth entails continuous disinclination to work or failure to do things that one should do. Sloth pulls humans away from good deeds, disregards knowledge, hinders humans in their righteous undertakings and leads them to ruin. A slothful person drifts along with law breaking, violence and crime. Importantly, sloth induces economic distress. When humans avoid Kirt, economic distress sets in. With diminished economy, basic needs of life are not met. Quality of life suffers. Poverty, disease, squalor, and crime

become widespread. Disharmony and conflict in the society becomes the order of the day. Those who do not work, suffer humiliation and indignity. They become vulnerable to vice.

Kirt is the antidote to sloth. But 'Kirt' faces threat from caste. Dr Ambedkar explains how caste weans people away from Kirt. To practice 'Kirt' devotedly, society must develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and make one's own choice of profession. This principle, according to Dr Ambedkar, is violated in the caste system as tasks are appointed to individuals not based on trained capacities but on their social origin. Dr Ambedkar further argues that under the caste system numerous persons are engaged in professions that make no appeal to

them. Generations after generations are engaged in degraded professions like scavenging, repairing shoes, labour, servants, and the like. These professions are historically regarded as demeaning and because of the slight and stigma attached to them, many shall prefer not to work than adopt these stigmatised, degraded professions. Dignity and esteem are therefore precondition for Kirt to flourish.

The principle of 'Vand Chako' or harmonious sharing is an empowering social vision encompassing inclusion, solidarity, participation, and contribution. It engrains the doctrine of amicable sharing of power, wealth, and opportunities. There can be no peace and prosperity if power, wealth, and opportunities remain concentrated in



the hands of the few. Even the constitution of India through Articles 38 and 39 direct the Indian State to follow this golden rule. The third fundamental, Nam Japo, emphasises on building capabilities to identify, disseminate, and apply knowledge for human development. Dr Ambedkar and Amartya Sen also give the highest priority to education for self and group emancipation.

Deviation from Kirt, Harmonious sharing and Knowledge have adverse consequences as are observed in Punjab. Of late, the State has been suffering at the hands of 5 Demons, namely, Drugs, Immigration, Unemployment, Economic distress, and Extremism (atvad). Many political parties and Governments in the last few decades have attempted to remedy the problem but

failed. The magnitude of drug forced migration, unemployment, economic distress, and extremism is on continuously on the rise. Reason for their inability to check this menace lies in the wrong diagnosis. We have generally failed to recognise that erosion of Kirt, harmonious sharing and knowledge in Punjab is the root cause of all its ills.

Khalsa model of welfare state alone can redeem Punjab's lost glory and prosperity. Kirt and knowledge (education) led society ought to be the first step in this direction. Government and society should create an enabling environment for Kirt. Aspirational jobs should be created. The capacity of everyone should be developed to the maximum, and each must choose to call of his choice. But it is important

to add the caution that in a Kirt Pradhan Samaj, there can be no room for senseless freebies because freebies stifle incentive because freebies stifle opportunity because freebies stifle responsibility, because freebies stifle contribution, and, above all, because freebies stifle Kirt. To position knowledge as the central pillar of the society maximum portion of the population must attain higher education and a

The principle of 'Vand Chako' or harmonious sharing is an empowering social vision encompassing inclusion, solidarity, participation, and contribution. It engrains the doctrine of amicable sharing of power, wealth, and opportunities. There can be no peace and prosperity if power, wealth, and opportunities remain concentrated in the hands of the few.

vast majority of the population must have access to information and communication technologies and to the internet. Both individuals and the state ought to invest heavily in education.

A society in which Kirt, harmonious sharing and knowledge predominate is Khalsa. Such a society is Beegumpura. Such a society is Ramrajya. Such a society was envisioned by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. Such a society is envisaged by the constitution. Such a society is what you want. Such a society is what we all want. Let us begin with Punjab.

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The Politics Of The Hijab: An Enumeration and Rebuttal

By Haranet Manu

Your clothes can cause “social separateness” and anarchy. Owing to the hazardous potentialities of your habiliments, your clothes stand banned in the interest of public order and integrity.

Sounds bizarre? Yet, the scurrility of the above proposition seems to have completely evaded the three judge bench that unapologetically upheld the restriction that barred young Muslim girls from wearing a hijab in educational spaces ostensibly in the interest of public order, integrity, unity and also women’s empowerment.

I have paraphrased the 129 page judgement while simultaneously attempting to rebut the core propositions of the verdict:

In The Interest Of Public Integrity

Your clothes could be immensely hazardous to public integrity and could harbour the volatile potential to invoke anarchy. Since your sartorial choice is also an overt assertion of who you are, your choice of clothing may also perpetuate social strife and therefore prove

In the wake of the judgement, politicians have cited the ban on triple talaq, the permission granted to women to become combat officers in the army and the hijab debate as initiatives specifically geared towards women empowerment.

to be inimical to society’s stable homogeneity.

What happened to the vibrancy of our democracy? Since when did clothes emerge as threats to public integrity? If we were to eliminate each institution or person that possesses the potential to perpetuate social strife, scarce little would be left of the larg-

est democracy itself. In the event that something or someone does perpetuate anarchy merely because they exist, is it not incumbent upon us to untangle the complex threads of the very factors that propel us to behave violently? No, we’d rather just eliminate the purported object that causes social separateness.

For Her : In The Holy Name Of Feminism:

Furthermore, if you adhere to the tenets of women empowerment, shunning oppressive and barbaric habiliments like the hijab should greatly gratify your feminist urges.

In the wake of the judgement, politicians have cited the ban on triple talaq, the permission granted to women to become combat officers in the army and the hijab debate as initiatives specifically geared towards women empowerment. This premise is both faulty and ironic. For the record, women’s empowerment is defined as promoting a woman’s sense of self worth, her ability to determine her own choices and her inviolable right to influence social change for herself and others.

In this context, how can a ban on Muslim woman’s hijab promote her empowerment? Only when a Muslim





woman with a hijab on her head becomes a combat officer in the Indian army, will the quest for empowerment come to fruition in the right sense of the word.

While some young women are coerced to wear a hijab one cannot discredit the fact that for some it continues to remain a matter of personal choice. The barrage of protests following the ban indicate that the hijab is a conscious choice for a sizable chunk of young women.

Progress is not on the head, it is in the head. A woman in a hijab does not symbolise regression. Analogously banning the hijab via legislation is in no way tantamount to liberating or empowering women. How can sartorial choices symbolise emancipation? What needs to change is the deep malaise that plagues us as a society. Is there nothing wrong with an interviewer at a job opening who dismisses the resume of a qualified candidate only because she will be wearing a hijab to work? Seems like there isn't because we'd rather ban the hijab than convince people to empathetically accept difference and heterogeneity.

Liberate them, but with the hijab on because progress is not on the head it's in the head.

In The Sacred Words Of Sara Silininger

If you feel like the right to your religion is being violated then American History major, Sara Silininger's course paper, *Veiled Woman: Hijab, Religion And Cultural Practice*, should allay all your fears. The erudite History major lucidly states that the hijab was not

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birthed into existence by a quranic injunction, therefore it is acceptable to relegate it specifically to the realm of culture.

Is the assertion of one's culture a crime? Since the high court itself asserted that the hijab is not religiously sanctioned, why must it then curtail the right to depict and express one's culture through one's sartorial choice? In the event that a young girl's hijab does cause havoc and anarchy, shouldn't the court formulate a remedy in the form of an awareness raising and counselling programme to sensitise them towards viewing hijab clad women with an empathetic lens. That an American History major is our referee in this controversy speaks volumes about how New India wants to selectively believe what it wants to believe.

War Rooms, Public Prisons And Caning

Since the *Rex v/s Newport judge-*

ment could uphold the right to caning for smoking a cigarette outside schools, surely stripping young girls of their veils within the premises of school is perfectly permissible because the quest to maintain public order is sacrosanct. Social separateness is unacceptable because a vibrant diversity is a mere chimaera that leads to anarchy. All qualified public places such as public prisons, war rooms and courts preclude the assertion of individual identity. Therefore, why should schools be exclusive exceptions to the norm?

There goes the liberal education model. That the court used the example of caning to support its argument is preposterous to say the least. In the first place the petitioners were lobbying for a hijab of a structure and colour with the school's uniform. The court's argument to ensure "uniformity" can be compared to asking someone to dress, speak and work like her coworkers because uniformity is key and individuality is insurrection in the offing.

There is something deeply problematic with comparing a school to a war room and public prison. Some schools don't even have a uniform. Should a place of learning be run by the same rules as a prison or a war room? If yes, then the place in question is not a school at all.

"There will be two categories of girl students, those who wear a hijab and those who do not, this will lead to social separation which will lead to anarchy". I ask, is there anything wrong with "two categories"? I thought we were the largest, most vibrant democracy yet.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY : NECESSITY OR THREAT

By Dr Shiv Kumar

Abstract

The nuclear weapons, one of the most destructive weapon in the world , is really important in present world for each and every country. It has sometimes become necessity for any country but sometimes it has been the biggest threat for another country. It has been, nowadays, used as nuclear energy for power generation with less amount of pollution which has been the much needed step for achieving the aim of Paris Summit signed in 2015.

Presently, each and every country wants to increase their nuclear stocks as early as possible and some countries want to hide from the world about their nuclear stocks. One such country is Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān or Islamic Republic of Iran , the country which is blacklisted by FATF has been the country which want to hide their nuclear stocks from the world. But the question arises why any country want to hide their nuclear stocks because it is considered as the most important weapon in the present world and the hiding of nuclear weapons is necessity or threat for the country.

Keywords

State - The territory or the nation which has sovereign government.

Nuclear Disarmament - The act of reducing or eliminating nuclear weapons.

Non-Proliferation - The act of discouraging or reducing the hoarding.

Introduction

The Nuclear weapons, as the events which has been happened until now like the dropping of bomb “fat boy” or cherbonyl nuclear disaster, has clearly states, they are the most important

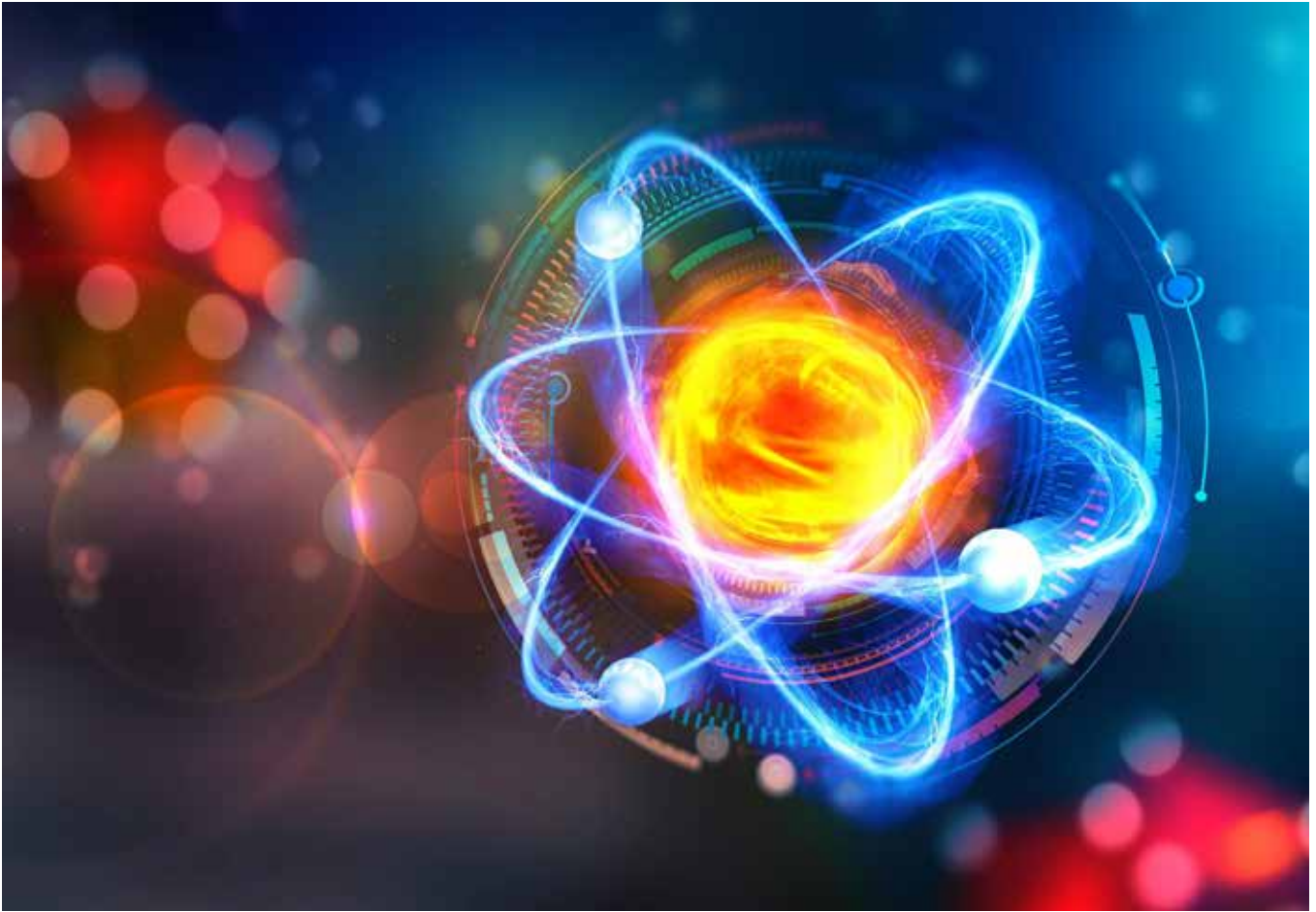


weapons for the survivable of the country. Though at present time as a signatory of NPT in 1969 and the formation of Nuclear agency IAEA to check the nuclear capacity in the country, it has been assumed that the countries are using nuclear for the peaceful purposes. But the reality has always been hidden.

At present according to the report published by SIPRI yearbook in 2020, many countries are increasing their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. India, Pakistan and China are main countries as they are not a part of NPT.

But in the present world it is utmost important for some countries to have stockpiles for nuclear weapons. But it is still ambiguous to tell that the nuclear stockpiles are of necessity or a threat.

As we have seen, the country like Iran, the country with highest border and one of the most important country as situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Arab states of the Middle East. This strategic position—and its access to the Persian Gulf in the south—have made Iran an important country throughout its history.



Iran has the highest border with 7 countries and all the countries are have become a threat for Iran. But sometimes it seems like the Iran has been a threat for the world because of its increasing stockpiles of nuclear.

Main objective

The country of 1648195 sq km² and just 8.4 crore people and run by the hard cleric president having major Shia castes Muslims have been considered by the world as one of the major threat due to its increasing nuclear stockpiles accusing for using for making a nuclear weapon.

The aim of the research is to find out how can the country with just a small population and a small area can become a threat for the world which other countries are accusing. Another question arises that is it really a threat for the world or necessity for the small countries like Iran to save increase their nuclear stockpiles? The problem not ends here itself because other countries like India, Pakistan, China are also increasing their nuclear stockpiles and why such stringent action can be taken against the country like China?

The main accusation it was facing is that it has not complied with the terms signed in JCPOA. However, the terms

are Under the deal, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear activity in return for the lifting of sanctions and access to global trade. The agreement allowed Iran to accumulate small amounts of uranium for research but it banned the enrichment of uranium, which is used to make reactor fuel and nuclear weapons. Iran was also required to redesign a heavy-water reactor being built, whose spent fuel could contain plutonium suitable for a bomb and to allow international inspections. On this basis again the question arises, if any country does not comply with the terms set by the major developed countries, then the countries would have to suppressed on that grounds? Though it was ambiguous about the status of Iran in the treaty of NPT and major sanctions for uranium enrichment have been imposed against it by major countries but Israel, main ally of US, and one of the country of infringing human rights, and no action has been taken against it yet.

Important things to be known

The nuclear diplomacy is really important in the present world because each and every country though want to show that they are decreasing the stockpiles of nuclear weapons but the

reality is every country needs to be safe and therefore they have relied on the weapon which can destroy the other enemy easily i.e. Nuclear weapon. Though some countries like India, Pakistan have shown that they are increasing stockpiles but maximum countries like Iran have to hide their nuclear stockpiles.

Iran though the small country with bordering 7 countries is really at the most strategic position. But if we have seen the history of Iran, it wants the nuclear program since 1950s. But as the time passes since 2002-2015 Iran wanted to be a nuclear country very badly. Everyone in the world thinks that Iran will be great threat for other countries as it is stockpiling the nuclear warheads. But the question or main topic of research is why Iran want the nuclear weapons.

The research which has been conducted finds that the west has been suppressing Iran since invasion of Iran in 1979. The former president of US has also supported Saddam Hussain to invade Iran. He added Iran in its 'evil of Axis' as well. After the research as well we find that are convinced that US shows supremacy over other countries and suppressed other countries as well. Therefore, due to the strategic impor-

tance of Iran, US wants to annex Iran and US has sent its army to Afghanistan and Iraq. This shows Iraq is generally an important ally of US and US has been showing suppression since the beginning of the Republic of Iran.

Though the signing between P5+1 has been utmost important but the backing of US president by giving the reason that Iran is not complying with the agreement, even in 2018 according to report by IAEA shows that Iran has been complying with the agreement, shows that US wants to show supremacy on each and every country. We also think that trump has been backed out due to diplomatic relations and high cost of operation of army.

But the main point is again why Iran needs such a destructive weapon because Iran also knows that if it can use it, it may destruct the whole country.

The Findings says that Iran being the country with many numbers of enemies though countries like China and Russia helped but most of the countries are against it. If we see through the purview of Iran, we may find that Iran is a major Shia Muslim Country which has clearly showed that every Sunni Muslim country like UAE, Saudi Arabia etc are all against it. We have seen that west has always been oppressive and offensive against it even every Europe

country is criticizing its policies. If we see from Asia side, China is helping, India is neutral but looking at the Pakistan, we find that it is home for many number of terrorist which may be hostile against Iran. If everything against us we can take help from neighbour. But looking at the neighbour of Iran we have find that the overturn of government in Afghanistan by one of the major terrorist group I.e. Taliban. The group though Muslim-centrist but one of the major enemy of Iran. We have seen that the terrorist group has easily taken different parts of the Afghanistan and has taken control over the entire Afghanistan in just a few days after the US has back off.

The another enemy and major enemy, Iraq, which has the highest influence of the US army is another major problem for Iran. Iraq is the country where one of the major terrorist group ISIS has been born for years. Though both the countries have been sharing major common interest but there is always an issue after the major Iran-Iraq war in 1973. The presence of US has been considered as another problem.

Turkey and Iran both the countries have regarded themselves as one of the major power of Middle east is another form of tension. This region is really important for both the countries. The

another conflict is Turkey strong relation with the US. Thus Iran is being the isolated country from the world which really need a true friend which may really help the country at odd times.

The another reason is being the nuclear program is very big issue in the Iran domestic politics. The hard cleric country with the view that it is not under anyone but it the country with the full power of its own.

Analysis

Iran is country which has been surrounded by 7 major countries like to the north by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, and the Caspian Sea, to the east by Pakistan and Afghanistan, to the south by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and to the west by Turkey and Iraq. And according to the different form of studies we find that it is really important for Iran to have nuclear stockpiles.

Currently we have seen that the overturn of government in Afghanistan by one of the major terrorist group I.e. Taliban. The group though Muslim Centrist but one of the major enemy of Iran. We have seen that the terrorist group has easily taken different parts of the Afghanistan and has taken control over the entire Afghanistan in just a few days after the US has back off.



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Turkey and Iran both the countries have regarded themselves as one of the major power of Middle east is another form of tension. This region is really important for both the countries. The another conflict is Turkey strong relation with the US. The problem of present war for oil and natural gas has been shaped Iran as the country of Utmost important as it has very high rich oil and natural gas reserves.

If we analyse the things accordingly, the theory of realism is utmost important which is given by Hans J. Morgenthau. According to him, the power defined as, "Man's control over the minds and action of other man". This theory can be considered as the utmost important. The main core of elements of this theory can easily tell that there is much needed of this theory in the present world.

1) Statism- The first elements tell that state is the sole representative in the present world for ensuring the interest of the people> State can do whatever it wants for the accomplishment of the interest of the people.

2) Survival- The second and most important elements which can tell the conclusion as well. The meaning of this Survival is the universal national interest of the nation. According to this, for the survival it is really important to take the steps which helpful in safeguarding the interest of the nation and the foreign policy could be made by the state looking at one's own interest.

3) Self-Help - The third and the last element which is really of utmost important tells us the real answer of the problem. According to it, each state actor is responsible for ensuring its own well-being and survival which clearly states that for the safety and for the survival of the interest of citizens the state can take any step.

Thus, if we analysis the strategic position of Iran in parlance with the theory of Realism, we can think that the nuclear weapon can be very important source of safety for the country like Iran as it is a landlocked country and its relation



with its each neighbour is highly intense. Therefore, in my opinion the nuclear weapon for Iran can be a necessity than a threat but it can also be turn into threat, therefore to avoid this type of situation, Iran also should adopt "Nuclear first use Policy" like Indian which states that the country cannot use its nuclear stockpiles if other country avoided it.

Conclusion

After a very long discussion and long research, we can only conclude that the world free from nuclear disarmament can only be a myth. The Gandhian Principles of Satya and Non-violence has only been looked good in books but in the present world where each country in any or other way are fighting on some reasons the bad effect of which has been resulted in migration of citizens, human rights violation.

The main causes of this problem can be lack of mutual interest between the nations. In present world, every country has been following the idea of realism and the very little about the theory of Neo-liberalism. This has been shown in many parts of the world. Another reason is suppression by major developed countries. They want the supremacy over the world therefore they try to rule in their own way which is another form of conflict among the countries. The third reason is the value of survivable of the interest of the citizen which has

been, sometimes, infringed by another country which has become a threat or cause of tension among the countries.

Thus, the problem whether the nuclear weapon for small country like Iran is necessity or threat for the world reached at the conclusion that the small country like Iran which is a landlocked country and fear of war from all sides has become a necessity for the country to increase its nuclear stockpiles to some extent for its safety purpose. And it is also an area of strategic importance as where the world is fighting for the oil and natural gas reserves and it is the area of maximum gas reserves put the country in a position where it has to save its reserves from the external sources and thus where the countries like US, UK etc have very highly and Neo-technology weapons. Therefore, to save its country and for the survival of the country, as it is the major asset for its GDP, it has been considered a necessity for the country.

But the problem is whether the stockpile can be used anytime during war or threat. Therefore, I think that Iran alike other countries should adopt Nuclear First Use Policy. And other treaties should also be signed between different countries like NEW START TREATY between US and Russia for nuclear disarmament so that each country should live peacefully and without any type of war.

EC must dissect manifestos, stop parties asking Centre to fund freebies

Shyam Sunder

Assembly elections are not natural calamities or disasters that require central assistance to meet the extravagant promises made by certain political parties in their manifestos just to lure voters and win these polls. It has become a trend for certain parties to make promises of free electricity, free water, free education, free travel, free cycles, free laptops, free scooties, cash credits etc in their manifestos for winning Assembly elections and once they win, then plead for funds from the Central government.

If this is not bribing voters, then what is it? Under which act are such manifestos covered or is it that the lawmakers are above the law? Such political parties are very well aware of the financial condition of the state concerned but still they go ahead with their alluring promises - for they know they always have the option to blame the Central government for the fiasco, if it refuses grants.

Promises by such political parties in their manifestos are nothing but propaganda. With MPs and MLAs being unable to spend even their development fund in 5 years, expecting them to execute another ambitious plan only showcases our ignorance and raises questions on our own understanding and purpose of elections.

Have we failed as a voter? Voting is our right, but who we vote for is meaningful too.

The voters who are already under financial stress, due to rising prices of essential commodities, or those who care nothing about who comes to power but only that their interests are met, go all out to vote for such parties. And political parties knowing such weaknesses of voters, are all out to capitalise on these factors.

There is still some hope if the Central and State government belong to the same party - the manifestos then, at least, make some sense. But if not, why the Central government would want to fund such commitments of opposition parties, knowing that these were re-



There is still some hope if the Central and State government belong to the same party - the manifestos then, at least, make some sense. But if not, why the Central government would want to fund such commitments of opposition parties, knowing that these were responsible for their own party's defeat in the Assembly elections?

sponsible for their own party's defeat in the Assembly elections?

Recently, the AAP won the elections in Punjab on the very same basis, with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is also AAP national convener, and his star campaigners, promising a number of freebies to the voters of the state. The truth is that the already debt-ridden Punjab has no money to fulfil AAP election promises.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann himself announced the AAP plan to fund promises made in the manifesto, before the elections. And now, post elections, he is asking Central government to help by providing financial grant to the extent of Rs 50,000 crore.

Some political parties have redefined the meaning of hypocrisy.

The game of freebies by political parties seems to be seeing no end. Sensing the situation, the Supreme Court had to intervene and had issued notice to the Election Commission over political parties wooing voters with the promise of freebies ahead of the Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Manipur, and Punjab Assembly elections.

It had observed that the promise of freebies was a "serious issue".

The day is not far when Election Commission would start dissecting the manifestos of all political parties and might embargo parties towards asking grants for at least 3-4 years from Central government to fund their promised freebies. Of course, natural calamities or disasters exempted.

OECEL News Services

How Kerala's Left govt took a U-turn to privatise education

Mayukh Devadas

Under the wake of the CPI(M) party congress the ideological somersault of the left sentinels on the educational front demands a serious discussion. The new policy draft introduced by the CPI(M) claims to transform Kerala into the Mecca of higher education through private investment. A glimpse of this policy draft by a left government would have caused Marx to turn over in his grave. For many it might have been a surprise, or at least for those who have vehemently participated in a series of anti-privatisation protests organised by the student wing organisation of CPI(M) not so long ago. In 1920 the Libertarian Socialist Bertrand Russell prophetically predicted the future of the Bolsheviks after his visit to Soviet Russia. He claimed that it will eventually fail in front of capitalism, and it will plummet into a Napoleonic model of imperialism, to which history responded quite literally. Now, the first democratically elected communist government seems to be following

the same trajectory. However, the purpose of this article is not to discuss the political and ideological metamorphosis of the Kerala model of communism, rather it is focussed on the impacts of private investment in the educational sector as mentioned in the draft policy.

Private investment in education is a very old, yet recurring debate among the mainstream intelligentsia. There are numerous justifications for bringing private investment to a critical sector. The most rational one is that, when the private players can provide a particular service at an affordable price, the government could delegate the onus to the private sector and shift the focus and reallocate the resources to other imperative spheres. Also, the government requires private capital in various areas to provide standard services for the subjects of the state. Obviously, the higher education standards of Kerala are abysmal and that is one of the stark reasons for the steady exodus of students to higher educational institutions abroad. Also, the research milieu and infrastructure also require an over-

haul. There are no Universities in Kerala within the first 25 positions of the latest NIRF ranking. The requirement of more investment in the higher education sector of Kerala is palpable and inexplicable. Notably, with a conspicuously well-established school education system, Kerala manages to produce a large number of potential undergraduates in every calendar year. The lacunae in both quantity and quality in higher education is leading to chronic unemployment among youth in the state (one of the highest in the nation) and numerous studies including Professor Edward Sayre have categorically proved the positive correlation between literate unemployed youth and extremism. After the NIA chargesheet against eight more youngsters from Kerala in January 2022, the state is turning into a hotbed for extremist recruitments. Thus, the literate and unemployed youth without a proper conduit to channelize their potential in a productive manner is hanging like a Damocles sword over the peace and security of the state. Also, the dilapidated agriculture sector and a



meagre 11.8 percent employment in industrial sector obliges the state to focus on the tertiary sector and concomitantly the skilled labour and education to keep its economic engine in perpetual motion. Hence, seeking private investment into the education sector could be seen as a necessary evil for both the social and economic sectors of the state of Kerala. Incidentally, the private educational institutions with military cantonment style campuses with uniform attire and a rigid education system which are imposed upon students through a panopticon model surveillance mechanism and coercive discipline tactics are surprisingly considered as a high standard educational model in the (progressive) society of Kerala. The private educational institutions, especially under the control of Christian missionaries are considered as the emulations of a quality educational institution in Kerala. Hence, the private investment in the educational sector would not be creating a huge ruckus in Kerala, especially not by SFI, if the policy is going to be implemented by the left government.

However, bringing private investment to a crucial sector like education requires a more intense and comprehensive deliberation. The sole motive of any private investment is to produce profit. More than any other incentive, the purpose of the private investment

staunchly adheres to the cardinal principle of capitalism, which is to churn out maximum profit for the invested capital. Apparently, the competitive nature of the private players might bring top-notch academicians, infrastructure facilities and a superior research culture to the academic environment of the state. Whereas the poll bearers of the huge cost of these educational advancements will be ultimately the students. Since the need for the private investment is the incapacity of the government to channelize funds to the educational sector, the private institutions will be obliged to depend upon their fee. The working model of most of the high-quality Universities in the west, particularly in the United Kingdom follows this pattern. Evidently, such educational institutions will create a significant wedge in the society. The Yale University Professor Daniel Markovitz has categorically proved the class difference among the students in such Universities. The students from the top one percent income groups dominate the entry into such prestigious institutions. We can already witness a similar situation in elite educational institutes such as IITs and IIMs and medical colleges. The students who corner those benefits by utilising their social and economic capital will transform the same to their offspring and perpetuates the class and

caste divide.

However, the entry of private players into the educational sector is more pernicious than the basic, 'widening of the inequality gap' arguments. The towering cost of education will increase the financial burden of the students, and this will significantly transform the educational and research sector. The educational liberty of the students will be curtailed, and they will be obliged to focus on the lucrative career choices to resolve their financial burden. The best minds will be engaged in the thought of how to capitalise and monetize their educational knowledge and research acumen. The increased burden of educational investment will have a severe impact on the social outlook, the ethical and moral perspective of the students and even on their mental state. The educational pattern will be slipped into cut-throat competition for job placements and other monetary incentives rather than developing an inquisitive and innovative pedagogical culture. This will significantly distort the research sector. Already, the social sciences are transforming itself into a mediocre version of the market economic disciplines. The research in social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and above all economics are more and more tilting towards applying the subject knowledge in deciphering the consum-





er behaviour and to develop marketing strategies. For instance, the subject areas like behavioural economics and anthropology, and psychology of marketing are meticulously developed to serve the interests of the market. The private sector will be interested in the development of disciplines and research topics which will be beneficial and applicable for them. The crucial and significant areas of study like gender, art, theatre, ethnic studies, inequality, social justice, and numerous other disciplines will lose their momentum in the research culture. Simply because these disciplines are not intended to make profit or could not buttress a monetary output, the quality of the research works in these disciplines may dwindle down. As per the studies of Dania Makki, when Universities are transformed into for-profit entities, the academic staff has been de-professionalised, and knowledge has been instrumentalised, commodified, and sold to students to echo with their purposes of climbing up the career ladders.

The main counter argument which will be the continuous participation and investment of the government in the public universities and colleges to maintain the standard, also has a flip side. The high fee structure of the private institutions will exponentially increase the competition for entry into the

government institutions. This will open a new market of educational coaching and vigorous competition and again the class difference and all the problems which we discussed above will persist.

According to Naomi Klein, the privatisation of educational institutes in the Philadelphia school district, which is considered as the boldest privatisation experiment in the USA, brought disastrous results and the school boards voted to take back the schools by the Pennsylvania state. Also, countries like Chile have witnessed strong protests as an aftermath of the privatisation of education and the inability to provide the standard education for the public, especially for the poor. According to the PISA test 2021-22, education in the top-ranking countries such as China, Singapore and Macau are predominantly funded by the government. Astonishingly, the state of Kerala itself is having a well public funded school education system and one of the finest in the country. The root cause of the enviable outperformance of Kerala in the socio and human development indices is the well-grounded school education system. Hence, a CPI(M) coalition government striving away from the public education system is surprising and at the same time disturbing.

Education is a crucial sector in which public investment is vital. It is

not only to maintain the standard of education and to reduce the inequality and class differences but also for the future of the education and research culture itself. The government keeping itself aloof from the responsibility or delegating the responsibility to the profit motive entities will bring huge ramifications in the future.

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Bhakti Saint Sri Ramanujacharya, promoted the idea of universal equality

Freedom becomes more meaningful if it stands under the shade of the tree of tradition, treating all citizens equally in the eyes of law.

All our ancient scriptures talk about equality. In the Bhagvada Githa, 5.18, Lord Krishna says, *Vidya vinaya sampanne bramhane gavi hasthini | suni chaiva svapake cha panditha:s sama darsinah ||*

The truly learned, with the eyes of divine knowledge, envisions the inner soul of a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog eater, equally. Equality is not a new concept. Inequality is.... it is a concept that keeps creeping into society.... repeatedly raising its ugly head... despite efforts of Elders, Sages, Social reformers etc.

So how come inequality is such a persistent problem? It is so because we don't realise that all inequalities are at the level of the physical body. From God's point of view, we're all equal. All athmas are part of paramathma, but they get embodied based on their karmas ... not as a punishment. but as an opportunity to better themselves. Any inequality, whether of colour, caste, creed or gender, is inevitable, at that physical level only.

Unfortunately, Mankind thrives on highlighting these temporary differences and creating divides, forgetting the oneness of all beings. We must realise that we have to help others to develop skills to cross this ocean of worldly existence.

Everyone says they believe in Equality and then shrug off its implementation as someone else's responsibility. Unless each one of us practices it in our day to day lives, it will only remain a slogan or a topic for essays and speeches.

The word Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same.... it means that everyone will have the opportunity to evolve to their optimum level. A bush will get the opportunity to become the best bush, not a tree.... a tree will get the opportunity to become the best tree, not a forest.

Over the centuries, many great men have struggled to make the concept of equality take root in the heart of humans. The legacy that a great man leaves behind can be ascertained by the

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number of hearts he has touched.

Sri Ramanujacharya Swamy, who graced this world in the 11th century, is the most important exponent of Sri Vaishnavism. His legacy is not just how many hearts he has touched, but how many 'souls' he has transformed.

We are blessed to be part of his lineage and carry forward his torch that has been passed down to us by our purva acharyas. Almost 5 decades of his life... spent serving all beings as a service to God... propagating the one concept closest to his heart... Equality.

Sri Ramanujacharya was born more than a thousand years ago when norms of society were even more rigid than they are today. Entering a temple, chanting mantras, learning Vedas was taboo for women, people from 'lower' castes and the downtrodden.

The world identifies Bharat with casteism, not realising that it began as a division based on vocations. It's unfortunate that untouchability burst forth as an issue.

Sri Ramanujacharya, like the Spring season, quietly set out to help many a flower to bloom to its potential. He

shared the manthra with everyone - irrespective of caste. He shared the manthra, which he himself had received from his guru, after traversing 100 miles on foot, 18 times. He shared the manthra at the cost of his guru's wrath and the possibility of facing Hell. He shared it with all. The only qualification he wanted was their being devoted and eager to learn.

In the times of Ramanujacharya, temples were the hub of knowledge, employment and culture. They were the universities, shopping centres, and meeting points. But they were under the control of one section of society, one particular caste.

Sri Ramanujacharya, encouraged inclusiveness by allotting 50% of the tasks, in temples, to persons belonging to the rest of the castes. That's the reason, from then on, there were no restrictions based on caste, to enter temples. However, the relapse of casteism occurred during the foreign rule in Bharath. Caste was used as a ploy to divide and rule.

Sri Ramanujacharya was born in a Brahmin family, but he was desirous of

having the leftover food of a great devotee from Kanchi, called Kanchi Purna, though he was from a lower social status. He said social status is not a barrier when you truly enjoy and cherish the companionship of people with a common goal.

He gave importance, at par with the Vedas, to the songs sung by alvars, Tamil poet-saints, about the glory of the Divya Desams. Some of these alvars were of the lower castes, but their songs were made mandatory in the temples.

In his old age, Ramanujacharya, while going for a bath in River Kaveri, would take the support of a Brahmin scholar Dasaradhi. However, while returning he used to lean on the shoulder of Dhanurdas, a low caste by birth. This talks volumes about the importance he gave to devotion over physical status by birth.

Sri Ramanujacharya showed his concern for women in those tough days and opened learning channels for women. This is 1000+ years ago..... I bet there was no social media to create awareness ... it was a single Acharya who sensed the need to educate all, so that everyone could experience knowledge... irrespective of their gender.

Sri Ramanujacharyais that gigantic reservoir from which, all present-day schools of thought that advocate Equality, have flowed out as creeks, rivulets and tributaries. This is a historical fact.

It's been over a thousand years that this divine personality sanctified the earth by his presence. The world is advocating his ideology, without giving credit to him. His name remains in the shadows. So, the magical essence is missing and values are disappearing in society.

Today, the world is fraught with divisiveness. Invisible, but invincible, walls have been built, dividing society. Equality has become just another name. We feel that the effulgence of Sri Ramanuja's ideology is the dire need of the hour. His form and his words can inspire society. What better time to experience this inspiration, than the millennium of his birth!

That is why the Statue of Equality has emerged. Let the Statue reverberate within you, echoes of Equality. Let these echoes become a yearning for Equality. Let this yearning get translated into actions leading to Equality.

(Writer Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamy is known for his spiritual discourses on Sri Vaishnavism. He is the designer and planner of the Statue of Equality, a statue dedicated to Ramanuja, in Hyderabad, India)



The Short-Term Impact of Ayushman Bharat

Prasanna Tantri

The recent assembly election results have sparked a fresh round of discussion about the socio-economic impact of the social sector schemes launched by the central government. One such scheme is the national-level health insurance scheme popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat. In a recent working paper (full paper available here: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4063386), I show that, apart from other benefits, the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat program is associated with a 21% decline in out of pocket health expenditure and an 8% reduction in the tendency to borrow emergency loans for health purposes, among poor households.

Given the well-known constraints on state capacity to deliver social welfare programs, it is essential to test the short-term impact of various programs to gauge whether the programs are being executed as implemented. Given the scale of the program—the Ayushman Bharat aims to cover nearly ten crore households at the bottom of the income distribution—implementing it efficiently is challenging. A large number of beneficiary households using health insurance instead of borrowing when faced with health emergencies and consequently experiencing a reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure relating to health insurance credibly indicate the effective program implementation. Ayushman Bharat could improve human capital by increasing access to curative and preventive healthcare in the long run. It is too early to comment on the long-term impact of the program. Therefore, I focus on the short-term impact of health-related borrowing and out-of-pocket expenditure.

Given the plethora of social sector schemes announced by both the central and state governments, it is hard to identify and disentangle the impact of a particular intervention. A typical beneficiary of Ayushman Bharat could also be a beneficiary of some other state-level or central social sector schemes, and therefore, it is generally hard to attribute any impact on a particular scheme. In this context, the fact that some states did not implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme, primarily

due to political reasons, can be used for identification. Any change, theoretically linked to health insurance in Ayushman Bharat implemented regions compared to the non-implemented areas can be reasonably attributed to the program. Further refinement by way of comparison between the border districts of the non-implemented states and the contiguous districts belonging to the implemented states in terms of change in outcome is likely to identify the program's impact tightly. I use the border district identification strategy in the paper.

I use the household survey data provided by the Center For Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). The survey asks households about their income, sources of income, expenditure, break up of expenditure, among other things. The



survey also records the health-related out-of-pocket spending. In addition, the CMIE conducts three waves of surveys in a year wherein they ask the households about health-related indebtedness. This survey records whether a household has borrowed for health purposes during the survey period of four months. Although the program was launched in 2018, it took some time to do the groundwork such as empanelment of hospitals, the issue of health cards, the spread of information, etc. Therefore, I consider the survey round ending April 2019 (starting December 2018) the first complete survey after Ayushman Bharat was implemented. I end my study period in March 2020 to avoid the impact of the ongoing pandemic confounding the results.

I find that in districts in the sample that implemented Ayushman Bharat, households that are eligible for Ayushman Bharat and fall in the bottom 10% of the income distribution experienced a reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure on health by about 1% after the implementation of the program. Interestingly,

in a sample of similar households belonging to the adjoining districts that belong to states that did not implement Ayushman Bharat, I find a 20% plus increase in out-of-pocket expenditure on health. Given the unlikely possibility of neighboring districts systematically differing in terms of health shocks, it is reasonable to conclude that the program caused a 21% reduction in out-of-pocket health expenditure within two years of its implementation. In other words, poor households in Ayushman Bharat implemented regions spent about 21% less on health care than comparable households in non-implemented regions. Interestingly, this pattern is not visible when I consider affluent households that are unlikely to be Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries.

I find a similar pattern when I examine borrowings related to health emergencies. The program reduced the probability of such borrowings by about 8%. Once again, this pattern is seen only among poor households, the likely Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries, and not among wealthy households. Also, using data from a credit bureau, I do not find any significant decline in other types of borrowings. Thus, the decline in health-related borrowing does not reflect a general reduction in credit supply in Ayushman implemented regions.

A reader may worry that the reduction in health care spending and borrowing reflects households skipping treatment rather than using insurance. I find two pieces of evidence against this hypothesis using data from multiple rounds of the National Family Health Survey. I find that both health insurance coverage and the average health situation improved in Ayushman Bharat implemented districts when compared to their neighboring districts that did not implement the program. The national economic survey for the year 2020-21 records a similar finding.

The results from my study suggest that the Ayushman Bharat program is achieving its primary purpose in the short run. It remains to be seen whether the program leads to a significant improvement in human capital in the long run.

(The author is an Associate Professor of Finance, Indian School of Business)



Shriram
Properties

Homes that live in you

Hindu-Muslim divide is widening even after gandhian diplomacy

By Himani Sanagaram

The Member of Parliament of the South Indian state of Hyderabad, Asaduddin Owaisi, last year visited Ayodhya, calling it Faizabad, but did not go to Ram Mandir and what do our Hindu leaders do? They go to Ajmer, lay the 'holy chadar' and call themselves secular. Many Hindus embrace Islam, but Muslims do not embrace Hindu values and criticize Hindutva. It is not a tit for tat situation.

The status quo since independence has not changed, and the situation remains grim. During India's partition, it was Muslims who were asked to leave and form Pakistan, but now it is Muslims dominating Hindus, converting them heavily in states like Kerala, Lakshadweep, Jammu and Kashmir. During partition in 1857, Muslims were called jihadis as they were in the al-Qaeda terror attacks of 9/11. The largest concentration of about 47 percent of all Muslims in India live in the three states

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of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar.

Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and Bangladesh are considered Islamic nations, but secular India with Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam suffers. In 2020, many Hindus and Muslims were killed during the

anti-CAA riots.

"The Taliban just took over the administration and President Hamid Karzai gave up power and fled to UAE," Tariq Karim, Consul General of Pakistan in Chicago, said, at the celebration of Pakistani independence day in Niles at the Maine Township Office after the Taliban laid siege in Kabul in June 2021.

Many atrocities are being faced by Hindu girls. Pakistan is sending Hindu and Christian girls to China. The Chingari Project started by Sudha Jaggannathan spread awareness to such problems. Rinkle Kumari in 2012 was converted and assaulted. She was slapped by a cleric. Kavita Kumari was converted and married in 2020 in Pakistan. Reena and Raveena Lal were abducted and due to family pressure, the court sent her back. Her family was threatened with violence. Taliban rule has recently said women will not be installed as ministers, although it is making things better.





In “Prabodhan – Thoughts on Hindu Society” edited by Saradindu Mukherji, it is stated that the two most important ideological legacies of British rule have been the implantation of a convoluted caste identity among Bharatiyas and the spawning of a secular ideology. Tahir Aslam Gora, a Canadian author agrees with Islam’s violent nature. Hindu ethnocide in Islam surfaced in 610 AD. Conversion of Hindus was carried out and the first mosque was built in 629 by the first Muslim of India, King Cherman Perumal Bhaskara Ravi Varma.

In United States, Chicago has the highest Muslim population followed by Virginia, New York, and New Jersey. Bollywood promotes Islamic culture-- even the language used is Urdu. Most movies are funded by underworld Islamic elements. Government grants have helped mosques in India, and on the other hand, Hindu temples are run and controlled by the Government of India.

Why did partition of India take place if Muslims are increasing in number? Half the relatives of Pakistanis are in India They won’t swear the holy words “Har” Har” but Indian politicians swear by “Allahu Akbar” and “Alhamdulillah’s”. Even when marrying a Muslim, Hindus must convert into Islam and not the other way round. The triple talaq motion has been banned. Gandhi was credited for Hindu-Muslim unity

Why did partition of India take place if Muslims are increasing in number? Half the relatives of Pakistanis are in India They won’t swear the holy words “Har” Har” but Indian politicians swear by “Allahu Akbar” and “Alhamdulillah’s”. Even when marrying a Muslim, Hindus must convert into Islam and not the other way round.

but he himself thought he failed in reuniting Hindus and Muslims. The je ne sais quoi of Hindus is that we can ‘trust’ them. If you go to an Islamic country and you say something they don’t like, your best friend will “stab you in the back.”

France has strict anti-terrorism laws. Countries like Poland do not allow

Muslim immigrants to avoid terror attacks in the country. In Germany, there are no restrictions on wearing hijab except for schoolteachers. In Quebec, Canada, Bill 21 prohibits people who wear hijab, turbans, crosses, and yarmulkes. Abu Dhabi has strict rules for emigrants and only people who earn 4000-5000 dirhams can call their relatives from India. India should also enforce such rules.

Online Islamic conferences like those by Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) were held in September last year in United States and the World Global Hindu conference was also held on October 1 live on Facebook for four weeks. October was declared Hindu Heritage month in United States.

In the book, ‘The Storyteller’s Daughter- One Woman’s Return to Her Lost Homeland’ (2003), Saira Shah writes about a visit to a secret school for girls. In the Taliban’s Kabul, concealment is a blessing. Even the youngest girls wear a burqa. Not only girls are denied education, but boys are also deprived of it too. If the Taliban find this class, everyone in the room- children included- will be beaten and sent to jail. Islam needs to reform itself and get world acceptance among other religions as it the fastest-growing religion after Christianity.

Writer is a freelance writer/journalist based in Chicago.

Hello Ayurveda!

Today's healthcare is facing the multi-fold challenges of aging population, multiple chronic diseases, high healthcare costs, and an unhealthy lifestyle left to be treated with modern medicine. While modern medicine i.e. allopathic medicine has its place and every form of healing deserves its share of respect, its known to curb diseases rather than heal them from the root cause. Our diseases just transform from one form to another, the root causes are not addressed, and we face many side-effects from the medications we consume. Isn't it time to look for alternative forms of medicine and integrate them in our daily lives?

One afternoon our cafeteria cashier showed me a new "Ganesha" tattoo (a Hindu deity) on her arm and a book on Ayurveda she had recently started reading. She thanked me for introducing her to Ayurveda and for helping her overcome her depression symptoms. Susie looked happy, content, energetic, and quite opposite to how she appeared three months ago!

We were working at a county hospital in California in the mental health department. Almost every person we met during the day was a psychiatry physician, resident, or a nurse. There were behavioral health books all around us, seminars were happening, and almost every conversation we'd over-hear was about mental health. But when Susie's mother passed away and she started facing depression, we all helplessly saw her mental health decline. Susie seemed disinterested in her work, missed deadlines, stopped attending office events and parties, didn't smile anymore, and had anger episodes which led to people complain about her to her boss. She'd visit therapists and take medications but still, she wasn't her old self, a happy, engaged, extrovert, and energetic person.

She told me she's frustrated that the medications are costly and not even effective! And she couldn't imagine herself popping pills all her life. "There has to be an alternative solution", she said. That's when I told her about a herb called "Ashwagandha" that was well known in India for reducing stress and improving one's energy levels. "Ashwa" means horse and "gandha" means smell. This herb's benefits are compared to the vitality of a horse, and because the plant its derived from has a horse like smell,



it got its name Ashwagandha. She ordered the herb in capsule form and in few days' time, Susie started experiencing its benefits. She went on a trek she was postponing for months now, and told me that she didn't feel tired as she'd usually feel. Then Susie started visiting an Ayurvedic doctor in Los Angeles and recommended her friends and family to do the same.

Before modern medicine came into existence few hundred years ago, traditional Indian ways of healing was popular form of medicine. "Ayurveda", an ancient way of natural healing, originated in India more than 3000 years ago. It incorporates internal purification processes with appropriate diet, herbal remedies, massage therapies, yoga, and meditation. The basic belief in Ayurveda is that every human is made up of five elements i.e. Air, Water, Earth, Fire, and Space, and diseases or "doshas" occur when these elements are off balance. The qualities of space and air are categorized into "Kapha", fire and water into "Pitta", and water and earth as "Kapha". Every person possesses a unique combination of these elements and they change depending on many environmental and non-environmental factors.

Let's take an example of "Pitta", the energy of digestion and metabolism in the body. The qualities of Pitta are oily, sharp, hot, light, moving, liquid, and acidic. Psychologically, it governs joy,

courage, will power, jealousy, and mental perception. When Pitta becomes imbalanced, the aggravated fire and water cause gives rise to anger, rage and ego. Thy physical manifestation can be seen as infections, inflammation, rashes, ulcers, heartburn, and fever. How do you think Ayurveda solves the problem of imbalanced Pitta? By prescribing a diet that avoids Pitta aggravating foods and encourages cooling foods instead. But without this knowledge, someone might continue to eat mangoes, coffee, alcohol, meats, oily and spicy foods instead of apples, grapes, cucumber, lettuce, cilantro, and coconut water and aggravate one's disease!

Some research studies have concluded that Ayurveda and Yoga can significantly reduce depression in people over age sixty enrolled at a residential home. Similar studies advocate for including Ayurveda in primary healthcare for better disease prevention, health promotion, and treatment of disease.

The answer to whether or not embrace Ayurveda and how to integrate it with modern medicine is not simple. However, let's at least consider natural forms of healing that claim to have no side-effects, are cheaper, and proven effective in uprooting the disease from its core. Prozac versus Ashwagandha, the choice is individual, but at least both options should be known to us!

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