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Cover Story

## THE TAIWAN RIDDLE

**China is challenging border sanctity, pushing armed insurgency, supporting UN designated terrorist in UN: It is high time for India to rethink it's "One China policy" And recognize sovereign Taiwan nation?**



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## India Taiwan Bhai Bhai

It has taken almost fifty-eight years since 1962 to settle the India China relationship at comfortable level but Covid 19 pandemic has forced confused President Xi Jinping to pick up fight with almost entire world including India by making the borders hot since March 2020. India has no option but to react with aggression to safeguard its national interest. India, following 'One



China' policy, does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan but India is having commercial, economic and cultural ties with Taiwan. While nearly 23 countries have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, several countries have opened offices in Taipei. These countries, which include the United States, western European, Japan, Australia and many others, follow 'One China' policy. However, the current hawkish Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen of DPP is pushing for nationalistic agenda. The Taiwanese know fully well the might of China. Yet, they are constantly looking

for expanding their room for maneuver. US support is vital to Taiwan and supplies arms to Taiwan while maintaining a 'One China' policy: India has a unique diplomatic tool to push for renewed ties with Taiwan since China is continuously pushing armed insurgency in North East, J&K via Pakistan, arming Maoist rebellion against in several states via Nepal, endorsing terror by saving Masoor Azhar in United Nation.

The assertions of sovereignty by China over South China Sea and US' pivot to Asia policy have led to rise of tensions in the region. The Taiwanese, taking note of India's growing influence in regional and global affairs, want to engage with it in the hope that their room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis China will increase. Keenly watching the development of India's 'look east' policy, they want to understand how India defines and protects its interests in Asia. India, which has a delicate and sensitive relationship with China, is naturally careful in dealing with Taiwan. India has sought to enhance functional linkages with Taiwan without offending China. The bilateral trade between India and Taiwan crossed \$15 billion in 2019-20. A joint study has been launched to explore the possibility of a free-trade agreement between the two sides. India has interests in Asia, particularly, the South China Sea. The Indian integration with ASEAN, South Korea and Japan is deepening. Given large complementarities between India and Taiwan, the latter can be good economic partner for India. India's software skills and Taiwan's hardware capabilities can be combined in joint-ventures. Taiwanese companies can invest in Indian infrastructure. Further, Taiwan, which boasts of some high-quality universities, think-thanks, and academic institutes, can be a good source for Indian institutions for academic exchanges. Presently, nearly 1000 Indian students are studying in Taiwanese science and engineering universities.

India is a large country following independent policies. India can pursue a functional relationship with Taiwan without deviating from its 'One China' policy, however, if China plays deceptive games at border, trade and foreign policy: Taiwan and Tibet should be raked up by India at international forums to expose China's expansionist regime. But India must have a consistent foreign policy in respect of Taiwan in alignment with the democratic nations of the world so that Taiwan can react to Chinese hostility with conviction. When China can defy the world and promote all weather friends Pakistan and North Korea then India should act independently to frame its foreign policy.

—Prashant Tewari,  
Editor-in-Chief

NOVEMBER 2020

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# Border Disputes Fueled By China in Recent Times

China is increasing tensions with India at the border. In the Corona era, when the whole world is preparing to deal with the Corona crisis, what does China want to achieve through such provocative actions? The truth is that China is preparing to achieve several goals simultaneously by increasing tensions with India. China wants to divert the world's attention from Corona, and one of the reasons for increasing the dispute with India is the India's rise and increasing respect in world. Because of which all the big countries including United States of America are giving economic and strategic support to India. Call it a craze to show the power of a dragon or expansionist policy. China's border dispute is going on with all its neighbors. China always shows eye to small countries, but showing eye to India will outweigh China. But even now, if China is increasing the dispute with India, there are many reasons for this. Why is China increasing tension with India? According to the defense experts, China's policy is to stake its claim at some place first.

Recently China pushed and included Nepalese PM K.P. Sharma Oli in this mission, then Oli attacked India in his nasty speech given in the parliament. PM Oli said that Kalapani-Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura are in the trilateral Nepal-India-China and will be included in Nepal's map at any cost. On 8 May, India inaugurated the Kailash Mansarovar Road Link in script, which Nepal had objected to. The new map of Nepal has received approval of the cabinet. Oli maintained, "Now we will try to get these areas through diplomacy, if anyone is offended by our move, then we are not worried about it. We will present his claim on his land at any cost." Nepal asserts its claim on areas such as Kalapani, Lipulekh on the basis of the Sugauli Treaty of 1816, although it has lost the original copy of this important document. Also, Nepal does not have the original copy of the 1950 Peace-Friendship Treaty. Both these treaties are an important part of Nepal's history and its foreign policy.

India has signed an agreement with China in 2015 to build a road from Uttarakhanda to Mansarovar in Tibet. This



road also passes through the script which Nepal claims. Nepal has opposed the agreement, asserting that building a road in scripture without Nepal's consent is completely unacceptable. Sugauli Treaty was signed between Nepal and East India Company in the year 1816. After losing in a war with the East India Company, Nepal lost a lot of its share. After the end of the war, the Sugauli Treaty was signed by Parish Bradshaw on behalf of the company and Raj Guru Gajraj on behalf of Nepal and on the basis of this treaty the boundary line of British India and Nepal was fixed. In this treaty, the Mahakali river of Nepal was made the basis of the border between the two countries. However, in the last 200 years, the river changed its route many times, due to which the boundary dispute deepened. Due to the lack of original copies of old maps and documents, it has become even more difficult to resolve this border dispute.

At the same time, the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 is very important for relations between Nepal and India. The treaty was signed between the then Rana regime of Nepal and the Government of India. Under this, both countries were asked to give equal status to Nepalese and Indians in most cases. However, some people in Nepal describe some terms of this treaty as unilateral and non-equal. On 22 July 2016, the investigation team that was formed to look into the matter told the

Parliament of Nepal that the original copies of Sugauli Treaty and Nepal-India Friendship Treaty are missing from the country.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs said, "The Government of Nepal has today released a revised official map of Nepal, which includes parts of the Indian territory. This unilateral act is not based on historical facts and evidence. To resolve outstanding border issues through diplomatic negotiations is contrary to bilateral understanding."

China's influence in Nepal has increased in the last few years. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Nepal last year the time when he visited India. Jinping has offered huge amount of financial assistance to Nepal, and in due course, these funds will be utilized against India, so the border disputes between Nepal and India should not be seen in isolation. Neither we did it earlier nor we consider it now, but in future, our soft power tag must be washed away and it must be made known to world, specially, our neighbours that we, the people of India are concerned for our reputation.

***(Dr. Kunwar Pushendra Pratap Singh is the expert of India-Nepal relationships and International relations. He did his Ph.D. on 'Role of Mass Media in Development of Nepal Since 1947' from Centre for the Study of Nepal, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh)***

# TAIWAN CAN BE A MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY CARD

## NDA GOVERNMENT



By Prashant Kumar Singh

**T**aiwan is a part of the geographical area of operation of India's Look East Policy (LEP). Although India does not recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state, its functional and people-to-people contacts with Taiwan are explainable under the LEP. Besides, India's economic activities are on the rise in the vicinity of Taiwan. Though commercial in nature, India's presence in the South China Sea, along with improvement in its bilateral relations with Asia-Pacific countries — especially in the realm of politics and defence cooperation — is of strategic significance. In the overall strategic context of the region, increasing functional ties with Taiwan without undermining the support to the one China Policy would be a stiff challenge requiring clarity of vision and skilled diplomacy. Thus, it is imperative for India to have a much better understanding of Taiwan, and the Asia-Pacific region.

In the author's view, functional ties/cooperation and people-to-people relations could make a separate category without attaching any diplomatic, political or strategic meanings. The main attributes of this category can be listed as below:

- A comprehensive package that includes cooperation in education, culture, science and technology, trade and investment and other similar issue-areas.
- The package could also be characterised as people-to-people relations.
- Cooperation without manifest strategic underpinning and implications.

Engagement with Taiwan would lead India to have a more informed Taiwan policy. Its unique geographical location and political situation would also contribute to India's understanding of the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan is situated in the middle of the disputed waters of the South and the East China Seas. Considering the continued threat from the People Republic of China (PRC) to its national security, Taiwan not only has



a natural interest in the modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China-Japan tensions, and the dynamic of Sino-US relations, but also a natural expertise on them. Taiwan and China have historical and cultural affinity, but political and strategic distance. Strategically, Taiwan is close to the US and figures in Japan's security considerations. It is obliquely mentioned in the US-Japan Defence Guidelines, 1997. But the US and Japan's support for PRC's One-China Policy has set a limit on their relations with Taiwan. Thus, Taiwan is not fully open to either of the major regional players. This situation leaves it marginalised and dissatisfied with every major power in the region and makes it a neutral interpreter of the region's politics. India could tap into this consultative potential of Taiwan.

Functional cooperation with Taiwan is even more valuable. Taiwan is a thriving and industrialised economy that is closely integrated with the international economy. It is amongst the world's leading exporting and importing countries. It is the leading producer and manufacturer in the world in foundries, IC packages, blank optical discs, mask ROMs, mobility scooters/powered wheelchairs and chlorella. If the products made by Taiwanese companies outside Taiwan are also taken into account, the list of products commanding a high share in the world is even longer. Notebooks, Tablets, LCD monitors, IC packages, motherboards (System & Pure MB), WLAN CPEs, cable modems,

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**Taiwan and China have historical and cultural affinity, but political and strategic distance. Strategically, Taiwan is close to the US and figures in Japan's security considerations. It is obliquely mentioned in the US-Japan Defence Guidelines, 1997**

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and digital blood-pressure monitors are a few examples. Apart from electronics, Taiwan's agro-industries, particularly food-processing, maintain international standards. It also holds high rank in the international rating by agencies like the Institute for Management Development (IMD), Business Environment Risk Intelligence (BERI), the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the Heritage Foundation. Its business environment, research and development, and innovation are recognised worldwide. (Data relating to all these is available in the tables at the end of this monograph). Further, Taiwan's education system ranks quite high. For instance, fourteen Taiwanese universities in 30

disciplines are on the list—compiled by the QS World University of the UK—of the top 200 universities in the world.<sup>1</sup> India could become an important destination for Taiwan's new Go South policy for diversifying Taiwan's trade and investment basket. India could also become an alternative to China for many Taiwanese companies in view of rising wages and costs in that country. In fact, a regulated flow of skilled labour from India can help overcome the problem of high costs in Taiwan itself. Taiwanese FDI can contribute to India's manufacturing, infrastructure and other sectors. India and Taiwan make a case for mutual benefit by being substantial complementary economies, as India's computer software industry complements Taiwan's computer hardware capability. India's demography, with a more than 300 million strong middle class, offers an economic opportunity for Taiwanese entrepreneurs. India is also one of the leading suppliers of natural resources. It can be a gateway to South Asia, and even West Asia, for Taiwanese companies. Further, like Taiwan, India too has a reasonably impressive record of achievements in science and technology. For instance, India has gained international recognition in the automobile, electronics and space science sectors. In education, India has internationally recognised institutes—like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). Besides, there is sufficient space for cooperation between the two countries in

the spheres of culture and tourism.

This monograph deals with Taiwan as it exists in the world today. It does not deal with the legal question, whether Taiwan is an independent state or a Chinese province. Despite its ambiguous diplomatic status, Taiwan remains an important factor in the East Asian security scenario. In spite of the Cross-Strait relations in their best phase, the solution to the Cross-Strait conundrum remains elusive. Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have signed 19 agreements related to functional areas since 2008. However, a formal political dialogue or a peace agreement that the PRC is pushing hard for, is not in sight. Taiwan does not appear inclined to yield on the question of sovereignty. Any formula that would downgrade Taiwan's international standing is unacceptable

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to both Taiwan's political class and the common Taiwanese. Contrary to Chinese expectations, the prospects of economic cooperation and integration have not made the Taiwanese amenable to Chinese claims over Taiwan. Similarly, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's unification with China continues to be a powerful reference point for Chinese nationalism. China still has its missiles deployed against Taiwan. Moreover, it is yet to renounce the use of force as an option to resolve the Cross-Strait problem. This reinforces Taiwan's perception of China as a threat to its security. Finally, the US, the security guarantor of Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) 1979, continues to maintain diplomatic ambiguity over the Cross-Strait issue. Therefore, any conflagration in the volatile waters of Taiwan Strait could result in a US-China face off.

Taiwan is also a part of problematic territorial claims in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Its claims





overlap with those of China and are ignored by the other concerned parties. Taiwanese claims mostly address domestic constituency. It appears content with the practical arrangements for resource-sharing. A good example is its fishery pact with Japan in 2013. However, since these claims stoke popular sentiment in Taiwan, it is difficult for the Taiwanese government to ignore the public opinion on these issues. Therefore, overlooking Taiwan in

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## Taiwan successfully drove this point during the standoffs between Japan and China in the East China Sea over the Senkaku/Diao Yu islands in 2012-13 by its diplomatic manoeuvrings

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the regional security map would bring pressure on the US alliance in the region, of which Taiwan is a part. Taiwan successfully drove this point during the standoffs between Japan and China in the East China Sea over the Senkaku/Diao Yu islands in 2012-13 by its diplomatic manoeuvrings. In fact, the Japan-Taiwan fishery pact has effectively made the dispute tripartite, and implies that Taiwan is a player in the dispute. In May 2013, the government of Taiwan conveyed that diplomatic recognition or not, it is capable of taking care of its citizens when it flexed its economic muscle against the Philippines over the killing of a Taiwanese farmer-fisherman by the Philippines coastguard.

Finally, accelerated interaction and cooperation in functional areas between India and Taiwan would, in the long-term, also contribute to increased mutual awareness. The Cross-Strait unification would not be the only eventuality in the dialectics of Cross-Strait relations. Whether Taiwan would eventually unify with China, or the status quo would persist, or some other form of Cross-Strait relations would emerge, is difficult to predict. To study and engage Taiwan is important irrespective of the scenarios, because each scenario will shape the regional security dynamics in its own way.

# The unique diplomatic opportunity - India Taiwan relations

Arvind Gupta

India, following 'One China' policy, does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Diplomatic ingenuity, visible since the mid-Nineties, when India opened an office known as India-Taipei Association in Taipei, has led to the flourishing economic and cultural relationship between India and Taiwan.

India is not alone in having commercial, economic and cultural ties with Taiwan. While nearly 23 countries have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, several countries have opened offices in Taipei. These countries, which include the United States, western European, Japan, Australia and many others, follow 'One China' policy.

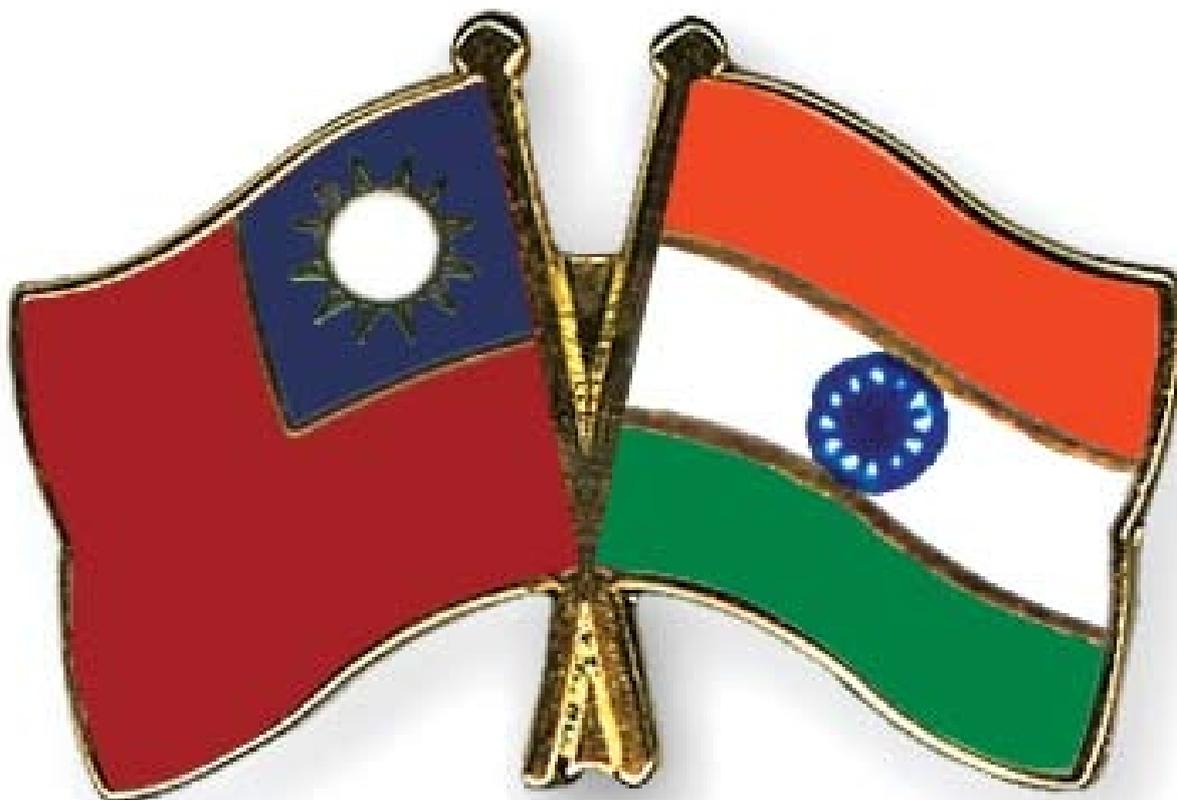
Another noteworthy fact is that cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan have been booming. Kuo-mintang National Party (KMT) came

to power in 2008. President Ma, in his second consecutive term, has initiated a policy of reconciliation on the basis of the so-called '1992 consensus'. According to this formulation both sides agree to 'One China' policy but refrain from defining what 'One China' means. Also, Ma conducts his policy of reconciliation with China on the basis of three NOs: No to independence, No to immediate reunification and No to political talks during his presidency.

China on its part insists on reunification and wants political talks but is happy to go along with Ma's three NOs. China is following a policy of gradual economic, social and cultural integration with Taiwan while not explicitly ruling out the use of force. The two sides have signed 18 agreements including an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), which has led to the beginning of cross-strait economic links. Nearly 500 flights per week ply

between Taiwan and the main land. The bilateral trade has crossed \$150 billion and Taiwanese investments have gone up to \$300 billion. Taiwan is contributing greatly to China's prosperity. It has, however, to be noted that this relationship is fragile and is being conducted under the shadow of 1,400 plus Chinese missiles targeted at Taiwan. China does not want to hear of independence even though there is soft pedalling on the issue of reunification. For China, Taiwan remains its 'core interest' and reunification is non-negotiable but no timeline has been set.

The Taiwanese know fully well the might of China. Yet, they are constantly looking for expanding their room for manoeuvre. US support is vital to Taiwan and supplies arms to Taiwan while maintaining a 'One China' policy stance. US-China-Taiwan triangle is a delicate one. The Taiwanese have a lurking apprehension whether the US may sac-





rifice Taiwan on the altar of US-China relations in future.

The Taiwanese negotiate with China all the time but they are in no mood to surrender. Being an economic power house and source of investments and high technology, Taiwan is wooed by many countries. Since the relaxation of relations between China and Taiwan, many countries have deepened their ties with Taiwan. Singapore and New Zealand are exploring the prospects of signing free-trade agreements with Taiwan. Taiwan has also acquired membership of 28 international organisations where statehood is not a membership criterion. It is seeking the membership of 17 more such organisations.

The assertions of sovereignty by China over South China Sea and US' pivot to Asia policy have led to rise of tensions in the region. The dispute between China and Japan over Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands can potentially escalate. While Taiwan, like China, claims sovereignty over some of the islands in South China Sea and East China Sea, it wants the disputes to be shelved and joint-sharing to be promoted. The Taiwanese are aware that India has interests in South China Sea and are keen to understand the extent of Indian national interests in these regions.

The Taiwanese, taking note of India's growing influence in regional and global affairs, want to engage with it in the hope that their room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis China will increase. Keenly watching the

development of India's 'look east' policy, they want to understand how India defines and protects its interests in Asia. India, which has a delicate and sensitive relationship with China, is naturally careful in dealing with Taiwan.

India has sought to enhance functional linkages with Taiwan without offending China. The bilateral trade between India and Taiwan crossed \$8 billion in 2011-'12. Taiwanese investment in India is over \$1.2 billion. Nearly 80 Taiwanese companies have presence in India. The Taiwanese are providing teachers for the increasingly popular Chinese language courses in India. The two sides have signed a double-taxation avoidance agreement. A joint study has been launched to explore the possibility of a free-trade agreement between the two sides. Taiwanese companies employ over 10,000 people in their operations in Tamil Nadu.

The Taiwanese are keen to expand their relationship with India further as there is considerable untapped economic and cultural potential. In a significant gesture, Ma made a brief refuelling halt in Mumbai in 2012. This was an unprecedented move on the part of the two sides. The former Indian President Abdul Kalam visited Taiwan in December 2010. A few ministers from Taiwan have also visited India. Track II level contacts have been regular.

India has interests in Asia, particularly, the South China Sea. The Indian integration with ASEAN, South Korea

and Japan is deepening. Given large complementarities between India and Taiwan, the latter can be good economic partner for India. India's software skills and Taiwan's hardware capabilities can be combined in joint-ventures. Taiwanese companies can invest in Indian infrastructure. Further, Taiwan, which boasts of some high-quality universities, think-thanks, and academic institutes, can be a good source for Indian institutions for academic exchanges. Presently, nearly 500 Indian students are studying in Taiwanese science and engineering universities. Taiwan can help India in strengthening its China study programmes.

There is always an apprehension how China will react to the growing India-Taiwan relationship. Both sides are aware of this factor. However, there is no reason why this relationship should not grow in economic, social and cultural spheres. India is a large country following independent policies. China and numerous other countries have substantial relationships with Taiwan. India can pursue a functional relationship with Taiwan without deviating from its 'One China' policy. Its diplomacy is flexible enough to improve ties with Taiwan without hurting its relationship with China.

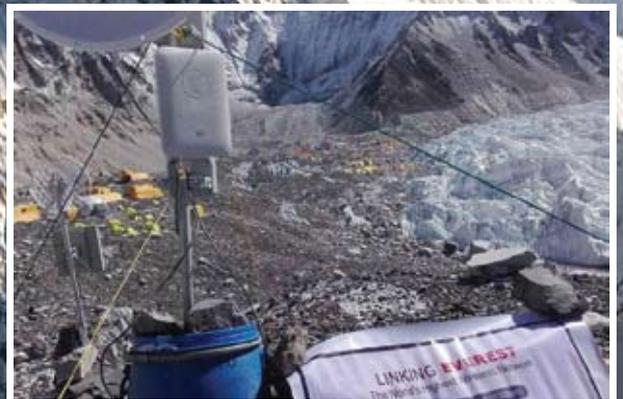
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# Modi to replicate PV Narsimha Rao Foreign policy legacy - LEP with a focus on Taiwan

By Prashant Tewari

**T**aiwan, Israel, Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea are huge foreign policy nightmare to Narendra Modi led right wing NDA government in India. Indian foreign policy between 1947-1991 was guided by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru socialist legacy and it look dramatic rightist shift from 1991 under PV Narsimha Rao legacy wherein closure US ties, south south cooperation, LEP was focused rather than puristic socialist approach. India undertook the path of economic liberalisation and the foreign policy started being guided by economic diplomacy. Off course, the bitter lessons from 1962, 1971 wars forced India to spend huge money on defence establishment to counter PRC & Pakistan aggression.

Today, India is emerging super power so it must have an independent foreign policy to serve its long term strategic interests.

Taiwan is a part of the geographical area of operation of India's Look East Policy (LEP). Although India does not recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state, its functional and people-to-people contacts with Taiwan are explainable under the LEP. Besides, India's economic activities are on the rise in the vicinity of Taiwan. Though commercial in nature, India's presence in the South China Sea, along with improvement in its bilateral relations with Asia-Pacific countries — especially in the realm of politics and defence cooperation — is of strategic significance. In the overall strategic context of the region, increasing functional ties with Taiwan without

undermining the support to the one China Policy would be a stiff challenge requiring clarity of vision and skilled diplomacy. Thus, it is imperative for India to have a much better understanding of Taiwan, and the Asia-Pacific region.

In experts view, functional ties/cooperation and people-to-people relations could make a separate category without attaching any diplomatic, political or strategic meanings. The main attributes of this category can be listed as below:

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tegic underpinning and implications.

Engagement with Taiwan would lead India to have a more informed Taiwan policy. Its unique geographical location and political situation would also contribute to India's understanding of the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan is situated in the middle of the disputed waters of the South and the East China Seas. Considering the continued threat from the People Republic of China (PRC) to its national security, Taiwan not only has a natural interest in the affairs of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China-Japan tensions, and the dynamic of Sino-US relations, but also a natural expertise on them. Taiwan and China have historical and cultural affinity, but political and strategic distance. Strategically, Taiwan is close to the US and figures in Japan's security considerations. It is obliquely mentioned in the US-Japan Defence Guidelines, 1997. But the US and Japan's support for PRC's One-China Policy has set a limit on their relations with Taiwan. Thus, Taiwan is not fully open to either of the major regional players. This situation leaves it marginalised and dissatisfied with every major power in the region and makes it a neutral interpreter of the region's politics. India could tap into this consultative potential of Taiwan.

Functional cooperation with Taiwan is even more valuable. Taiwan is a thriving and industrialised economy that is closely integrated with the international economy. It is amongst the world's leading exporting and importing coun-

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high. For instance, fourteen Taiwanese universities in 30 disciplines are on the list—compiled by the QS World University of the UK—of the top 200 universities in the world.

India could become an important destination for Taiwan's new GO South policy for diversifying Taiwan's trade and investment basket. India could also become an alternative to China for many Taiwanese companies in view of rising wages and costs in that country. In fact, a regulated flow of skilled labour from India can help overcome the problem of high costs in Taiwan itself. Taiwanese FDI can contribute to India's manufacturing, infrastructure and other sectors. India and Taiwan make a case for mutual benefit by being substantial complementary economies, as India's computer software industry complements Taiwan's computer hardware capability. India's demography, with a more than 300 million strong middle class, offers an economic opportunity for Taiwanese entrepreneurs.

India is also one of the leading suppliers of natural resources. It can be a gateway to South Asia, and even West Asia, for Taiwanese companies. Further, like Taiwan, India too has a reasonably impressive record of achievements in science and technology. For instance, India has gained international recognition in the automobile, electronics and space science sectors.

In education, India has internationally recognised institutes— like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). Besides, there is sufficient space for cooperation between the two countries in the spheres of culture and tourism. This monograph deals with Taiwan as it exists in the world today. It does not deal with the legal question, whether Taiwan is an independent state or a Chinese province. Despite its ambiguous diplomatic status, Taiwan remains an important factor in the East Asian security scenario. In spite of the Cross-Strait relations in their best phase, the solution to the Cross-Strait conundrum remains elusive. Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have signed 19 agreements related to functional areas since 2008. However, a formal political dialogue or a peace agreement that the PRC is pushing hard for, is not in sight. Taiwan does not appear

inclined to yield on the question of sovereignty. Any formula that would downgrade Taiwan's international standing is unacceptable to both Taiwan's political class and the common Taiwanese. Contrary to Chinese expectations, the prospects of economic cooperation and integration have not made the Taiwanese amenable to Chinese claims over Taiwan. Similarly, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's unification with China continues to be a powerful reference point for Chinese nationalism. China still has its missiles deployed against Taiwan. Moreover, it is yet to renounce the use of force as an option to resolve the Cross-Strait problem. This reinforces Taiwan's perception of China as a threat to its security. Finally, the US, the security guarantor of Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) 1979, continues to maintain diplomatic ambiguity over the Cross-Strait issue. Therefore, any conflagration in the volatile waters of Taiwan Strait could result in a US-China face off.

Taiwan is also a part of problematic territorial claims in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Its claims overlap with those of China and are ignored by the other concerned parties. Taiwanese claims mostly address domestic constituency. It appears content with the practical arrangements

for resource-sharing. A good example is its fishery pact with Japan in 2013. However, since these claims stoke popular sentiment in Taiwan, it is difficult for the Taiwanese government to ignore the public opinion on these issues. Therefore, overlooking Taiwan in the regional security map would bring pressure on the US alliance in the region, of which Taiwan is a part. Taiwan successfully drove this point during the standoffs between Japan and China in the East China Sea over the Senkaku/Diao Yu islands in 2012-13 by its diplomatic manoeuvres. In fact, the Japan-Taiwan fishery pact has effectively made the dispute tripartite, and implies that Taiwan is a player in the dispute. In May 2013, the government of Taiwan conveyed that diplomatic recognition or not, it is capable of taking care of its citizens when it flexed its economic muscle against the Philippines over the killing of a Taiwanese farmer-fisherman by the Philippines coastguard. Finally, accelerated interaction and cooperation in functional areas between India and Taiwan would, in the long-term, also contribute to increased mutual awareness. The Cross-Strait unification would not be the only eventuality in the dialectics of Cross-Strait relations. Whether Taiwan would eventually unify with China, or the status quo would persist, or some



Prashant Tewari visited Taiwan Parliament, greeted by the then speaker H.E. Mr. Jin-Pyng Wang to improve bi-lateral relations between India & Republic of China Taiwan



other form of Cross-Strait relations would emerge, is difficult to predict. To study and engage Taiwan is important irrespective of the scenarios, because each scenario will shape the regional security dynamics in its own way.

This monograph begins by establishing a narrative of India-Taiwan relations. Though not very long, the historical relationship between India and the Republic of China (ROC) during the 1930s and 40s was fascinating. It encompassed British colonial rule in India, the Japanese aggression on China, India's freedom struggle, the Second World War, the camaraderie between India and the ROC, the charming personalities of Jawaharlal Nehru and Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kaishek, and the civil war in China. In the late 1940s, the ROC versus the People's Republic of China (PRC) conflict became a test case for Indian policy of state recognition. Later, in the 1950s, Cold War determined the Indian position on Formosa (the ROC). This monograph illustrates a lesser known fact that has now faded from public memory: that apart from Tibet, the issue of Formosa was also raised by Indian opposition parties to criticise Nehru's China Policy. The monograph briefly discusses the Cold War to understand the history of no-contact between India and Taiwan. It proceeds to discuss and analyse the state of India-Taiwan relations after 1995 within the framework of India's Look East Policy and Taiwan's Pragmatic Diplomacy. Finally, it concludes by making an attempt at re-interpreting Nehru's policy on Taiwan.

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**This monograph begins by establishing a narrative of India-Taiwan relations. Though not very long, the historical relationship between India and the Republic of China (ROC) during the 1930s and 40s was fascinating**

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In fact, the LEP initiated by Narsimha Rao government in 1992 offered a huge space for Taiwan because of the strategic shift from conventional foreign policy to economics driven foreign policy. The entire ASEAN block was suspect of India due to its proximity with USSR during cold war era but post 1991 when Indian government liberated itself from socialist pattern of governance, LEP attracted every ASEAN country towards India because of the simple reason that India offered huge market to any country offering world class product & services.

There is a strong desire in the public mind and the Taiwanese and Indian establishments to strengthen their relationship. However, the two sides are still hampered by mutual ignorance. This is the result of the four decades-

long rupture in the relationship between the two countries. A fresh start is confined to people-to-people contact. Because India is adhering to One-China policy, it is prudent to begin building the relationship between the two countries through people-to-people contact. People-to-people contact requires far more coordinated, institutionalised, and sustained initiatives by the governments of India and Taiwan.

This monograph, thus, endorses people-to-people relations as a comprehensive package for functional ties in education, culture, science and technology, trade and investment, as well as in other such areas where cooperation has no manifest and direct political or diplomatic constraints.

The NDA government have a strong mandate with a decisive leadership to bring about drastic changes in governance and foreign policy. Narendra Modi government have shown a keen interest in LEP foreign policy initiated by Congress government of late PV Narsimha Rao and followed by BJP led NDA government of AB Vajpayee. Early avatar of BJP, the Jan Sangh had a clear Taiwan policy that stated a sovereign country status to ROC but the times have changed and PRC is a global power today. The present government must articulate innovative diplomatic tools to balance Taiwan interest viz mainland China to bring macro level foreign policy change.

**Writer is Editor-in-Chief,  
Courtesy content from - PK Singh  
book for IDSA**

# Shed Counter-Productive Overcaution on Taiwan

By G Parthasarathy

Wang Yi's visit came at a time when tensions have been rising in China's relations with all its maritime neighbours, ranging from Japan and South Korea to Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. Like in the case of its land boundary with India, China is laying claim to huge areas in its maritime boundaries with these neighbours—claims which have no legal basis in terms of the UN Conventions on the Laws of the Seas. India has expressed concern in recent years about Beijing reinforcing its unwarranted claims on the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh, with issue of stapled visas for residents of the state visiting China. China also opposes international funding for development projects in J&K. At the same time, China warmly and officially welcomes high functionaries from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan.

Members of China's Peoples' Liberation Army have, in recent years, been involved in large numbers, in building roads and tunnels in Gilgit/Baltistan re-

gion of PoK. The construction work is said to be for a transportation corridor linking China to the Arabian Sea at the Port of Gwadar in Balochistan. But, tunnels across high mountain slopes are also ideal locations for nuclear weapons silos. One hopes New Delhi is keeping this in mind. China's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear weapons and missile programme and its supply of potent conventional weapons pose the most serious security threat to India.

China has continuously stressed the need for others to respect its 'One China Policy' and eschew any action that lends political legitimacy to the government in Taiwan. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj delivered a pointed message, about our annoyance at China's policies about Arunachal and J&K, by observing that India hoped China, in turn, will adopt a "One India" policy in its dealings. While one can understand some caution about not provoking China on its political concerns on Taiwan, New Delhi has been unnecessarily overly cautious in dealing with Taiwan, which signed an 'Economic Cooperation and Friendship Agreement'

with China in 2010. This has led to many ASEAN countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia looking at exploring the possibility of concluding a free trade deal with Taiwan. Countries like Vietnam and Indonesia have extensive investment and industrial ties with Taiwan.

Development of electronic and high-tech industries is being accorded the highest priority by the NDA government. Such industries are crucial to dilute the unhealthy dependence we now have on China for imports in strategic sectors like communications and defence. Taiwan is a major producer of such products. It is crucial to take steps to promote investment and industrial cooperation with Taiwan in such sectors. While ASEAN countries have visits by ministers from Taiwan dealing with economic issues, an over-cautious establishment in New Delhi has avoided such ministerial-level exchanges despite India having an official Trade Mission in Taiwan. Given the PM's emphasis on economic diplomacy, one hopes such counter-productive caution will soon end.

*The writer is a former diplomat*



# Isha's Cauvery Calling is a mass movement to inspire the World – Sadhguru

**Prashant Tewari** in conversation with **Sadhguru**, a yogi and visionary. Named one of India's 50 most influential people, Sadhguru's work has touched the lives of millions worldwide through his transformational programs. An internationally renowned speaker and author of the New York Times Best-seller *Inner Engineering, A Yogi's Guide to Joy*, Sadhguru has been an influential voice at major global forums including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum, addressing issues as diverse as socioeconomic development, leadership and spirituality. He has also been invited to speak at leading educational institutions, including Oxford, London Business School, IMD, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Wharton and MIT. In February 2017, Sadhguru was the recipient of the Padma Vibhushan Award

by the Government of India, the highest annual civilian award, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service.

**Q. How will Cauvery Calling contribute to India's target nationally determined contributions (NDCs) target for 2030, under the aegis of the Paris Agreement?**

We estimate that the 2.42 billion

## INTERVIEW

trees necessary to be planted in the next 12 years to revive Cauvery can sequester 200-300 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. This is 8-12% of India's 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions target. Nature Based Solutions like Cauvery Calling are crucial in tackling current

and oncoming ecological crisis in a way that is ecologically and economically sustainable and has a restorative impact on the local ecology. Cauvery Calling is designed to be a demonstration of a replicable model and as such its impact is not restricted to Cauvery basin, but its impact on economy and ecology will prove to be a very strong motivational factor for implementation of such initiatives across the nation and the tropical world. Similar projects across various Indian river basins could easily contribute to achieve and even surpass the NDC targets.

**Q. What can India as a nation do to ensure we meet this overall targets?**

Cauvery Calling is designed to be a model for the tropical world, it is an economic plan with a significant ecological



impact. In a nation such as India where almost half the population is engaged in agriculture, such a plan that enhances farmer livelihoods while creating various ecological benefits via improvement of tree cover in a sustainable manner by linking it positively with economics can go a long way in meeting India's ecological aspirations.

**Q. What will be the impact of forestation planned by Isha foundation in terms of improving the life of millions of people living adjacent to the proposed river line?**

The primary focus of Cauvery Calling is to improve farmers livelihoods by encouraging the transition of a portion of the land to tree-based agriculture and increase the green cover in the Cauvery basin to the national aspiration of 33% tree cover on land. This will be done by encouraging planting of trees on private farm lands by farmers as part of tree-based agriculture which can improve their incomes by 3-8 times. Improved tree coverage will deliver a host of ecosystem services towards the region, like sequestration of water, improved water quality, soil fertility improvement, reduced erosion and improved soil biodiversity.

Additionally, the produce from this tree-based agriculture will promote allied industries and create new employment in the region in addition to multiplying the farmer incomes which will further boost the entire rural economy.

**Q. Yes, it is true that agroforestry would addresses problems related to soil, water, nutrition and climate change, but Why would farmers opt for growing trees on their farmlands.**

Tree based agriculture offers an attractive proposition to farmers, Isha has



experience with almost 70,000 farmers in Tamil Nadu who have implemented tree-based agriculture and have seen a rise of 3-8 times in their incomes. Tree based agriculture is less labour intensive overall and has a high resistance to climate change, floods and droughts. Having trees on the farm is also an insurance for the farmer as they are an asset, he can utilize in times of need instead of falling prey to creditors/loan sharks or being crushed by financial stress otherwise.

**Q. If they opt, then how will they earn their livelihood as the trees farming would take at least 6 to 7 years to give them income.**

We are encouraging farmers to convert a part of the land, in a phased manner, to tree-based agriculture and not the entire land. They can also opt for

boundary plantation instead of block plantation and continue their regular cropping. Tree based agriculture allows for plantation of his regular crops in between the saplings in the first 2-3 years when the trees are small and leave most of the land unshaded and available for cropping. Once the trees grow the farmer will continue to grow intercrops like yam, long pepper, groundnut, vegetables, pulses, moringa and pepper grown on trees, and earn regular annual income from these crops. Further governments should encourage and support farmers by offering incentives for tree-based agriculture, for example the Karnataka government's Krishi Aranya Protsahan Yojane offers farmers Rs. 125 per sapling planted, spread over the first three years based on sapling survival.

**Q. Who will guarantee them the fair prices for their trees/timber? Who will compensate if they are forced to sell at the prices even lower than the prices level prevailing at the time of growing samplings?**

India has imported, annually, timber and allied products worth \$6.5-7.2 billion in the period 2011-2015, which could be produced by our own farmers and also create forex savings for the country. (Wood is Good, Centre for Science and Environment, 2017). MoEFCC has already announced establishment of a digital marketing platform for tree-based produce to promote agroforestry and green businesses. We are working



with the state governments on relevant aspects as per the state laws. Species-wise felling, transit and sale is a state subject.

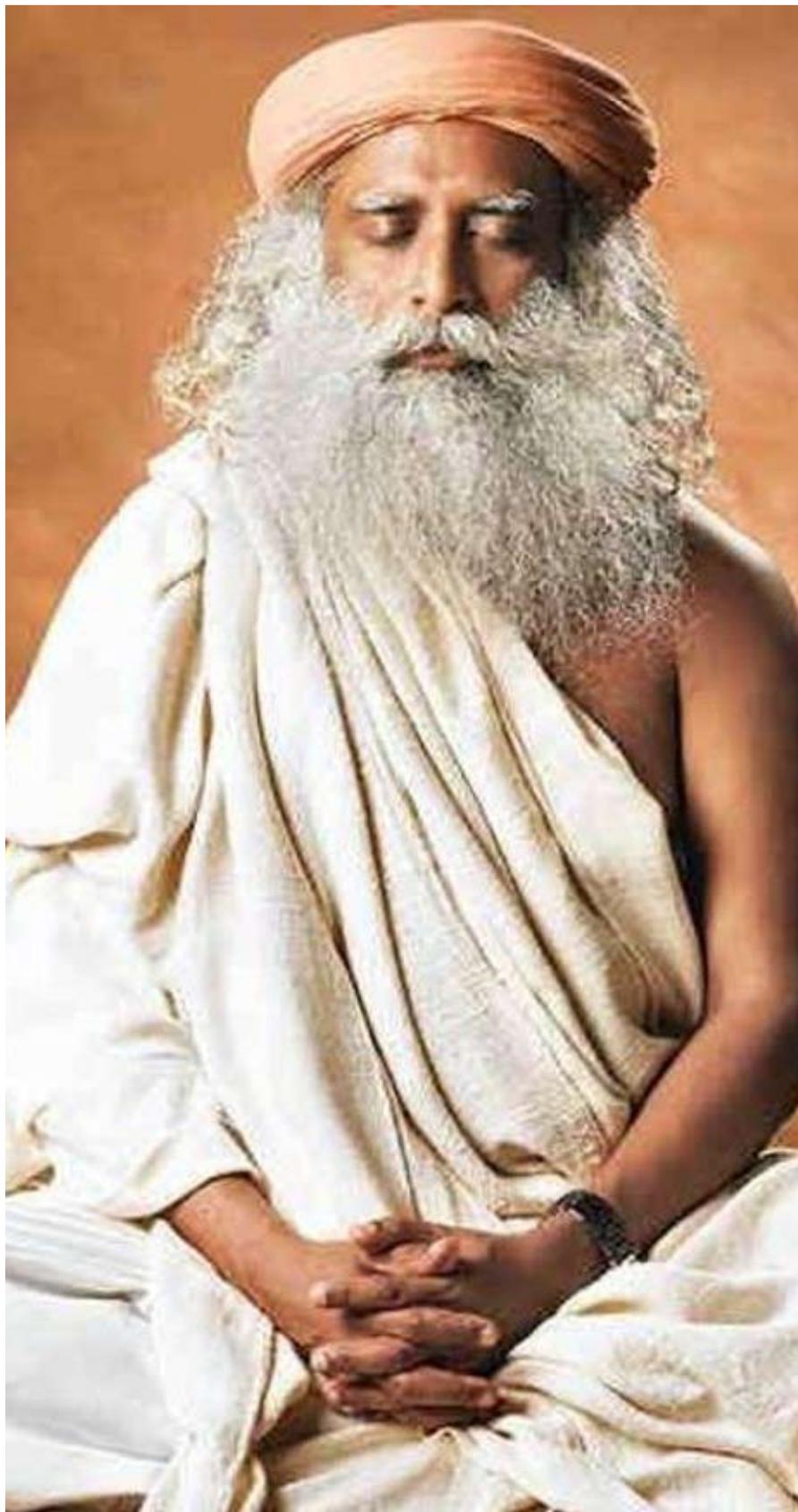
**Q. The vegetables nutrients have fallen by 40%. Who is to be blamed Farmers or Govt. Policies? And how the redeem the situation?**

Plants depend for their nutrition on the soil, hence if the soil health suffers and nutrients are depleted then plant health and the nutrient content of the produce will be adversely affected. To address the falling nutrients in our food we have to address the soil, and the only way to add organic matter to the soil is via plant and animal waste. Tree-based agriculture on farmlands ensures addition of organic matter via plant litter, and further it also protects the land from sunlight, this preventing the loss of organic matter and soil moisture, promotes microbial diversity and creates a conducive microclimate on the farm for the health of plants. Cauvery Calling aims to encourage farmers to convert 30% of their land to tree-based agriculture and this will have a significant impact on the soil and plant health.

**Q. How can we motivate farmers for organic farming with your mega tree plantation scheme?**

Farmers need a healthy and organically rich soil to implement natural farming on the farm. The only way to rejuvenate the soil is by addition of plant and animal waste. Tree based agriculture means the farmer has tree litter to add organic matter to his soil, additionally tree shade results in higher moisture content and less degradation of organic matter. This also promotes soil biodiversity and soil microorganisms necessary to maintain soil fertility. The improved organic content and tree roots ensure reduced erosion of valuable topsoil and increased sequestration of rain water. Hence tree-based agriculture will act as a foundation for the farmers to make chemical based agriculture unnecessary.

Further the farmers need hand holding in the process of transitioning to natural farming with the right practices appropriate to their crops. Isha's Isha Agro Movement is a very vibrant initiative focused on natural ways of farming without use of artificial fertilizers, insecticides or growth promoters. We provide a variety of training to farmers



ranging across different crops and addressing aspects such as natural inputs, pest management, etc. Isha Agro Movement is primarily focused on improving farmer incomes as a result of switching to natural farming where all the inputs required are generated by the farmer on his own farm without the need to pur-

chase anything from outside. Isha Agro Movement is unique in that it enables effective farmer to farmer knowledge transfer about traditional methods that have stood the test of time. This approach holds a lot of potential to benefit farmers across the Cauvery basin.



# Growing India Ghana relations will consolidate India Africa ties: Dr Micheal Aaron

**H**.E. Dr. Michael Aaron N. N. Oquaye Esq (Jnr) is Ghana's High Commissioner to India, with concurrent responsibility for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. H.E. Dr. Oquaye Jnr is an International Investment Corporate Lawyer with an extensive experience in Project Finance, Infrastructure, Mergers and Acquisitions, General Contract, and Commercial Transactions. His global experience is mainly focused on emerging businesses and markets. Countries of business include UK, USA, the ECOWAS region, and South Africa. His varied areas of legal practice are in the sectors of Energy (Oil and Gas Bio fuels and Renewable Energy), Media and Technology, Telecommunications, Commodities, and Agri-business among others.

His work experience spans many years in both the UK and Ghana. His last job in the UK was at 9 King's Bench Walk, Chancery Lane, London, where he worked with renowned barrister AI Mustakim. In Ghana, he is currently a legal practitioner at Exusia Law Consult with renowned lawyers such as Dr Yeboa Amoah (the first Managing Director of Ghana Stock Exchange) and Mrs. Esie F. Cobbina (Cocoa Board Ghana).

He was called to the Bar of England and Wales at The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and later called to the bar in Ghana. He holds a BL from BPP University's Law School in Holborn, UK, and an LLB from the Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, UK. He also started an LLM in Oil and Gas at The University of Dundee, Scotland, UK.

**Prashant Tewari** Editor in Chief in conversation with **H.E. Dr. Michael Aaron N. N. Oquaye Esq (Jnr)** to speak on the bilateral relationship between India and Ghana and more, he has successfully completed his tenure in India and he is returning back to his

country to enter active politics.

**Q H.E. You have spent quality time in India, what is special about the India and the people?**

Well, let me first of all say thank you to you and your organization for this opportunity to have a conversation, which is mainly to promote and develop the relationship between India and Ghana's. Let me continue by saying that in terms of memories of India, I'll have so many fond memories. The first one, of course, is the kind of welcome I had from the officials of India and the other African ambassadors who welcomed me at the airport, I really started enjoying the great Indian hospitality, which of course, is legendary. And, of course, with the work itself, it was quite a roller coaster. Everything went the way it's supposed to go. I really appreciated the Indian food, thank God, I was introduced to it in the UK, previously, and so I had quite a smooth understanding of it. With regard to sports, cricket was something that I was never really interested in. But after coming to India and seeing how big it was, I had the opportunity to go to the stadium in Kolkata. And it was a fantastic experience with regard to that sporting activity, especially combined with the Commonwealth experience. So, one thing I learned in India was also how to use sport to create activity. And I was also part of the Polo & Golf circuit in India, and met a lot of very prominent Indians. So, these are some of my fond memories in terms of trade and sport, in terms of cuisine, and even with a cuisine. We also introduced Ghanaian food to India, and this was done on the big show of Khana Khazana with Sanjeev Kapoor. I'll expand on that later during the interview. So, these were some of my very fond memories of India.





The first one, of course, is the kind of welcome I had from the officials of India and the other African ambassadors who welcomed me at the airport, I really started enjoying the great Indian hospitality, which of course, is legendary



is the Minister of commerce. So, I arranged the meeting, met with the then minister of commerce called Suresh Prabhu. I had two meetings with him. And he agreed to change the goalposts. So, these are some of the challenges in terms of business. Now, one thing I also noticed about the Indians is that some of them were unfamiliar with Africans, they were not sure what to expect? So that was also a challenge because most of the time I have to sort of justify my inclusion to people who are not used to dealing with foreign diplomats. The same challenge was experienced by our students, especially those in very remote colleges, where I have to ask the university authorities to put down clear discrimination laws, so that anybody who was caught discriminating can be punished. And you can see that that changed attitudes.

**Q India and Africa have great relationship at official level, similarly India and Ghana bilateral relationship is at its peak. But Ghana can lead the African continent to consolidate India and Africa relationship in a leadership role, your government is working on the proposal of being the African leader?**

Yes, I mean, first of all, I'll say thanks for the compliments to myself and my predecessor. And we're looking

forward that whoever succeed me, will do a fantastic job as well. But in terms of Ghana, as a leader in Africa, Ghana is already a leader in Africa. However, what I always keep explaining to the Indian government is that it is very dif-

However, I always keep telling the business community. And you raised a very good question when you said, Ghana as leader. Ghana at the moment is the headquarters of the Africa continental free trade area. So, in effect, we

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**Ghana at the moment is the headquarters of the Africa continental free trade area. So, in effect, we are positioning ourselves as the gateway to Africa. So, this is what we're trying to do to help the Indian business community to be able to penetrate through Africa commercially, before they'll even be any sort of political understanding, which may be a thing of the future**

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ficult for India to deal with Africa as a continent. They have to deal with us bilaterally. Yes, COMESA has a secretariat. But it cannot influence Ghana or any other country. For example, now there's something called the Africa continental free trade area, right, which is the new way where you produce in Ghana, and supply to whole of Africa without tariff or duty. It is a commercial arrangement, but it's not a political one. So, this is where there still has to be a certain amount of bilateral relationship.

are positioning ourselves as the gateway to Africa. So, this is what we're trying to do to help the Indian business community to be able to penetrate through Africa commercially, before they'll even be any sort of political understanding, which may be a thing of the future. Let me quickly equate this to the EU. We all know that the EU started as that European Economic Community, that's how they started and now they are trying to get a certain political angle which is still not working, but at least the trade and

commerce is working. So, this is how Africa has to go and India has to go with us. Let us focus on the commercial aspects. Let us look at the capital in Accra, Ghana, for the Africa continental free trade area. And India must be looking at setting up manufacturing base. So, we are looking at value addition. My brother, let me make a very important contribution here with regard to trade. India and Ghana have a trade at the moment is about, almost five billion. While, in the last two years, we have risen 48% in trade, because we have come to India to change the game. And now the trade balance is even in favor of Ghana, because India is now becoming more of an upper middle-class economy, they are now becoming more of a consumer but where is the raw materials? In Africa. Let me give you an example. Ghana trades in cocoa, gold, we supplied more gold than South Africa last year, we do cashew, we do rubber, all these things India needs. But if you look at the markets, headquarter hub of all the commodities is in Europe. So, the gold market, London bullion metal exchange is in London, So why doesn't India have a direct link to Ghana to get the gold for the refinery, we don't need to go to London to trade gold. Similarly, we need

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**My brother, let me make a very important contribution here with regard to trade. India and Ghana have a trade at the moment is about, almost five billion. While, in the last two years, we have risen 48% in trade, because we have come to India to change the game. And now the trade balance is even in favor of Ghana, because India is now becoming more of an upper middle-class economy**

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to change some of the structures look at diamonds produce in Africa. Today the diamond capital is in Belgium, but India has the technology for diamonds. So why can the market shift to Asia? We have cocoa, Ghana and Ivory Coast cocoa produce 60% of the world's cocoa yet the hub of cocoa main product chocolate is in Geneva, Switzerland. Why is that the case? India is producing a lot of chocolate. India has some of the biggest oil refineries here today, with reliance and so on. The oil in Middle East and Africa, yet the trading of oil is done in Rotterdam. So, to supply India direct, how do we make this happen? And that is why recently, just last year, Ghana

in India signed an MOU for LPG gas, where you would help us with technology that we will then be able to go to our gas reserves better, because we have the raw materials. India has the technology and we can merge. Secondly, the technology of the west is very expensive and advanced. But India with your reverse technology and cheaper technology, which is more practical for the African climate. I think we make better bedfellows, and we can even work to a better and common future together.

**Q As suggested by you, G2G relationship is great between India and Africa but P2P relations are weak, you suggest the ways to in-**



## **crease the people to people contact to push for comprehensive improvement in India Africa relations?**

In fact, you raised a very fantastic question. The first thing that I want to propose, we have something called one district one factory. So, we welcome Indian companies who have come to even manufacture in areas like steel pharmacy, to be able to join other Ghanians in a joint venture. But the reverse is not. The Indian government doesn't have any schemes, which they will assist African or Ghanaian businesses to overcome and establish here. For example, we produce shea butter for cosmetics. Can we not supply here and then come and set up small factories, which will at least do the first or two stage of processing before we give to the Indian cosmetic and pharmaceutical businesses. How is the Indian government ready to open up on that?

It has to be talked about to education in every country in the world, Indians go to Australia and they go to America, they go to Europe, Africans go to Australia, they go to Europe, America, Canada, when you finish studying, you are given what we call internship for a year or two in some countries, so that you pick some work experience from that country. And what helps also is apart from the work experience, it allows the Indian industry to be familiar with Ghanaian work ethic, and Ghanaian work output. But in India, when the African students finished studying, they hardly get the internship. And they have to go without any commercial experience to Africa. So, what you are raised is a very fantastic thing where the government of India, for example, should look at more b2b encouragement and b2g encouragement because Ghana is really encouraging that side. And in fact, an Indian company called pharma Nova was recently given \$5 million by the Ghanaian government to help them. So, we didn't discriminate. So, anything that you have here as an advantage for your corporations, we also want you to let some African operations also feel free to come in here, especially when it comes to value addition. So, it's a fantastic thing to foreign direct investment. We don't want a relationship where it's all about borrowing money from ExIm Bank. And I must commend India, that in the last two years alone, in 2018, India invested private money of over \$500 million dollars of foreign direct investment.

India was the second largest in terms of funding and the number of projects in Ghana in 2019. And because we are welcoming you this way. So, we also want you to start welcoming us so that we can also bring half a billion-dollar investment this way, so that we can expand in Asia, and then we become partners in friendship.

## **Q Africa is a fabulous tourist destination for the world yet it is under marketed in India, why? And is there any scope for improvement in Travel & Tourism?**

Yes, very much. I must say that, to be honest, Ghana has not really expe-

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## **Can we not supply here and then come and set up small factories, which will at least do the first or two stage of processing before we give to the Indian cosmetic and pharmaceutical businesses**

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rienced much difficulty in traveling to India, India really are very accommodating in terms of visas to Ghanians. In fact, there have been some occasions where the Ghanians may not have all the documentation that bureaucratically India may want, and I've had to intervene and they've understood that these things may not necessarily be common to Ghana, and most of them have come here have not had any problems of immigration. The only problem and most people face challenges when they need to renew their papers, especially with FRRO, this is something that India needs to look at that when it comes to FRRO Rule matters. Sometimes they're a bit too slow and bureaucratic, especially where it is clear that a person wants to leave the country, the person is asking for an exit visa, and you know that you want him out of your country anyway, give it to him quickly. And that is one little hitch that we have. And with regard to business again, I must say that generally, there really isn't no issue, because the Indians who come to Ghana, they trade happily, there are many Indians

in Ghana at the moment who have lived there for hundred years and never been to India.

On the other hand, India is a fantastic country. India is virtually a continent. The experience you have in Punjab is totally different from experience in Kerala, and totally different for experience in Kolkata, definitely different for experience in Mumbai. India, in itself is an enigma. And I encourage, as you said, with tourism, a lot more Ghanians to come here for tourism, and a lot more Indians to also go to Ghana for tourism, because it's when you go for tourism, that you are able to sample our cuisine, and most importantly, look at business opportunities also. So, I think you're right, tourism will be a very good way of expanding the relationship, both sides, and let us see how best we can put it together. Yes, in fact, we have the Ghana Tourism Authority. And I must admit, the main focus of the Ghana Tourism Board has been in America, and Europe and Canada, simply because they are also trying to attract more of the Africans who have the cultural roots, or a lot of expats Ghanians, who are based in these countries. So, I must admit that our focus has been more there than in Asia or in India. However, our visa has increased within the last three years to double the amount, but it's mainly business that we are focused on. And I think we can focus more on tourism. To do that. We welcome any such introductions, who would want to come and meet the Ghana Tourism Authority to be able to deal with that particular aspect.

## **Q Your message to India before you leave the country to take plunge in active politics?**

Um, my departure is actually on Saturday, the 31st Oct. And I must say that of all the interviewers I've spoken to, you have been able to extract deeper information from the way you've phrased your questions. I think the question that you asked about the challenges that are faced in India for example, is a genuine heartfelt question, because some people they only want to hear just the rosy things. And that is a fake friendship or relationship. So, I'm very grateful to your style of chatting. And it made me very relaxed and maybe even open up more. And I felt like I was having a private conversation is that of an interview? Surely, I will come back to India and through you, I am inviting Indians to Ghana.

## THE MAJORITY REPORT

# Sordid story of robbing crores of poorest Hindus of scholarships and loans: Ram K. Ohri

**T**he Majority Report is a research study undertaken by two retired IPS officers highlighting the gross discrimination practiced by the UPA government against crores of poorest children of the majority community, namely the Hindus. Will it shock you, dear friends, if we were to inform you that in four out of the five globally recognized major human development indices the Hindus happen to be the most disadvan-

taged and the poorest religious group in India?

Not many people know that by using the flawed and fabricated findings of Sachar Committee, the former Minister for Minorities Affairs, Shri Salman Khurshid, acting in collusion with the former Prime Minister, robbed the unwashed and unlettered daughters and sons of nearly 34 crore Hindus living below the poverty line, mostly in rural areas. The High Level Committee

chaired by Justice Sachar was born in sin of grave constitutional impropriety. The task assigned to Justice Sachar had been entrusted in 1992 by the Indian Parliament to the National Minorities Commission by enacting a special law called The Minorities Commission Act, 1992. All responsibilities for protection of the rights of minorities and ensuring their welfare had been assigned by the Parliament in terms of the aforesaid legislation to the Minorities





Commission. Therefore the very act of the Prime Minister constituting a High Level Committee in March 2005, by an executive fiat for one single religious minority was patently unconstitutional and bad in law. The worst aspect of the sinister move, however, was that Justice Sachar did not inform the P.M. that what was being was a blatant violation of the Constitution. In appointing Sachar Committee the former P.M. also violated the oath of his office.

For decades an unsubstantiated belief has been propagated across the country that economically and educationally the Muslims are the more disadvantaged than the Hindus. This falsehood is being unabashedly used by the powerful pro-Muslim votebank lobby to bestow many unmerited benefits and concessions, including nearly twenty million scholarships and concessional educational loans exclusively on the Muslims, Christians and three other minorities. But it was revealed by Salman Khurshid's Press Conference on May 29, 2012, that not one single scholarship was given to the daughter or son of the poorest Hindu. Nor were any cheaper educational or entrepreneurial loans advanced to any Hindu poor, while funds worth several lakh crores were advanced to the children of doubly blessed five minorities, namely the Muslims, the Christians, the Buddhists, the Parsis and the Sikhs.

This strategy of religion-based discrimination was implemented in pursuance of the communally divisive votebank policy enunciated in the Prime Minister's notoriously famous "Muslims First" policy statement made on December 9, 2006, by the Prime Minister. Inexplicably the aforesaid policy statement was made by Dr. Manmohan Singh on the birthday of Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance. Perhaps thereby hangs a tale of deceit.

The worst aspect of the ongoing discrimination is that crores of poor Hindus belonging to the perennially famished hoi polloi of rural India have been deliberately deprived of any share in the 20 million scholarships awarded to the five minorities, including four economically and educationally better placed communities than the Hindus. These four super-privileged minorities are the Christians, the Parsis, the Buddhists and the Sikhs all of whom happen to be show stealers in literacy average, economic prosperity and education.

The data pertaining to infant and child mortality, degree of urbanization and life expectancy at birth available public domain proves that it is the Hindus, not the Muslims, who are the most disadvantaged religious group. Following are the five major globally recognized human development indicators :

- i) Infant Mortality;**
- ii) Child Mortality;**
- iii) Life Expectancy at Birth;**
- iv) Degree of Urbanisation ; and**
- v) Literacy**

It was established by the National Family Health Survey -2 of 1998-99 that the Hindus are far behind the Muslims in the first four human development indices, excepting literacy in which Hindus with 65.1 percent literacy are marginally ahead of Muslims who have the literacy average of 59.1 percent. But Justice Sachar did not have the moral courage to identify and write that one single factor responsible for lower Muslim literacy average was the lower ratio of literacy among Muslim women at a meagre 50.1 percent. It was lower by 3.6 percent than the national average of female literacy at 53.7. Thus, this important cause of lower female literacy among Muslims ignored by Justice Sachar was the dictats of religious leaders restricting education of girls beyond a certain age and insistence on the customary veil.

Unfortunately most Hindus, including their spiritual gurus, teledia analysts, self-anointed intellectuals and political leaders belong to the prosperous fraternity and well-to-do middle class. Their children do not need free scholarships. No wonder they have thus remained indifferent to the pathetic economic condition of the

poorest Hindu masses, especially those trapped in the terminally ill rural areas? These busy-bodies strutting across the political and spiritual universe have never cared to know that in four, out of the five globally recognised human development indices, the majority community is lagging behind the Muslims, the Christians, the Buddhists, the Parsis and the Sikhs? That explains how the children of 34-35 crore poorest Hindus were led to slaughter on the altar of Sachar Report! The daughters and sons of nearly 340 million poorest Hindus were robbed in broad daylight of their rightful share in 20 million scholarships by the ruling politicians in an ugly bid to promote the 'exclusive development' of five minority communities. And lo and behold this deprivation of the poorest Hindu children was done in the garb of 'inclusive development'!

The ongoing discriminatory policy against the majority religious group, mostly the rural Hindus, was launched by the Prime Minister with great fanfare in June, 2006, in the garb of Prime Minister's New 15 Points Programme for Welfare of Minorities. Through a sleight of hand the poorest Hindu children were deprived of any share in twenty million scholarships showered on Muslim, Christians, Buddhists, Parsis and the Sikhs.

The most shocking aspect of this biggest post-independence scam is that the Christians, Buddhists, Parsis and the Sikhs are the real show-stealers in literacy and education - way ahead of the Hindus.

A careful examination of Sachar Report reveals a series of ugly tricks devised to trample upon the Right to Equality of the eighty percent citizens of India on the ground of religion. Apparently the poorest students belonging to the majority community are being denied proportionate share in millions of scholarships and financial largesse worth thousands of crores because they happen to belong to the politically-pariahed religious group, the Hindus.

No Hindu or non-Hindu political leader showed the guts to question this implementation of 'exclusive minority development' programme tom-tomed as 'inclusive growth'. Enumerated below are two prominent instances of fudging of facts by Justice Sachar in his report.

1. Justice Sachar deliberately refused to consider the documented fact that according to the National Family

Health Surveys Nos. 1 (1992-93) and 2 (1998-1999) the Muslims were better placed than Hindus in four major human development indicators, namely the Infant Mortality, Child Mortality, degree of Urbanisation and Life Expectancy at Birth. After admitting this important fact on pages 37-38 of his report that in infant and child mortality and life expectancy at birth the Muslims were better placed, Justice Sachar took recourse to suppressio veri, suggestio fallaci, by attributing it to the highly inventive argument that it could be due to better child feeding practices prevalent among Muslims. Instead of candidly admitting that the Muslims were better fed and had access to better medical care the retired Chief Justice decided to weave the yarn of 'better child feeding' practices among Muslims. Could there be a worse example of falsification of

that in the first four globally recognised economic development indicators the Hindus are lagging far behind the Muslims and four other religious minorities, namely the Christians, the Buddhists, the Parsis and the Sikhs. This truth was established four times by four different studies, though Justice Sachar ignored the documented truth for reasons best known to him.

The first well-documented rebuttal of the flawed findings of Justice Sachar came on September 2, 2006, when a paper was circulated by Prof. Sanjay Kumar of the Centre of Studies for Developing Studies, New Delhi, in a seminar organized at the prestigious Indian Institute of Public Administration. The research of Prof. Sanjay Kumar presented in a packed hall of distinguished scholars in the auditorium of the I.I.P.A. revealed that there was

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Unfortunately most Hindus, including their spiritual gurus, telemedia analysts, self-anointed intellectuals and political leaders belong to the prosperous fraternity and well-to-do middle class. Their children do not need free scholarships. No wonder they have thus remained indifferent to the pathetic economic condition of the poorest Hindu masses, especially those trapped in the terminally ill rural areas?

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the data available in public domain?

2. Another instance of suppressio veri, suggestio falsi is the horrid description of the plight of Muslim women on page 13 (Chapter 2) which was false beyond belief. Astoundingly the retired Chief Justice Sachar wrote about the plight of Muslim women thus:

***"Everything beyond the walls of the ghetto is seen as unsafe and hostile - markets, roads, lanes and public transport, schools and hospitals, Police Stations and government offices."***

Can any Indian honestly believe that the Muslim women are treated so shabbily in India? Many more instances of fudging of facts can be cited from the report of Justice Sachar. These are being left out because of shortage of space.

To sum up, a systematic and rational analysis of the comparative scores of the Hindus and the Muslims in various human development indices reveals

highly any difference in the economic and educational status of the Hindus and the Muslims.

The in-depth research based on a survey by the Centre for Developing Societies, New Delhi, further highlighted that the proportion of 'the very poor' Indians was higher among the Hindus than among the Muslims. The survey conducted in the year 2004 showed that the percentage of 'very poor' Hindus was 31 percent while the percentage of the 'very poor' among Muslims was only 24 percent. Thus, on the basis of the CDS survey the percentage of the 'very poor' people among the Hindus was nearly 25 percent higher than among the Muslims! It was a very significant finding of Prof. Sanjay Kumar, based on a survey comprising 27,000 random samples.

Mysteriously this important finding was ignored by Justice Sachar despite a clear directive in the Prime Minister's Notification dated March 9, 2005. to

Justice Sachar's High Level Committee to "obtain relevant information from Departments/agencies of the Central & State Governments and also conduct an intensive literature survey to identify the published data, articles, and research on relative social, economic and educational status of Muslims in India at the State, regional and district levels" to address the problems faced by Muslims. More importantly, Prof. Sanjay Kumar's research paper highlighting his important findings was duly sent to Justice Sachar by our Thinktank, Patriots' Forum'. But the former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court chose to ignore the truth altogether for reasons best known to him and his team mates.

The second rebuttal of Justice Sachar's fabricated findings came in October, 2010, when the National Health Survey- 3 (2005-2006) revealed a high quantum jump of 5.4 years from 62.6 years in the life expectancy of Muslims within a short span of 7 years, i.e., between 1998 and 2005. The advantage which Muslims had over their Hindu counterparts in life expectancy at birth was barely 1.2 years in 1998-1999, but it grew to 3 years in 2005-2006, as revealed by the National Family Health Survey -3.

And the master mystery of all mysteries was that the results of the National Family Health Survey of 2005-2006 were released in October, 2010 – i.e. after a long delay of 4 years ! It needs to be investigated why in this age of super technology the findings of NFHS Survey-3 conducted in 2005-2006 were not made public. This inordinate delay was responsible for facilitating implementation of Sachar Committee's recommendations favouring the Muslim community. The discriminatory largesse of 20 million scholarships and cheaper educational and entrepreneurial loans of several lakh crore rupees was showered on Muslims, along with 4 minorities in gross violation of the Right to Equality enshrined in the Constitution.

The third rebuttal of Justice Sachar's fudged facts was made public in the findings of Rajesh Shukla, a Senior Fellow of the National Council of Applied Economic Research published in the EconomicTimes, New Delhi, on April 5, 2007, re-confirming that there was hardly any difference in the economic status of the Hindus and Muslims. Among other things Rajesh Shukla's survey disclosed that the Sikh community were 'the Sardars in Prosperity', with Christians closely following behind them.

The fourth rebuttal of Justice Sachar's findings came on February 24, 2011, in the reply to a Parliament Question answered by Vincent H. Pala, the Minister of State for Minorities in Lok Sabha admitting that the central government had no data pertaining to the number of persons living below the poverty line according to religious denominations. If as late as the year 2011 the government had no data about the number of Muslims and Hindus living below the poverty line, why were the fudged findings





of Justice Sachar accepted and implemented several years ago ?

The fifth demolition of the lies propagated by Sachar Committee came on October 24-25, 2011, when in a Seminar jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme and India's Planning Commission at Claridge's Hotel, two scholars of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (Sukhdeo Thorat and Amaresh Pandey) presented a research paper re-confirming that there had been far greater poverty reduction among the Muslims than among the Hindus between 2004-2005 to 2009-2010.

Despite these five research-based rebuttals of Sachar Report the multi-dimensional discrimination against the unwashed daughters and sons of the poorest Hindus, living below the poverty line has continued at fast pace - perhaps in deference to the policy announcement made by the Prime Minister in December, 2006, on Sonia Gandhi's birthday.

It is, however, for the self-anointed Hindu secularists to analyse and explain why no poorest of the poor Hindu child was considered eligible for even one single scholarship out of twenty million freeships showered by Salman Khurshid on the privileged children of Muslim and Christian parents. According to a half page advertisement published in The Pioneer, New Delhi, on February 15, 2014, "over Rs. 1,95,000 crore of bank credit was showered on 5 minorities". In sharp contrast, not one rupee worth bank credit was made available to anyone of the 35 crores Hindus living below the poverty line.

Most importantly, Prof. Suresh Tendulkar's research had revealed that in 2009 approximately 37.2 percent Indians were living below the poverty line. It meant that roughly the unwashed children of 34-35 crore Hindu les miserables were debarred from applying for scholarships and educational loans in an unethical bid to consolidate a votebank of five minorities. Such a policy of robbing the poorest on the ground of religion by recourse to a sleight of hand has no parallel in the history of any democratic country. Only a legal eagle like Salman Khurshid, aided by Justice Sachar, could do it with remarkable dexterity and finesse !

Now time has come for Shri Salman Khurshid and the former Prime minister to explain to 34 crore poor Hindus living below the poverty line, mostly in rural areas, why their hungry, emaciated and unlettered children were robbed of the rightful share in 20 million scholarships and educational loans totaling several lakh crore rupees ?

Time has also come for the unlettered masses to seek identification of those public figures and government functionarie for deliberately cheating the poorest citizens of their right to equality.

# Why this focus on ‘rapes in India’ by world media?

By Maria Wirth

Judging from media reports, India has a BIG problem with rape. No other country seems to come even close. All over the globe “another rape in India” is reported ever so often. On my last visit to Germany, I jolted when on 27. December 2013 the most popular TV news ended with “another gang rape in India”. It was one of only five topics of the 15 minutes broadcast.

Even my sister wondered how a gang rape in India made it to the main news in Germany. That same day in a conservative estimate, over a thousand rapes would have been committed all over the world. In the USA some 200, in South Africa some 170. In the western cities, the statistics show a high percentage, much higher than in India. Many of those rapes would have been gang rapes. In many cases, the girl or woman would have been killed. Behind each of those statistical figures are painful, heartrending stories. If we knew what is happening at this very moment on this earth – how much pain humans inflict on other humans and on animals – we could not bear it. With so much crime happening everywhere, why is India being singled out and shamed with “another gang rape”, when it actually has only a fraction of the crimes other

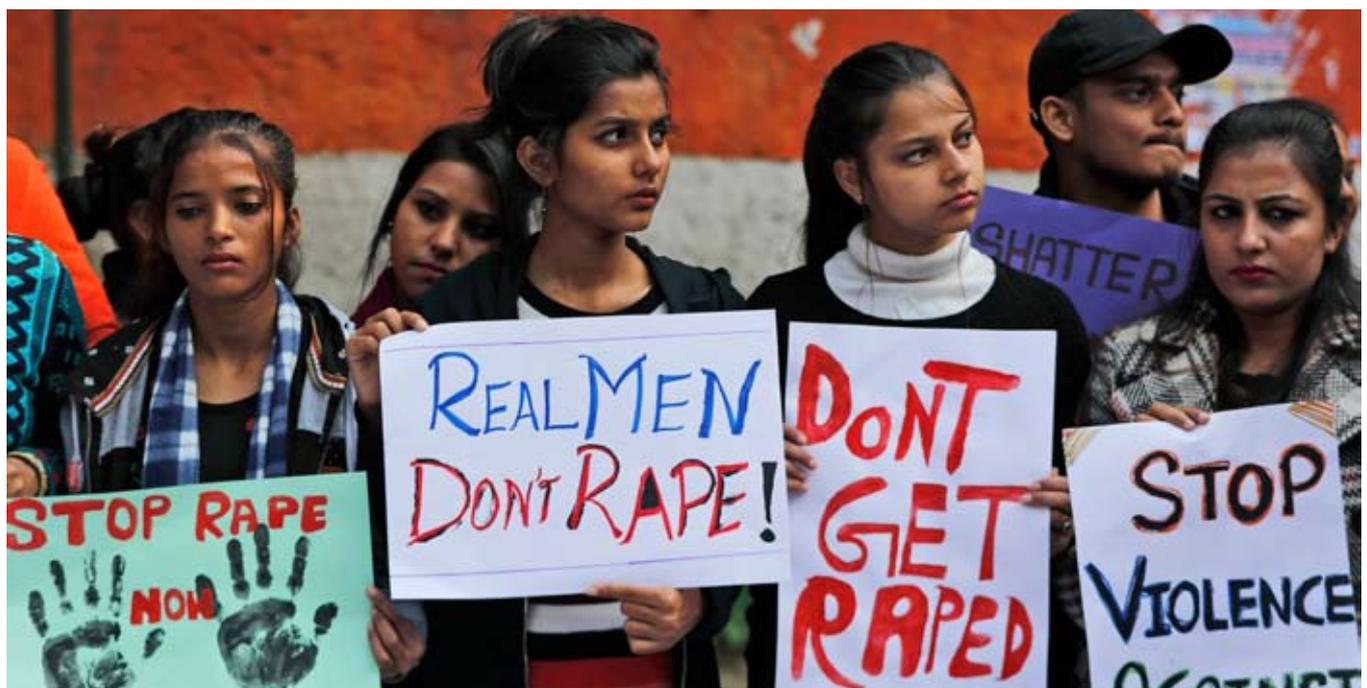
countries have in relative numbers? In absolute numbers of course it would be no surprise if India with her huge population of four times the size of the United States were number one apart from China. Even then it is not number one. USA is.

The deluge of rape reports on India started with the shameful gang rape of a young woman, Jyoti, in a bus in Delhi on December 16th, 2012. Jyoti died. The six culprits were convicted. One committed either suicide (official version) or was killed by prison inmates. Four got death sentence. The sixth was a minor, six months short of his 18th birthday. He got away with 3 years in a reprimand home. As he allegedly was the most brutal of all and responsible for the death of Jyoti, efforts are on to try him as an adult.

This gang rape received unprecedented publicity. It reached national and local news all over the globe. It reached even a friend in Slovenia, who is usually oblivious of what is happening. Why was it broadcasted all over with such intensity? Was it because Indians protested in a big way and demanded harsh punishment? Those protests should have actually gone in favour of India, as they made clear that Indians consider rape as completely against their culture. But the opposite happened:

Ever since that December 2012, news on India have centered almost exclusively on “another rape” and even on the “rape culture of India”. One year later, the tragic story of Jyoti was again splashed over half a page in a local Nuremberg newspaper, and in its year-end- review, the Spiegel magazine did not feature anything about India, not even the Uttarakhand disaster with over 7000 dead, but – a group of victims of sexual abuse learning martial arts in Lucknow, ready to take on anyone who molests women. Obviously it was implied that such molesters are lurking at every corner.

India does have a problem with rape. Other countries also have this problem. Yet the exclusive focus by the world media on “rapes in India” is not justified and raises suspicion of an agenda behind it. Articles appeared now, often written by Indians with Hindu names, that Indian (read Hindu) culture is to be blamed for the rapes, because it does not consider women as ‘autonomous entities’, which probably means that they can’t do what they want. The Washington Post proclaimed that sexual violence was endemic in India. The Reuters Trust Law group named India one of the worst countries in the world for women. A Harvard committee crafted strategies for ‘adolescent education’



to change the Indian mindset about gender. It was getting a bit much. Don't westerners look at their own record – past and present – and compare it with that of India? Are they not ashamed?

Anyone who cares to find out will easily discover that rape is not in the culture of India, and women have a good, even respected position compared to other cultures or countries. This position may not be in tune with the view of feminists, but are feminists the measure of all things? Do those feminists believe that village women in India want to be like them? In my view, those feminists look pitiable in the eyes of those often very strong village women who see Sita as their ideal. The main anguish of those women is poverty, not gender roles.

To blame Hindu culture is preposterous to say the least. In fact, if Hindu culture would have prevailed and Christianity and Islam had never appeared on the scene, the world would be a better place. Christians and Muslims have traditionally used rape as a tool of war. For them, the 'other' was never worthy of any consideration and could be brutally raped and killed never mind if they were civilians. The Geneva Convention's purpose is to stop this barbaric behaviour. Hindus never needed a Geneva Convention. They also fought wars, but they did not brutalize women or the civilian population.

The campaign to paint India blacker than it is sadly has worked. It is now a 'fact' for most foreigners (and for the convinced Indians) that Indian women have to live terrible lives, more terrible than anywhere else. No disagreeing possible. Everyone will shout you down with plenty of horrific examples. Yes, there are plenty of horrific examples and one needs to find out the reasons and find remedies. But individual criminals do not define a country, even less, if other countries have more of them. So why is India beaten with "another gang rape" again and again? Is the purpose to spoil the image of India? And if so, why?

In recent times, Indians have clearly made a mark. There is tremendous talent in the country. It is acknowledged that Indians have brains. This expresses itself in a new found confidence. 'Western values' are more likely to be scrutinized now and the ancient Hindu tradition is seeing a renaissance. The 'established opinion' that Christianity and Islam are any time better than Hinduism is being challenged. Modern western values are also more likely to be



scrutinized and the west does not like it. The established opinions have power and this power seems to be used to malign India in a most unfair manner.

Rape is a delicate subject and whoever tries to place it into perspective is likely to get slaps from all sides, not least from the women's groups. Not many will dare to state, that India has a problem, but not a bigger one than other countries, and does not need interference from the west in handling it. In fact, India has a great advantage. The family system is generally still strong especially among the masses who have escaped English education. Celibacy before marriage is still valued and not ridiculed. Romantic love is still seen for what it is – a temporary emotion and not a solid basis for a lifelong companionship. Compromise among family members and even sacrifice are not yet condemned as restricting individual freedom. Sita is still an ideal for most Hindu women. Bhakti, love for God, can still be expressed.

The fact that these values are still strong is not appreciated by western opinion makers. Those values are considered out of sync with the Zeitgeist. They pose a challenge to the western lifestyle which is being pushed into India. 'Modern, western values' mean for example (I learned this from an article in a German magazine) to live in rainbow or patchwork families, Those families will either have homos as 'parents' or children from different partners as the parents would have had several live-in relationships earlier. It is supposed to be a great learning experience for everyone. A book will soon be out in Germany that examines whether homo marriages make better 'parents' than the traditional man-woman combination. It is overlooked, that homo 'parents' can't produce children together.

But then, who needs children in the west?

Traditional Indian society is clearly out of sync with this modern lifestyle and to portray it in a poor light, "another rape" makes headlines every other day. Care is taken that only rapes committed by men with Hindu names reach the limelight and are discussed on TV. India has some 200 million Muslims and some 50 million Christians and they also commit rapes and very cruel ones, as well. For example the minor in the rape case of Jyothi is a Muslim. This news, however, did not make it to the mainstream media. There seems to be communalism in regard to broadcasting crimes, and maybe even in registering them. This makes sense, if the objective is to demean Hindu culture and thereby propel it to reform and open up. It is expected to leave those old fashioned family values behind, to have condom vending machines in colleges, to consider free sex as normal. What better start than to talk of rape? It prepares the ground for allowing westerners to prepare the syllabus for 'adolescent education'. And once the youth is convinced, the 'backward' Hindu society will be a thing of the past.

This prospect would be a horror for the Indian masses from all religions. Hindu society is indeed rigid in certain aspects and has much scope to improve, but its values are still highly preferable to western, modern 'values'. One just needs to look at western societies to realise that the modern life style is a failed model. It has already regrettable fallout: many youngsters are without direction because of too much freedom. They long for clear rules and turn to fundamentalist, evangelical churches. Hindu Dharma would be the better option. But they are not likely to get to know about it in an unbiased manner.

# SINDHU AND SARASVATI: BATTLE FOR AKHAND BHARAT

By Vijaya Rajiva

**T**he Sindhu and Sarasvati rivers were at the centre of Rig Vedic consciousness, closely followed by the Iravati (Ravi), Sutudri (Sutlej), Vipasa (Beas), Chandrabhaga (Chenab), Vitasta (Jhelum). Hence the reference to the land as Sapta Sindhu (seven rivers). The Sarasvati, mentioned some seventy times in the Rig Veda, dried up in post-Vedic times and was rediscovered in the last four decades through satellite imagery which spotted its paleo channels. This was a landmark breakthrough and provided Indic scholars the basis for challenging much of the traditional history of India as written by Western scholars and their followers in India.

As the Vedic peoples moved eastwards from the Punjab/Haryana region (where the Rig Veda was composed), they discovered new territories and rivers. Hence, the stotram for the water purification ceremony from the Puranas:

*Gange cha yamune chaiva Godavari  
Sarasvati Narmada Sindhu Kaveri  
Jalamin sammidham Kuru*

*O ye Rivers Gange, Yamune, Godavari,  
Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and  
Kaveri! Reside together here in this wa-  
ter*

There is a close bond between Sindhu and Sarasvati in Rig Vedic consciousness and the phrase 'akhand bharat' (undivided Bharat). Eminent historian and archaeologist Shivaji Singh has spelled this out in his definition of the word 'aryam' as characterising akhand bharat. Quoting the famous line from the Rig Veda, Krinvanto visvam aryam (Make



the world aryam), he explains that aryam is that mindset, world view, attitude, which works for the spiritual and material welfare of humankind (Vedic Culture and its Continuity, 2010).

Elaborating, he points out that the word 'aryam' has nothing to do with the racist use of the word 'aryan' by Western scholarship, nor is it a linguistic construct. The battle for akhand bharat is thus a battle for the definition of sacred geography (the land from the Himalaya and the northwest to Kanyakumari in the south and from Dwaraka in the west to undivided Bengal in the east) but also the more universal meaning of aryam.

The question arises as to whether the sacred geography of akhand bharat is closely linked to the sanctity of the Sindhu and the Sarasvati and the meaning of aryam, and if so, why and how.

### **The Meaning of Aryam or Aryattva**

One of the clearest explanations of this ideal of Aryam is provided by Shivaji Singh: "The essence of Vedic culture lies in its perception of Aryattva, a virtue the achievement of which is considered to be necessary for civilised living. The slogan *Krinvanto visvam aryam* (Rig Veda 9.63.5) is an appeal to the divine almighty power to help achieve this ideal. Unfortunately, however, many historians have misunderstood this Aryattva".

Scholars have often confused the Vedic Aryans with Indo Aryans, forgetting that the two concepts are different. 'Arya' being the self-designation of the Vedic people, 'Vedic Aryan' represents a historical reality. As against this, the term 'Indo-Aryan' is a linguistic construct denoting speakers of a sub-group of languages within the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family, and being a construct, its validity is subject to verification.

Although language and culture are intimately connected, Arya does not denote a speaker of a particular language. In the Vedic view, a person speaking a Dra-



vidian language is Arya if he possesses the virtue called Aryattva... (p10). Arya is defined one who is noble and refined in ideas and action, and these depend on a "world view characterised by a belief in certain concepts like Rta, Satya, Tapas, Yajna, Brahma etc." (p10)

Aryattva is a blending of virtues that lead to the highest material and spiritual achievement. Rta simply means the order and harmony of the universe which the Rig Vedic Rishis saw in their physical environment, Nature. Yajna, the ritual of the fire, homa, is not only a tribute to the fire Deva, Agni, but embodies the orderly working of the universe reflected in Vedic astronomy. The intricate celestial relationships that the Rishis actually observed with the naked eye are clearly explained by BN Narahari Achar in 'Saraswati River and Chronology: Simulations using Planetarium Software' (cited in Vedic River Saraswati and Hindu Civilisation, 2008, ed. S Kalyanaraman).

Satya (usually translated as Truth) represents the mirroring of the cosmic order in society and the individual's alignment with this cosmic order. Likewise, Tapas or self-discipline (austerity) was practiced by the Rishis for the welfare of society and therefore the universal application of this to individuals who embody Aryam/Aryattva.

These ideals of virtuous living came to the consciousness of Vedic Rishis as they saw the heavens, the earth around them, the rivers, forests and lakes and all living creatures. Aryam was a holistic ideal which passed into Hindu consciousness and society as Dharma. A recent contemporary explanation of

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Dharma and Rta is provided by Shrinivas Tilak, A Reawakening to a secular Hindu nation (p13-16, 2008).

Dharma in Tilak's interpretation (though not explicitly stated by him) is related to Aryam/ aryattva which is the social derivative of Rta as the Vedic seers envisioned it. Tilak provides a very lucid explanation of other aspects of Dharma.

The Vedic peoples engaged in international trade and were familiar with

maritime travel and also engaged in the intellectual fields of mathematics and astronomy. The ideal of Aryam came to them on the banks of the Sindhu and Sarasvati. This was the basis of their spiritual bond with the two rivers.

### **Sacred Geography**

Sindhu and Sarasvati were not only rivers that provided the livelihood of the Vedic peoples. In a previous article, the writer spoke of the role of the Sarasvati as the giver of 'light' ('Sarasvati and the Resurgence of Hinduism', Haindava Keralam, 08/05/2013). In the Rig Veda, Sarasvati is not only a river but the giver of 'light'. Western scholars have traditionally dismissed the presence of the Goddesses (hereafter referred to as Devas and Devis) in the Rig Veda and downplayed their importance.

Nevertheless, for a correct reading we have to see Sarasvati not only as a river Devi giving abundance and plenty to the Rig Vedic peoples, but also as the giver of 'light.' The very first book of the Rig Veda says : '...Sarasvati, the mighty flood, she with light illumines, She brightens every pious thought' (Book 1, Hymn 3, Line 12, Griffith translation). The 'light' here refers to intellect and devotion and explains the origin of Sarasvati as patron of learning, knowledge, music, arts, etc. Book 1 is the work of Sage Agastya, also known for his famous Sarasvati Sthotram (Ya kundendu tushaara, haara dhavala...) where he hails the Devi as the source of knowledge.

The ten books of the Rig Veda contain seventy references to Sarasvati. Of these, two are directly addressed to her, as one who gives prosperity and plenty. She is the mighty river that flows from the mountains to the sea. She is life giving water. There are some references to her as the origin of holy thoughts, but none as clear cut as the reference to the giver of 'light' by Agastya.

Hence, one can infer that the Rig Veda signalled the importance of knowledge. This fits in with NS Rajaram's thesis that Vedic Mathematics was central to the civilisation and that the geometric/algebraic notions of the period influenced Old Babylonia and Egypt and thence the Greek philosopher Pythagoras whose theorem is well known to most readers (See 'The Origins of Indo-Europeans' and 'The Third Wave', Folks Magazine, Dec. 2012, Feb, March 2013).

Pythagoras (570 BC-495 BC) always wanted to visit India. There is a missing



period of ten years in his life and scholars have speculated that he may have come to India during that time. He had, of course, visited Egypt and Babylonia. If he did come to India, it is reasonable to assume that he learned his Mathematics directly from India and not through Old Babylonia and Egypt.

It is not accidental that Sarasvati is deified as the source of 'light.' Rajaram points out that the mathematical formulae used for the bricks for the Vedic fire altar were borrowed by the Harappan civilisation (via the Sulba Sutras) whose peoples lived on the banks of the Sarasvati and Sindhu.

The Sindhu has been mentioned in the Rig Veda more than a dozen times, the most arresting being in Book X, where the power and might of the river are invoked. It would seem that this aspect overawed the Vedic peoples.

**Verses from the Rig Veda make this abundantly clear:**

1) The singer, O ye Waters in Vivasvan's place, shall tell your grandeur forth that is beyond compare. The Rivers have come forward triply, seven and seven. Sindhu in might surpasses all the streams that flow.

2) Varuna cut the channels for thy forward course, O Sindhu, when thou ranst on to win the race. Thou speed-

est over precipitous ridges of the earth, when thou art Lord and Leader of these moving floods.

3) His roar is lifted up to heaven above the earth: he puts forth endless vigour with a flash of light. Like floods of rain that fall in thunder from the cloud, so Sindhu rushes on bellowing like a bull.

4) Like mothers to their calves, like milch kine with their milk, so, Sindhu, unto thee the roaring rivers run. Thou leadest as a warrior king thine army's wings what time thou comest in the van of these swift streams.

*(Rig Veda, Griffiths translation, Book 10.75.1-4)*

Shivaji Singh says the Sindhu's contribution to the Indian ethos is tremendous. The Rig Veda highly adores Sindhu for its benefactions, and the reverence for the river has continued down the ages. The water purifying mantra (ganga cha yamune chaiva...) still repeated at the very beginning of Hindu religious performances, stands witness to the fact that Sindhu has traditionally been considered as one of the seven most important rivers of the subcontinent. Changes and modifications in political boundaries cannot alter this fact. Culture is far more durable than Politics (email communication).

**Sacred Space and Akhand Bharat**

Akhand Bharat, then, in which Sindhu and Sarasvati are integral parts, is a sacred space unique to the subcontinent. Here live the Devas and Devas that the Rig Vedic Rishis sighted and were commemorated by them in the Rig Veda. As time went by, some of the names changed and more names were added to the Hindu pantheon. They still continue to inhabit the land mass from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin and from west to east.

In a discussion of rashtra as a culturally nuanced space, Shrinivas Tilak observes: "As a culturally integrated unity, the idea of rashtra inevitably developed a nuanced network of ideology, outlook and traditions inspired and informed by the particular geo-morphological features of the Indian landmass." (Rewakening to a secular Hindu nation, p.20)

This culturally integrated unity which Hindus call the motherland was given several thousand years ago by the Rishis of the Rig Veda who first lived on the banks of the Sindhu and the Sarasvati.

*The writer is a political philosopher who taught at a Canadian university*

# INDIA'S BANKING WOES & ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT

Dr Rahul Misra

There's no doubt that the UPA left poison pills behind; the Government must get tough. The Indian banking sector is in crisis and someone needs to call out the culprit, the UPA Government, which allowed ridiculous loans to be approved. If facts are investigated, it will emerge that several gold-plated loans were given to favoured businessmen. It is, therefore, not surprising that journalists, friendly to the previous regime, are flying kites and are trying to discredit legitimate business loans given to people close to the current administration. When Congress leaders attack the Modi Government for

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When Congress leaders attack the Modi Government for allowing defaulters such as Vijay Mallya to 'escape', one cannot but be astounded at the hypocrisy of such spokespersons. It was the UPA that gave massive loans which did not have a semblance of logic

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allowing defaulters such as Vijay Mallya to 'escape', one cannot but be astounded at the hypocrisy of such spokespersons. It was the UPA that gave massive loans which did not have a semblance

of logic. Anybody with a modicum of intelligence could see that Mallya's airline was in a tailspin and was going to be crushed under the one-time liquor baron's immense ego. And it is not just





Mallya to whom loans that defied logic were given, infrastructure projects from roads to airports were 'gold-plated', the cost of building a kilometre of four-lane highway inexplicably jumped four-times in that decade as mafia builders ripped off the banks with Government's tacit support.

As much as one would say that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley have been hobbled by the ineptitude and downright thuggery of the previous administration, the fact is that they are the ones in power today. Blaming the previous Government is not an excuse that can be taken to voters after completing three-quarters of one's term in power. There's no doubt that the global financial crisis, coupled with stricter rules, implemented by both former and present Reserve Bank of India Governors, Raghuram Rajan and Urjit Patel respectively, have made most Indian banks reluctant to give loans to small and medium industries. These projects are essential to get job growth going and, thus, encourage a consumption economy. India's economic growth has been constrained over the previous few quarters because of this fact. While a 6.5 per cent growth rate is nothing to be ashamed of, it is certainly not enough to keep pace with India's 'demographic dividend' which runs the

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**With gross non-performing assets growing from Rs 5.02 lakh crore to Rs 6.41 lakh crore between March 2016 and March 2017, the situation is critical. The new insolvency law brought in by the Government, despite some flaws, is a beginning in the process to recapitalisation**

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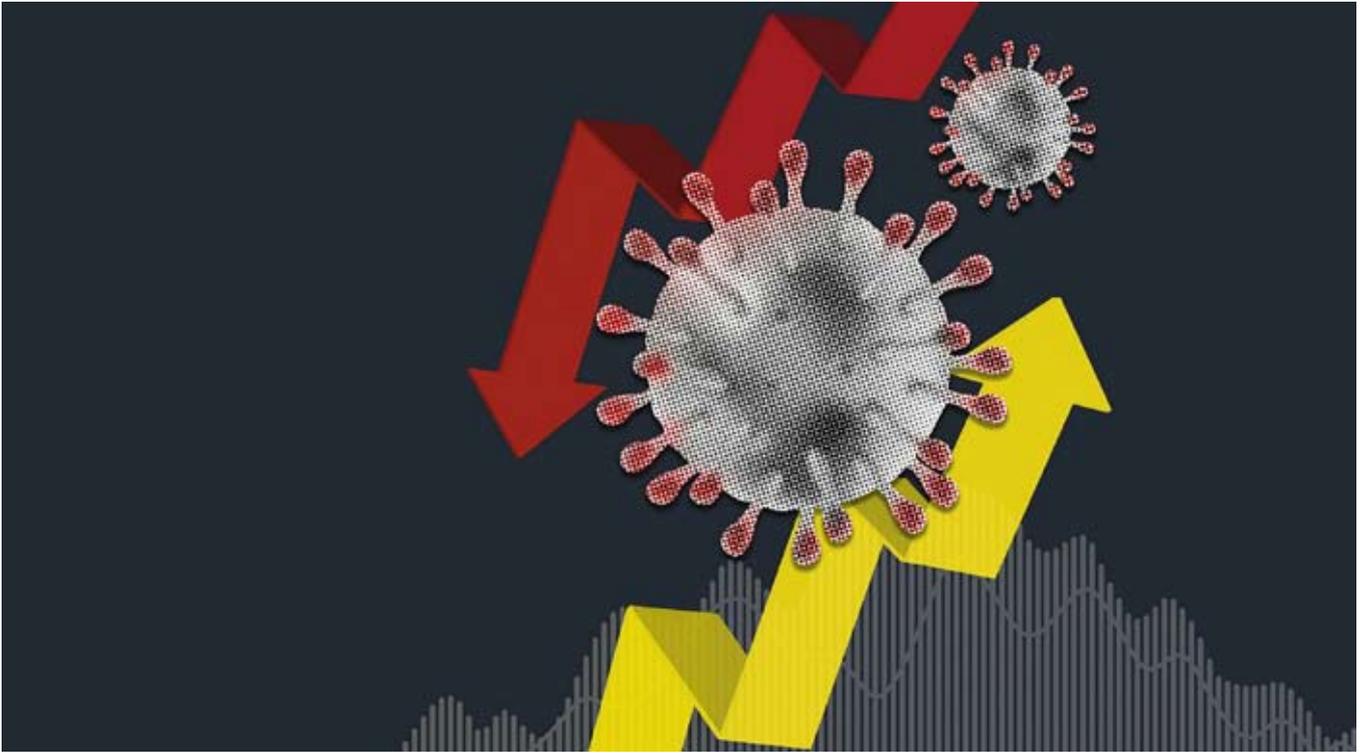
risk of becoming a 'demographic burden'. Jaitley rightly noted that large industrial enterprises do find it easier to raise funds from bond markets and from foreign banks due to their credit ratings, something that self-appointed social media economists fail to understand.

With gross non-performing assets growing from Rs 5.02 lakh crore to Rs 6.41 lakh crore between March 2016

and March 2017, the situation is critical. The new insolvency law brought in by the Government, despite some flaws, is a beginning in the process to recapitalisation. Crony capitalists encouraged by corrupt politicians of the previous regime should see their projects taken away and their assets built up by siphoning funds from their companies, should be auctioned off. Yes, the banks and the Government will need to take a haircut, a massive one at that, but that's the only way forward. The Government must think before it recapitalises the banking system. Bankers should realise that things are not as bad as they were in the aftermath of the most corrupt administration India has ever seen.

The drop in the NPA to capital ratios in 2016 looks hopeful but this is partly due to the additional capital received by many public sector banks as part of the government's Indradhanush programme. Also, in light of the revised disclosures of NPA levels by some large private sector banks in the last few weeks, the 2016 ratios are likely to be much worse.

We also compare the growth rates of NPAs, capital and loans across the two crisis episodes. The average annual growth rates of GNPA and NNPA over the five-year period from 1997-2001 were 8.5% and 9.8%, respectively. Dur-



ing this period, bank capital grew 13.14% and bank loans grew 15.87%. The corresponding numbers for the current crisis are much worse. The average GNPA and NNPA growth rates for the period 2011-2015 were 45.9% and 54.9%, respectively. The average growth rate of bank capital for this period was 16.1%. Bank loans grew at 16.2%.

This shows that during the last NPA crisis, bank capital grew at a higher rate than NPAs. While the NPA to loans ratio was higher then, banks were not undercapitalized. They had better ability to withstand the problem. In the current crisis, however, the growth rate of NPAs has been considerably higher than that of bank capital, further underscoring the severity of the crisis. The growth rates of bank loans on the other hand have been similar across both crisis episodes.

The emphasis on the alternative measure of the NPA problem also highlights the importance of capital in resolving the crisis. If the NPA to capital ratio is to be restored to a level that was prevalent during the high growth years of 2003-2007, the capital base has to roughly quadruple. Even if we assume that roughly 50% of the net NPAs will be recovered by the banking sector, the capital base has to double. This is unlikely to happen through retained profits or sale of real estate or other similar strategies.

An attempt to revive the banking sector must include a credible commitment of capital for it to be meaningful.

In absence of capital and accompanying structural reforms, any solution will be incomplete and the banking sector may remain in the quagmire for a long time to come.

### **Impact of NPA on Economy**

The problem of NPAs in the Indian banking system is one of the foremost and the most formidable problems that had impact the entire banking system. Higher NPA leads to following adverse impact on Economy:

1. Depositors do not get rightful returns and many times may lose uninsured deposits. Banks may begin charging higher interest rates on some products to compensate Non-performing loan losses
2. Bank shareholders are adversely affected
3. Bad loans imply redirecting of funds from good projects to bad ones. Hence, the economy suffers due to loss of good projects and failure of bad investments
4. When bank do not get loan repayment or interest payments, liquidity problems may ensue.

### **Steps taken by RBI and Government in last few years to curb NPA**

- Government has launched Mission Indradhanush to make the working of public sector bank more transparent and professional in order to curb the menace of NPA in future.

- Government has introduced Bankruptcy code which will make it easier

for banks to recover the loans from the debtors.

- RBI introduced number of measures in last few years which include:
  - Tightening the Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR) mechanism,
  - Setting up a Joint Lenders' Forum, prodding banks to disclose the real picture of bad loans, asking them to increase provisioning for stressed assets,
  - Introducing a 5:25 scheme where loans are to be amortized over 25 years with refinancing option after every five years, and
  - Empowering them to take majority control in defaulting companies under the Strategic Debt Restructuring (SDR) scheme.

It is a matter of grave concern that due to the NPA problem, the entire economic activity of the country has come to a gridding halt. Modi government is doing its best to resolve the issue with carrot and stick policy though the sentiments are extremely damp. It will take some time to restore the confidence of the people in the banking system and the banker must own responsibility of serving the country honestly, then the problem is likely to be resolved. The Covid 19 will escalate the NPA crisis to the next level so the banks and enforcement agencies of the government must plan effective realization of the bad and stolen assets within stipulated time before the banks takes irreversible hit.

**Writer is Associate Editor & banking and finance expert.**

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*The Pioneer* thanks all its readers and patrons for their support.  
The journey of passion continues with your blessings as we enter our 20s

# Why women in China do not get breast cancer

By Prof. Jane Plant

I had no alternative but to die or to try to find a cure for myself. I am a scientist - surely there was a rational explanation for this cruel illness that affects one in 12 women in the UK?

I had suffered the loss of one breast, and undergone radiotherapy. I was now receiving painful chemotherapy, and had been seen by some of the country's most eminent specialists. But, deep down, I felt certain I was facing death. I had a loving husband, a beautiful home and two young children to care for. I desperately wanted to live.

Fortunately, this desire drove me to unearth the facts, some of which were known only to a handful of scientists at the time.

Anyone who has come into contact with breast cancer will know that certain risk factors - such as increasing age, early onset of womanhood, late onset of menopause and a family history of breast cancer - are completely out of our control. But there are many risk factors, which we can control easily.

These "controllable" risk factors readily translate into simple changes that we can all make in our day-to-day lives to help prevent or treat breast can-

cer. My message is that even advanced breast cancer can be overcome because I have done it.

The first clue to understanding what was promoting my breast cancer came when my husband Peter, who was also a scientist, arrived back from working in China while I was being plugged in for a chemotherapy session.

He had brought with him cards and letters, as well as some amazing herbal suppositories, sent by my friends and science colleagues in China.

The suppositories were sent to me as a cure for breast cancer. Despite the awfulness of the situation, we both had a good belly laugh, and I remember saying that this was the treatment for breast cancer in China, then it was little wonder that Chinese women avoided getting the disease.

Those words echoed in my mind. Why didn't Chinese women in China get breast cancer? I had collaborated once with Chinese colleagues on a study of links between soil chemistry and disease, and I remembered some of the statistics.

The disease was virtually non-existent throughout the whole country. Only one in 10,000 women in China will die from it, compared to that ter-

rible figure of one in 12 in Britain and the even grimmer average of one in 10 across most Western countries. It is not just a matter of China being a more rural country, with less urban pollution. In highly urbanized Hong Kong, the rate rises to 34 women in every 10,000 but still puts the West to shame.

The Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have similar rates. And remember, both cities were attacked with nuclear weapons, so in addition to the usual pollution-related cancers, one would also expect to find some radiation-related cases, too.

The conclusion we can draw from these statistics strikes you with some force. If a Western woman were to move to industrialized, irradiated Hiroshima, she would slash her risk of contracting breast cancer by half. Obviously this is absurd. It seemed obvious to me that some lifestyle factor not related to pollution, urbanization or the environment is seriously increasing the Western woman's chance of contracting breast cancer.

I then discovered that whatever causes the huge differences in breast cancer rates between oriental and Western countries, it isn't genetic.

Scientific research showed that





when Chinese or Japanese people move to the West, within one or two generations their rates of breast cancer approach those of their host community.

The same thing happens when oriental people adopt a completely Western lifestyle in Hong Kong. In fact, the slang name for breast cancer in China translates as 'Rich Woman's Disease'. This is because, in China, only the better off can afford to eat what is termed 'Hong Kong food'.

The Chinese describe all Western food, including everything from ice cream and chocolate bars to spaghetti and feta cheese, as "Hong Kong food", because of its availability in the former British colony and its scarcity, in the past, in mainland China.

So it made perfect sense to me that whatever was causing my breast cancer and the shockingly high incidence in this country generally, it was almost certainly something to do with our better-off, middle-class, Western lifestyle.

There is an important point for men here, too. I have observed in my research that much of the data about prostate cancer leads to similar conclusions.

According to figures from the World Health Organization, the number of men contracting prostate cancer in rural China is negligible, only 0.5 men in every 100,000. In England, Scotland and Wales, however, this figure is 70 times higher. Like breast cancer, it is

a middle-class disease that primarily attacks the wealthier and higher socio-economic groups, those that can afford to eat rich foods.

I remember saying to my husband, "Come on Peter, you have just come back from China. What is it about the Chinese way of life that is so different?"

Why don't they get breast cancer? We decided to utilize our joint scientific backgrounds and approach it logically.

We examined scientific data that pointed us in the general direction of fats in diets.

Researchers had discovered in the 1980s that only 14% of calories in the average Chinese diet were from fat, compared to almost 36% in the West.

But the diet I had been living on for years before I contracted breast cancer was very low in fat and high in fibre.

Besides, I knew as a scientist that fat intake in adults has not been shown to increase risk for breast cancer in most investigations that have followed large groups of women for up to a dozen years.

Then one day something rather special happened. Peter and I have worked together so closely over the years that I am not sure which one of us first said: "The Chinese don't eat dairy produce!" It is hard to explain to a non-scientist the sudden mental and emotional 'buzz' you get when you know you have had an important insight. It's as if you have had a lot of pieces of a jigsaw in your

mind, and suddenly, in a few seconds, they all fall into place and the whole picture is clear.

Suddenly I recalled how many Chinese people were physically unable to tolerate milk, how the Chinese people I had worked with had always said that milk was only for babies, and how one of my close friends, who is of Chinese origin, always politely turned down the cheese course at dinner parties.

I knew of no Chinese people who lived a traditional Chinese life who ever used cow or other dairy food to feed their babies. The tradition was to use a wet nurse but never, ever, dairy products.

Culturally, the Chinese find our Western preoccupation with milk and milk products very strange. I remember entertaining a large delegation of Chinese scientists shortly after the ending of the Cultural Revolution in the 1980s.

On advice from the Foreign Office, we had asked the caterer to provide a pudding that contained a lot of ice cream. After inquiring what the pudding consisted of, all of the Chinese, including their interpreter, politely but firmly refused to eat it, and they could not be persuaded to change their minds.

At the time we were all delighted and ate extra portions!

Milk, I discovered, is one of the most common causes of food allergies. Over 70% of the world's population are



unable to digest the milk sugar, lactose, which has led nutritionists to believe that this is the normal condition for adults, not some sort of deficiency. Perhaps nature is trying to tell us that we are eating the wrong food.

Before I had breast cancer for the first time, I had eaten a lot of dairy produce, such as skimmed milk, low-fat cheese and yogurt. I had used it as my main source of protein. I also ate cheap but lean minced beef, which I now realized was probably often ground-up dairy cow.

In order to cope with the chemotherapy I received for my fifth case of cancer, I had been eating organic yogurts as a way of helping my digestive tract to recover and repopulate my gut with 'good' bacteria.

Recently, I discovered that way back in 1989 yogurt had been implicated in ovarian cancer. Dr Daniel Cramer of Harvard University studied hundreds of women with ovarian cancer, and had them record in detail what they normally ate. Wish I'd been made aware of his findings when he had first discovered them.

Following Peter's and my insight into the Chinese diet, I decided to give up not just yogurt but all dairy produce immediately. Cheese, butter, milk and yogurt and anything else that contained dairy produce - it went down the sink or in the rubbish.

It is surprising how many products, including commercial soups, bis-

cuits and cakes, contain some form of dairy produce. Even many proprietary

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## My first chemotherapy sessions had produced no effect - the lump was still the same size. Then I eliminated dairy products. Within days, the lump started to shrink

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brands of margarine marketed as soya, sunflower or olive oil spreads can contain dairy produce

I therefore became an avid reader of the small print on food labels.

Up to this point, I had been steadfastly measuring the progress of my fifth cancerous lump with callipers and plotting the results. Despite all the encouraging comments and positive feedback from my doctors and nurses, my own precise observations told me the bitter truth.

My first chemotherapy sessions had produced no effect - the lump was still the same size. Then I eliminated dairy products. Within days, the lump started to shrink

About two weeks after my second

chemotherapy session and one week after giving up dairy produce, the lump in my neck started to itch. Then it began to soften and to reduce in size. The line on the graph, which had shown no change, was now pointing downwards as the tumour got smaller and smaller.

And, very significantly, I noted that instead of declining exponentially (a graceful curve) as cancer is meant to do, the tumour's decrease in size was plotted on a straight line heading off the bottom of the graph, indicating a cure, not suppression (or remission) of the tumour.

One Saturday afternoon after about six weeks of excluding all dairy produce from my diet, I practised an hour of meditation then felt for what was left of the lump. I couldn't find it. Yet I was very experienced at detecting cancerous lumps - I had discovered all five cancers on my own. I went downstairs and asked my husband to feel my neck. He could not find any trace of the lump either.

On the following Thursday I was due to be seen by my cancer specialist at Charing Cross Hospital in London. He examined me thoroughly, especially my neck where the tumour had been. He was initially bemused and then delighted as he said, "I cannot find it." None of my doctors, it appeared, had expected someone with my type and stage of cancer (which had clearly spread to the lymph system) to survive, let alone be so hale and hearty.

My specialist was as overjoyed as I was. When I first discussed my ideas with him he was understandably sceptical. But I understand that he now uses maps showing cancer mortality in China in his lectures, and recommends a non-dairy diet to his cancer patients.

I now believe that the link between dairy produce and breast cancer is similar to the link between smoking and lung cancer. I believe that identifying the link between breast cancer and dairy produce, and then developing a diet specifically targeted at maintaining the health of my breast and hormone system, cured me.

It was difficult for me, as it may be for you, to accept that a substance as 'natural' as milk might have such ominous health implications. But I am a living proof that it works and, starting from tomorrow, I shall reveal the secrets of my revolutionary action plan.

***Extracted from Your Life in Your Hands, by Professor Jane Plant/***



Homes that live in you

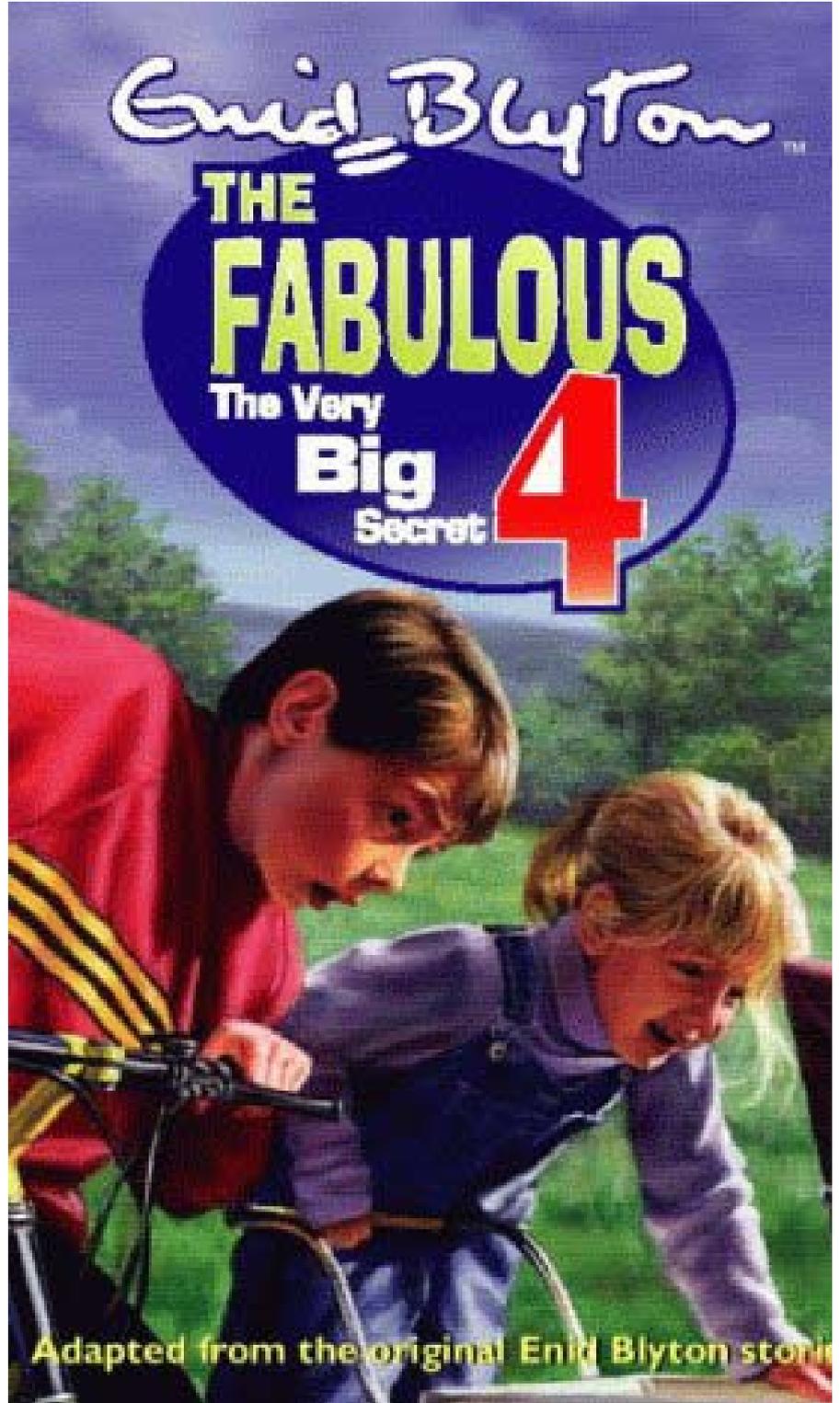
# FABULOUS FOUR BATTLE ZOOZOO, THE WIZARD



**T**he west gave the world exciting adventures with the secret seven and the famous five. Now, with the fabulous four, comes a new, exciting adventure full of eastern story-telling magic.

Four children with unique abilities from different parts of the world come together to fight powerful, dark forces.

Zoozoo, an evil wizard, kidnaps Princess Samara's parents, the king and queen of Nonamia. The princess journeys to the far corners of the world to meet and befriend three young people to help her plan and carry out the rescue of her parents. In Wetlands she meets Raja, who can balance a candle on his head while swimming in swirling waters; in Hotlands she meets Nandu, the Fire Boy, who can casually walk through a blazing wind; while in Snowlands she meets Prince, the Snow Boy, who sips ice-cold beverages in freezing temperatures wearing only a T-shirt. With the help of Khabar, a magical bird, and Barado, the fastest horse in the world, the Four undertake the fearsome task of challenging Zoozoo and his army, headed by General Zombo, together with Churail, the evil witch. If they are to defeat Zoozoo, they will need to resort to magic and wizardry of their own.



In this story of a battle between good and evil played out in a fantastic world, there are echoes of the world we know.

# This Youtube Channel is helping restaurants and street-side food vendors hit by lockdown: Megha Parmar

**S**ocial media has the power to create positive impact of people's lives. As the video of a couple in tears, sharing that no one is eating at their Dhaba after the lockdown went viral. This Baba ka Dhaba was flooded with customers very next day. Love and compassion started pouring as much from commoners as celebrities. Mohsin Khan has been trying to helping many more like Baba ka Dhaba through his Youtube Channel, mykindofproduction. We happened to catch up with this young and passionate youtuber.

**Q. Tell us how the idea of starting this Youtube channel conspired?**

A. I always wanted to do something like food and travel since college days. I always use to get AAAWED by (Food and Travel) TLC anchors and ROCKY and Mayur. It's like a dream job u get to travel, eat good food and u get paid and I was fortunate enough to host Sa-far Zayke Ka ) Food and Travel Show for Travel Trends TV channel and AB KHULEGA RAHASYA Zayke Ka ( food and Travel show) for Dangal TV. During the show, I realised that (its time I should also make Food VLOGs on YOUTUBE)

**Q. The channel was started in 2007. What are the major changes you have witnessed over the years in terms of content and viewership?**

A. The channel was created randomly to watch Youtube. I had no idea about the power of Youtube until I met a friend who told me about YOUTUBE and that he makes money also out of it. From 2018 I got serious about YOUTUBE and started working on the channel under the name @MYMYKINDOFPRODUCTIONS. it's just been two years odd on Youtube as a content creator and I'm still learning to make it big. All I have learnt in two years is that one has to keep it REAL and Youtube is evolving every day and one needs to be updated.

**Q. Your channel is trying to support food vendors and restaurants? What made you start this**



MOHSIN AFROZ KHAN

**initiative?**

A. The concept of the Channel was not only to review food but get recipes from street food vendors and Restaurants so that everyone can get the same {Restaurant and street food taste} in their kitchen. PEOPLE watching the show are not only trying the recipes in their kitchen but also reaching out to the vendors and Restaurants to try their food. Due to the Pandemic, the Restaurant industry and street food vendors have got a major hit back. Even big Restaurants are finding it difficult to manage rents. I wanted to create awareness that it's safe to order food from your favourite restaurants via the Food Vlog. Now in the food vlog, I also Share their contact numbers to boost their sales.

**Q. How has been the response? Have some restaurants benefited from your videos?**

A. The Channel has the best of both worlds. From Fine Dine Restaurants like Rajwadu (Prime Minister's favourite Restaurant), Lemon Tree Premier sharing their award-winning Biryani recipe, from brands like Sardar Pav Bhaji, Induben Khakra wala, Daas Khaman

House to unknown Street Food Vendors sharing their recipe on our channel. We have (Sukhdev Jee) a street food vendor who sells Chinese food for just 20 rupees in super-expensive Mumbai. Post our video he has become a local hero and many people from even from Hyderabad and Gujarat have visited his stall. Again, during COVID I came in touch with the Restaurant Owner (Couple) in Oshiwara who runs a restaurant Love from Chandni Chowk. Both Were stressed out due to Pandemic sales hit. They shared Chicken Barra and Delhi Style Chicken Curry with our Channel and people from Pune saw the video and visited their Restaurant. They have invited me again to cover some more recipe. Not only the Restaurant owners and Street Food Vendors benefiting but our NRI Viewers as well. Our NRI brothers and friends are loving the show and are trying desi food in their kitchen. Also, during pandemic people who want to try street food can enjoy street food in their Kitchen. There are families who have started their food business looking at our recipes

Honestly, I had no idea how powerful YouTube was/is until now.

# JOURNEY FROM NORTH EAST TO WEST: REEMA DEBNATH

**Q What & who inspired you to be in the entertainment & fashion industry ??**

To be honest, I wanted to become an Airhostess. That year I had cleared all my tests with Indian Airlines. It used to be tough to get into Indian Airlines in those days. I scored well in my exams, still at the end I wasn't selected because I was overweight by 3kgs. So, my failure to become an airhostess pushed me towards a minor depression. My mom and my sister wanted to divert my mind and they took me for an acting class thinking that I will get over the pain of losing this opportunity. But, as we say, "When God makes you fail in one thing, you must have faith that he is planning for something higher". My failure to become an airhostess had led me towards becoming an Actor and be a part of the Film & TV or Cinema industry. Being an actor, who worships this art form named "Cinema", somehow I am not able to define it just as an entertainment industry. And... who inspired? Definitely my mom and my sister but they probably never thought that I will take it very seriously. Loll...

Now, when you mentioned Fashion industry in your question... to be honest I am not a big part of that, apart from the amount of fashion needed for me being an Actor. Though fashion plays an integral part in the film industry but,



Cinema and Fashion industry, both has completely two different dynamics, but yes, as and when it is needed for cinema or for an actor, we collaborate with fashion. And of course, we have many actors who shifted their career from Fashion to Cinema. But, to be honest, as an actor I personally feel less attachment with fashion. To me, Cinema is my Love and it is much more powerful. "Cinema doesn't only show the mirror to the society but it has the power to bring Big Positive Change".

**Q How do you compare Indian fashion industry with the present North East benchmark industry?**

Wow, that's a lot of pressure.

Honestly, I don't know exactly how to answer this question of yours and how to compare exactly. There is no comparison because we are "One Nation". See, we all know that our nation is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the World. Now, when Fashion comes to our mind, we immediately categorize that into two different sections, Traditional and Western. We all know that every state in India has a different pattern of attire which we call our traditional outfit. That could be Sarees, Salwar, Mekhela etc. And, I am sure you have noticed that even Sarees are worn in different ways in each state, for e.g. a Tamilian, a Gujarati and a Bengali will wear their Sarees in completely 3 different ways and even the pattern and tex-



ture in the sarees are going to be completely different and beautiful in its own way. Similarly, how Salwar Kameez is traditional in Punjab, Mekhela Chadar is traditional in Assam, Ghagra Choli is traditional in Rajasthan and so on...

Now, coming to your question, for some reason North East India has a huge influence of International Fashion (I won't call it western fashion anymore) apart from the traditional attires what we have in North East. See, I was born in one of the most beautiful states in North East India and that is Tripura. So from my perspective how I will describe is, North East India people are extremely traditional when it comes to their Love towards their land, people, relations, festivals, food and their art & culture like anyone else in other parts of India, But, at the same time on the other side, they are extremely International (I won't call it Western as I mentioned earlier) when it comes to Education and Fashion. You may visit Guwahati, Meghalaya, Agartala or Itanagar... You will get to see the kids wearing the latest Fashion clothing way before other parts of India will have them into their lifestyle. In North East India, kids really love to stay up-to-date as per the international standards when it comes to fashion. But, unfortunately not only in India but in the entire World I suppose, we humans in general, we are judged based on our attires in every sector of our life and in every industry. Most of the time people try to judge your knowledge, your status, your upbringing, your entire belief system based on what you are wearing and where you are wearing it, that is, the Fashion/ the Attire you chose to wear, could be Traditional or could be International. And, we all know that one should never judge the story inside the book based on its cover.

As I have travelled in many different countries and I am a kind of person who observes everything from her heart more than her eyes, I must take the opportunity to say one very important thing while answering your question, that, My North East India kids could be extremely up-to-date in their fashion sense in what they are wearing but at the same time could be extremely traditional in their belief system deep inside their heart. Exactly like any other western countries, whether you visit Italy, Greece, Australia or any other country, even they have their traditional attires and values... even there you will see people wearing what we call western outfits



## Reema Debnath

Life Member of Cine & TV Artistes' Association, Mumbai

**Feature Films (Hindi-Released):** PK (Phuljhadiya), Bodyguard (Savitha), Machchli Jal ki Rani Hai (Urmi), Namah Shivaya Shantaya (Parvati)

**Feature Films (Regional-Released):** Sindoor Daan (Bhojpuri), Dulha Albela (Bhojpuri), Daraar (Bhojpuri) Aloy Phera (Tele-Film) Bengali

**Television (Hindi):** Chandramukhi, Jai Shri Krishna, Jyoti, Aahat (Episodic), CID (Episodic), Kaala Saaya, Adaalat (Episodic)

**Documentary (Hindi-English-Russian-French-Spanish):** Special Appearance in the documentary named "The Eternal Truth Who Am I" which was Produced and distributed by BRAHMA KUMARIS.



but could be extremely traditional and sometimes conservative in their beliefs. Now, personally I am looking forward to a day when, whether kids are from North East India or South India or West or North or East India they all should blend well with each other, share their culture, food, fashion, their emotions and bond like "One India". For that to

happen, time to time, from each corner of our nation everyone must plan for vacations to North East India. Trust me, you all will have blissful experiences in each and every state of North East India.

### Q From where you have the confidence to be in the highly competitive entertainment industry?

Hmm... I must thank you for asking such thought provoking questions. First and foremost, I believe God or this Universe has really been very kind. Second is, I don't know how to express it in any other ways but let me try... We are followers of Ramakrishna Math & Mission. I am Educated. I don't have much fear when it comes to decide on what is right. I guess what I tried to say is when your spiritual belief system and your education are in place then you don't have to fear to be in any industry. There should not be any fear to be in any industry but the fear should be whether you understand what will really make you happy. There will be struggle and competition in every industry whether it is Cinema industry or a typical Corporate. Now, I personally believe that our spiritual belief system helps us to choose what is right for us and filter out what is not, and, our education helps us to not have any fear of failures because if you are educated you always have the choice to survive with dignity.

### Q What role you would like to play to promote North East art & culture in India & abroad ?

So far, I was never approached to promote North East Art & Culture in India or abroad but if in future any government body will approach with any idea, I am open for discussion and it would be my honor.

### Q Role models ?

First my mother off course. Always seen her being strong with a big smile on her face no matter how difficult the situation is, and second my father, for being the most kind, supportive and loving person I know. Our families are our core foundation, especially our parents. Your dreams and goals can keep changing. In your choices, sometimes you may succeed or sometimes you may fail. For any child it's a blessing to have a family who are there for you not only in your good choices which are convenient for them, but, also in your those choices which are not for their convenience but for your dreams and happiness.

# Beating all odds to shine: Reema Khanlokar

## Reema Khanolkar

Profession: Fashion Model

City: San Francisco

### Achievements

- Lead model for a Hollywood Runway Production in Los Angeles Feb. 2020
- Nominated for “Model of the Year “2020 and “Best walk of the year “2020 at the International Fashion Week 2020 in Goa
- Received training in acting under Acting coach “Ryan Glasgow” of Hollywood
- Trained in modeling by America’s Next Top Model Brittney Sharaun and Laura James
- Celebrity Guest on Neeshon Radio, Bollywood radio station of Houston Texas
- “Appointed” as Official Jury for “Fashion” at International Indian Icon Global Talent show in Chicago in December 2019
- “Covergirl” Lifestyle Elite Magazine for their August edition of successful Beauty queens
- Recipient of “Indian Icon Award “Gold 2019 for Fashion, Glamour, and Entertainment
- “Official Jury” of National Pageant, Miss and Mrs Globe India 2019
- “WINNER “Mrs. Iconic 2019
- “International Indian Icon First Runner up” 2018 in Chicago
- “WINNER “ California Indian Icon 2018
- Featured as the “Covergirl “ of Lifestyle Elite Magazine for their success story edition; success story featured on Pg. 3.
- Walked for International designers at the World Fashion Show at Prestigious “RUMI Awards” 2018 in Oakland California
- Top Finalist representing USA in Greece at Mrs. India Worldwide 2018
- Walked for fashion labels and designers in USA.

**By Profession:** Physiotherapist practicing successfully in the San Francisco





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