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POWER, POLICY AND PEOPLE

'Politics is about power' is a familiar maxim. There is, however, considerable semantic ambiguity about the terms 'power' and 'policy'. Both are often loosely used. The study and practice of politics enjoyed exalted status in ancient times. Politics, for the ancient Greeks, was 'the master science' and 'the noblest pursuit.' In India it was 'Rajaneethi.' Kautilya in distant past and Machiavelli in pre-modern times produced treatises that dealt with the practical and the pragmatic side of politics. The modern concept of power began to receive attention with the publication of David Hume's famous essay in 1748. Scholars have classified power into five main forms: force, persuasion, authority, coercion and manipulation. Of these coercion and manipulation are generally regarded as the real forms of power.

The rise of modern democracy has been characterised by a perceptible shift in the power-paradigm. People are supposed to be the wielders of political power, even if it is indirect and periodic. Power is supposed to flow from the people to their elected representatives and through the latter to the party or group (or an individual) that exercises power. Elections provide legitimacy to the system. Democracy arouses public expectations and aspirations and fulfilling them is the task of the parties that obtain the mandate of the people. Policy formulation, and implementing it through plans and programmes are among the tasks of the party/parties in power. There can be no politics without policy and policy formulation is a complex process. In essence politics centres around power, policy and people.

Of the 124 democracies (they are classified as liberal and illiberal) in the world today many have failed to satisfy the primary needs of the people and to guarantee basic rights and freedoms like liberty, equality and justice. This has led to deep frustrations and disappointments. Growing violence is a symptom of this malaise. India is often referred to as the 'largest' democracy in the world and the 'stablest' in the Third World. Survival, like age, is no sign of strength or success. Indian democracy is at the crossroads today. (Probably it has got stuck there for quite sometime!) The ills of our democracy are far too many to be listed here. Collapse of institutions, decline of professional autonomy, erosion of credibility, growing corruption and criminalization of politics are

among them. The rot that set into the system three decades ago has not been stemmed and things seem to be drifting from bad to worse. No amount of publicity and public celebrations of the so-called achievements of the parties and individuals in power can hide the truth.

Briefly two or three aspects can be mentioned here to describe the disturbing scenario. First is the rise of manipulative politics all over the country. At both the national and state levels parties and leaders have exploited the drawbacks of 'the first past the post system' (parliamentary model) to sneak into power and stay there by hook or by crook. Needless to repeat here that plurality of votes, not necessarily majority of votes, is enough for a party to get into power. Electoral politics combined with manipulative politics constitute the first and most important drawback of the Indian democracy today.

Secondly there does not seem to be any conscious effort by parties or leaders to evolve a coherent and constructive policy on any major issue - political, economic or social. There is no economic agenda focussing on such major concerns as poverty alleviation and employment generation. The failure of Women's Reservation Bill to get Parliamentary approval is a glaring and shameful instance of political pusillanimity and opportunism. The policy of the government, not only the present but of most governments in the past, seems to be to have no policy at all. If the government believes only in reacting to a crisis its hands are always full as there is no dearth of crises in our country. Democracy is now a kind of adhocery that reacts to crises and problems.

When millions of people are excluded from the institutions of governance and more number of people are marginalised, alienation and frustration appear everywhere. Unless all people are emancipated from hunger and poverty and empowered at the grassroot level the top heavy Indian democracy may have to face more serious problems in the years ahead. Decentralization and devolution of powers and empowerment of women and the disadvantaged sections of the society should be placed on top of the agenda. The sooner it is done the better it will be for Indian democracy.

- The Editor

"Effective dictatorships require great leaders. Effective democracies need great citizens." - Benjamin Barber

CYBERNETICS OF DEVELOPMENT

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The Problem

Development is now the concern of almost every nation and society. But managers of societal systems are continuously taken by surprise by the turn of events at various levels: Recessions in economics, ethnic upheavals, near - hijacking of global assets by few powerful individuals, growing fear of loss of standard of living for some wealthy nations, possible increase in the poverty levels of some nations etc.

Can we consciously intervene in this change process and determine the course of events in the direction of what we call development?

What is Development

Development, according to Webster's Dictionary, means many things. Among them three of the definitions are relevant to social development. They are:

to move from original position (as in chess) to one providing more opportunity for effective movement; to cause to grow and differentiate along lines natural to its kind; to go through a process of natural growth, differentiation or evolution by successive changes

The problem of development is, therefore, to understand the original configuration and context of a system, to identify thereon the lines of natural growth, differentiation and evolution and finally to delineate the process of successive changes in the movement towards a natural or preferred destination.

Societal System in Focus

Human society operates in a broad four dimensional space, described by (economy x technology x science x society). Among these, economy changes at great speed, while society changes slowly. We refer to the present day society as technology-driven economic system. And so, as a society it is almost dragged along with slow changing social parameters. Latter are governed by individual and group behaviors. But, at the root of the group behavior is individual behavior governed by some basic urges, needs and purposes. One of the most comprehensive statements of individual needs is the four Purusharthas of Indian social philosophy (Maslow's hierarchy essentially talks of achievement hierarchy). These integrate the (technology x economy) duo also into the individual behavior. So, one can try to understand

"India's strength has been two fold: her own innate culture which flowered through the ages, and her capacity to draw from other sources and thus add to her own."
- Jawaharlal Nehru

the lines of development movement by an analysis of purusharthas.

Four Purusharthas

Individual has four important concerns in life: Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

Dharma: Social and moral code that binds society together.

Artha: Material concerns like money and other physical needs.

Kama: Emotive needs like sex, art, music, culture, ambitions, affections etc.

(Artha and Kama: These involve technology and economy in a big way)

Moksha: Liberation from limits of established truth and exceeding it into a mystic level.

Broadly, the components of each of the above can be stated as follows:

Dharma

- Social laws and ethics for control and regulation of group behavior
- Code of ethics controlling and regulating individual in harmony with social good

Artha

- Individual material needs like money, food, clothing, shelter etc.
- Social wealth to supply community needs: like GNP, PCI, QLI, Productivity technology level of self steering ability.

Kama

Emotive life, culture, art, literature, sex, institutions like family.

Moksha

Liberation from the limits of discovered truth and catering to mystic needs. Level of scientific inquiry, fundamental science, philosophical debate, ritual practices to commune with the mystic etc.

The above components can be grouped into meaningful expressions of scientific laws and traditions.

Viability tradition: Social resilience, (i.e.) ability to tolerate and endure social shocks and bouncing back capability.

(Cybernetic) Law of requisite variety:

Quality of governance (reflects the control and regulating apparatus ethical practices)

Law of requisite hierarchy:

Productivity: (Reflects the productive forces)

Self steering ability (ability to steer itself in a given direction)

Equity: (Indicator of economic and social justice)

GNP, PCI, QLI (reflects money matters etc.)

Cultural Tradition :

Philosophical debate (reflects education, research, media, academia etc and ethics)

The above can be taken as the measures of development. While designing a plan for development, these must be borne in mind as the lines along which development should take place.

Description of Society as a System

A society is a large complex system structured through people and technology structures devised by them and organized through various relational subsystems like legislative laws, economic relations and spiritual motivations. So, the organization of a society is a set of relations between the constituent people and their mutual concerns. Society can, therefore, be described mostly qualitatively-through the theory of relations and broadly by the mathematics of complexity. Cybernetics is an important part of this armory. It contains theory of relations and science of change. Mathematics of complexity basically deals with study of substance and form, that is mathematics of relationships and patterns. It is the most appropriate tool of systems thinking/approach, in which there is a shift of emphasis from objects to relationships and from quantity to quality. Mathematically the shift is from linear to relentlessly non-linear behavior, from order to disorder from stability to instability and from equilibrium to non-equilibrium conditions. Philosophically this implies a shift from 'being to becoming'. Feedback is an important feature of the behavior of systems.

Large complex systems display many new behaviors during their existence in time : self organization, self similarity, order through chaos etc. Mathematics of complexity attempts to deal with these aspects. We know that present day societies are complex. This aspect cannot be ignored in designing our development scenarios. To elaborate on the natural behavior of a complex system some of the characteristics can be cited here.

1. Self organizing behavior implies :
 - a) Spontaneous emergence of new structures.
 - b) Systems are open and are far equilibrium.
 - c) Presence of multiple feedback loops driving change.
2. Self-similarity Characteristic implies that every part of the system looks like the whole.
3. Order-through-chaos implies that seemingly random behavior leads to orderly patterns through a process of bifurcations, symmetry breaks and a series of dissipative structures.

Some key characteristics of Dissipative structures :

- Sensitivity to small changes in the environment
- Relevance of previous history at critical points
- Uncertainty and unpredictability of the future

- Display a mix of chance and determinism in the behavior
- They are the basic structures of the living systems including human beings
- Display points of instability at which new structures and forms of order can emerge

In fact the present 'so-called' war on terrorism is such a critical point in the global system. We shall try to understand the present context applying the above system concepts.

Present Contexts

September 11, 2001 incidents seem to have had a striking effect on the world scenario. What happened in New York has created ripples all over the world, in various governments and religious groups. This is like a long range correlation. Nobody knew what was happening and whole scenario became chaotic. Friends became foes and vice versa. A volatile coalition of governments was formed against a faceless enemy. A terrorist attack was interpreted as war by Islamic groups against anti Islamic groups. Thus this has all the necessary features of "chaos".

One does not know where this will stabilize. But one thing is clear that extraneous values like fundamentalism in anything will vanish from the world scene. The second feature of present situation is globalization in trade, in political dealings and in cultural impacts. Conflict between the so-called three worlds, first, second and third worlds - developing and developed and various other amorphous regional groupings based on trade security and geo politics - are coming to the surface. Where will development lead this scenario of the present? And how does one plan for any preferred scenario?

Growth Lines

If development measures are those described earlier, we should look for their change over the years. We have been generally planning for the quality of life (QLI) parameter. American consumerism has laid too much emphasis on this. Others are following this since it is the most tangible one and requires least persuasion to make individuals work for increasing their monetary riches. But such a one-sided emphasis leaves holes in the social fabric. A comprehensive plan alone will ensure a stable, safe and equitable society.

A well rounded society alone can provide a social machine that can drive a homogenous development machine.

Configuration of the Present Social Machine

This elaborate configuration has to operate within a globalised economy. Globalisation is a phenomenon of the present information age. This cannot be avoided by any government or group or society. The effect of it however can be regulated or contained within the powers,

capabilities and demands of ideological moorings. This can be broadly portrayed by the accepted nebulous formations and influences.

Social Machine and Development

The social system described above can be called the social machine which is the one that drives the development engine characterized by the five development measures. The attempt of the social machine should be to change these measures in a direction that will mean an integrated prosperous life (Samyak Jeevatham).

If one studies the measures as of today, the most important one, the quality of governance is highly fragmented, weak and poor. It has only the ability to maintain the status quo with difficulty. It is not strong either to take the society in the development direction or to withstand the pressures of peoples' ambitions. The lower end of the state machinery is highly addicted to devious ways of making money from every situation. Exploitation of every loophole in a rule and opportunity for their personal advantage has become a norm of an efficient bureaucrat. The legislative bodies have not yet learnt to discharge their functions for the benefit of ensuring proper governance and promotion of social good. They have become battle grounds for personal and party survival. Judiciary too has not acquitted itself with any glory with a laissez fair dispensation mode of justice. The millions of unresolved disputes in courts of various kinds are a pointer to this state of affairs. Even writ petitions take too long to defeating the very purpose of such a legal instrument. With all this, a reasonable semblance of democratic behavior and governance is being maintained since independence. This itself is a creditable thing.

So the first priority of the social machine is to drive this measure to a proper level. This implies that the available machinery for policy making and implementation of accepted policies should be reformed and revolutionized to support the proper running of the development engine.

The next measure is quality of life as measured by PCI, GDP Growth etc. In some sense these are improving but not at the pace required for the real big take off. As the cybernetics of economy indicates, the divide between macro and micro levels is so great now, that the lower end, which is suffering from quality of governance in a big way, is dragging the over all growth rate. This end should receive the right kind of attention for the overall measure to touch the critical threshold value and take off in an accelerated way. Broadly the govt. should act as a facilitator for the change of the macro end and the macro economic groups must help the government to play that role. On the other hand government should act as a change agent for the micro-group and actively promote the entrepreneurial behavior at this end. These are two distinctive roles. Our planning and implementation strategies should reflect this.

The third measure, the quality of emotive life, is heavily dependant on the culture and tradition of the society. At present, most of our literature art, philosophy and music are highly imitative of the momentarily successful West. Those who want to preserve tradition are adopting a fundamentalist stance, while those who want to move with the times are mostly imitating without any innovation. They are unable to stand on the base and shoulders of the rich and the powerful culture and tradition of our society.

The fourth measure, quality of debate and learning, is at appalling low level. Except in some specified areas of science and engineering, there is not much of science or engineering that is original. Media in most of the countries is biased. There is not much to recommend the media even in developed countries like US, even though considerable amount of printing takes place. Most of the newspapers and TV media are ad-marts. Most of the literature can be called as books of the hour. The cause for this may be the culture of consumerism, which leaves little time for any serious reading or thinking. So packaging of news and entertainment has become the norm of all media presentations.

The fifth parameter quality of social resilience is an interesting measure. This explains to a certain extent the difference between the most developed, developed, the best developing and the least developing nations. The most developed countries, like US, Sweden and some a small number of nations, have been setting their own norms of social behavior conducive to individual initiatives and definitions of prosperity. For US it meant a democratic consumerism. For Sweden it meant massive social welfare and allowing even hedonistic behavior. For countries like UK, France and Europe with more history and tradition, the norms of behavior and definitions of wealth were based on the renaissance tradition and colonial hangovers. For Greece, Italy and Spain their long history and Mediterranean neighbors influenced their growth patterns. For countries like India tradition and colonial rule were heavy-loading factors on the way for development. China and Russia got into an ideological experiment to get over their traditional moorings in defining their movements towards development. Even so, tradition was a heavy base which they could not shake off. Both have got back to their original path.

Conclusion

These are the twists and turns and linkages on the road to development of the complex social systems of the present. If these are ignored, what is natural will be sidelined. It will return again and again to influence the movement. To understand all these aspects of development configuration and planning inclusively is not easy. But without a comprehensive understanding of these issues, the path to development will become rough and rugged. However, one thing can be said : if the planners

and implementers work with a conscious commitment to ride on these rough roads with a sense of devotion to public good, the twists and turns and pits can be managed as we do now on our roads. In a developing country one has to give more than what he receives - a kind of partial *Niskama Karma*.

(Courtesy : Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management 2002, Vol. 3 No.1 pp 45-51)

PROF. B. SARVESWARA RAO'S COMMENTS ON THE PAPER

(in a letter to Dr. P.N. Murthy)

I am much enlightened by going through the article which reveals your thoughtful and perspective observations on the complex structures, institutions and dynamics of human societies in all evolutionary aspects. You have also emphasised in your paper the need for planners and administrators, technocrats and managers, and social interventionists to be men of wisdom committed to the values of their professions and at the same time concerned with social good and the moral development of man, instead of being merely technical people. I wish that social scientists devote enough attention to the ideas expressed by an eminent person like you.

In my own little way during the past several decades of my academic life and research, I have paid considerable attention to the problems of interdisciplinary research and bringing together scientists, administrators and social scientists for the study of contemporary socio-economic, technical and educational developmental problems. I have also devoted some attention to the problems of Action Research. But unfortunately very little has been attempted in our institutions of higher education to promote such interactions. Recently, in a note sent to the Indian Social Science Congress Conference held here in Andhra University campus (January, 2003) one of the observations I made is as follows:

"I hope the distinguished delegates to the Congress will also find enough time to discuss in depth some methodological issues going beyond critical review of established theoretical frameworks, with a view to better understanding of human behaviour and the functioning of social organisations and their limitations, and excessive pre-occupation with generalisations (scientification), pretending to give them universal validity and relevance - ignoring lessons of history, relevance to policy-making at the local and regional levels and most importantly, ignoring the frame of human values within which theoretical and analytical frameworks have to be built, if any purpose is to be served. In the analysis of national policies it also seems to me essential to synthesise macro and micro approaches."

Social Scientists by and large are not unaware of the complexities of socio-economic systems and need for such interdisciplinary interactions, but unfortunately hardly any progress has been made in this direction.

You may be interested to know that in our field of economics, even strong advocates of econometrics have realised the limitations of a purely quantitative macro approach for understanding and solving the problems. Dr. K. Krishna Murthy, Retd. Director of Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi (one of my most distinguished old students) wrote in his Presidential Address to the Annual Conference of Indian Economic Association (2001) as follows: "The use of econometric models, whether they are behavioural, input-output based planning models or CGE models for scenario analysis or for forecasting is not a mechanical job. It is an art requiring judicial judgements about the functioning of the economy. Many factors of socio-economic and political nature cannot be captured in any mathematical or quantitative models and those are not properly dealt with."

I am tempted to make one or two reflections regarding your comments and interpretation of the "Four Purusharthas". Your explanation is extremely fascinating - the concepts and goals indicated. Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. These undoubtedly have set valuable goals for living for one-self and as a member of the society, even within the caste-occupation frame work. I am not competent to comment but still I have a feeling that over time the significance and value of these norms seem to have been lost in practical life and public activities. The collective approach to social problems, the refinement and reform of social relations and institutions, and even the basic human values of self-control and disciplining of our senses, and compassion for the suffering have become largely neglected. We now witness many vicious problems facing the society in all sectors of activity.

WHAT IS IN STORE ?

Shri K.V.V. Subrahmanyam, IPS
Home Secretary (Retd.)

The late Rajiv Gandhi ushered in the slogan of infotech in the millennium which is no longer new but more than three years old. He did not live to see the rapid strides made in the field. But leaders like Chandra Babu Naidu, S.M. Krishna have been instrumental in the giant leap in this arena. I.T. Hubs in the cities, Call-Centres, Outsourcing have come but have they come to stay or not and how long are questions in the womb of the immediate future, not the dim distant future. The computer savvy younger generation in the teens and twenties are shall we say were, licking their lips for six figure salaries in the Silicon Valley, M.N.C.s etc.

The early discordant notes were heard from September eleventh, WTC, onwards. Osama Bin Laden was suspected in everyone's appearance, particularly with unkempt appearance. Body shopping in the I.T. Field took a distinct downward turn in the second and third years of the Millennium. The unrest in those who had gone for green pastures, has mounted significantly. It is no longer a secret that those who had gone pipe

dreaming for careers as I.T. professionals have to make do with whatever came their way. Extreme cases of their taking to lawn mowing, dish washing and baby sitting may be an exaggeration but placements in their chosen fields have diminished. Quite a few prodigal sons are returning home crestfallen and depressed.

Inside the country the glut has led to under employment and fall in wage expectancy. The inhuman treatment meted out to I.T. Professional in Malaysia is only the tip of the iceberg. The assumption, that armed with I.T. Expertise, I.I.T. Education, one can make a quick buck and a neat pile in double quick time, is slowly but surely yielding place to skepticism. The placement agencies, with a never say die spirit, are dangling the carrot of job opportunities, in the U.K., Europe, Australia and New Zealand, South East Asia rather vaguely. But the position as sensed from media reports is that even in these countries, employment opportunities for the local populace, do not brook placements for persons from outside. A very clear ethnic overtone is discernible in the U.K. and European countries. This trend is likely to gain ground in times to come.

The breaking out of the shooting war in IRAQ and the Intransigence of the U.S., U.K. combine are likely to have far reaching impact on world economy, with oil prices sky rocketing, military expenditure mounting security concerns increasing, all those will have a multiplier effect on spiraling prices and increasing unemployment.

Budgetary allocations and plan schemes, as a result, will go haywires. These are inevitable concomitants of the emerging scenario. Optimists have it that the shooting war will be of short duration. But this appears not well founded. Hence it is, govts, central and state have to go back to basics of income and employment generation schemes, without looking for external prop. International funding and M.N.C. participation. That can happen only if the academicians and planners go in for home spun remedies, utilization of indigenous, economic potential and accent on agriculture and small industry. These two areas are languishing, the former due to drought in large areas in the country, the latter due to the callousness and indifference of the political masters and their advisers. The handloom sector has especially received a raw deal.

All these and other cognate matters issue require urgent attention and do not brook any delay. Most importantly, the virtues of diligence, patience, gradual growth should be instilled in the younger generation. We have had enough of media hogging of the I.T. Giants, Super Markets and five star hospitals. Shall we think of strengthening backbone of our kirana shop, primary health centers, primary schools, not merely ITs, mega IT centers and Engineering Colleges which have become the will of the wisp that eludes the grasp? The issues are grave and fraught with risks of considerable magnitude to the people as a whole.

(SIR ARTHUR COTTON BICENTENARY MAY 15, 2003)

Sir Arthur Cotton and the Growth of Godavari District - I

- A. Prasanna Kumar and I. Dosagiri Rao

THE CONSTRUCTION of an anicut across the Godavari at Dowleishwaram near Rajahmundry was no doubt 'a great feat of engineering'. It was a victory for peace and a monument to the genius of Sir Arthur Cotton. The more important feature was that it ushered in many great changes in the economic and social conditions of the people of the Northern Circars of Andhra Pradesh. It resulted in tremendous economic prosperity, putting an end to chronic poverty and economic hardship, and people from different regions began to migrate into this area.

The Godavari district, which was bifurcated into East and West in 1925, became the centre of social and commercial activity in this part of the country. Social change led to political ferment. The emergence of the middle classes and agricultural labour was one of the important consequences of the irrigation projects undertaken by Sir Arthur Cotton. In this article, it is proposed to trace the history of the construction of Dowleishwaram anicut by Sir Arthur Cotton and its effects on the social and economic conditions of the people till the end of the 19th century. This period, right from 1852 to 1900, forms a very important phase in the growth of social and political life of the district.

Centre of Social Reform

Till its bifurcation in 1925 into East and West the Godavari District was one of the five Northern Circars forming the northern part of the Madras Presidency. Rajahmundry, the main town was the centre of this area which later became the centre of social reform, intellectual activity and political ferment of Andhra Desa. The Godavari District, as it existed then lay between 16° 18' and 17° 56; 35" N. lat., and 80° 56' and 82° 40' E. long., bounded on the north by the territory of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Central Provinces; on the North-east by the district of Vizagapatnam, on the east and the south by the Bay of Bengal; and on the west by the Krishna district. Its area was 6,224 square miles.

Situated in the Northern Circars (consisting of Rajahmundry, Condapalli, Ellore, Guntur and Cicacole), Godavari district was under the suzerainty of the Nizam of Hyderabad, who entrusted the supervision of the district to Hussain Ali Khan. The East India Company entered into a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad on November 12, 1766 and the whole of Northern Circars except Guntur was handed over to the East India Company in return for a large tribute and military assistance. Thus despite fratricidal rivalry among the Hyderabad princes and designs of the French, the East India Company succeeded in taking over this important part of the Madras Presidency.

The river Godavari, after which the district is named, begins as a trickle near Triambak-Jyothir Linga, 25 km. off Nasik. Joined by other tributaries enroute it becomes a mighty and 'fearful stream' traversing a near 1500 kilometer long course before merging into the Bay of Bengal. The fury of the Godavari in full flood has always excited the wonder and fear of those who have seen it. The scenic beauty of the Eastern Ghats amidst luxuriant foliage through which the magnificent river enters the plains made Sir Charles Trevelyan compare it to that of the Rhine between Coblenz and Bingen. Walch described its strength and fury thus: "Its maximum discharge is calculated to be one and a half million cubic feet per second, more than 200 times that of the Thames at Staines and about three times that of the Nile at Cairo." Yet most of the water flowed into the sea and as a memorandum submitted to M.E. Grant Duff, Governor of Madras, said "people perished for want of the water that flowed in abundance at their feet." Edmund Burke once referred to the water resources of South India as "the national bank of the country".

First Mooted in 1789

The idea of an anicut across the Godavari was first mooted by Michael Topping, an astronomer, in 1789. The idea was revived in 1844 when Sir Henry Montgomery, Special Commissioner, was asked to report on 'what could be done to raise it from its lamentable state of depression.' This experienced officer, having come from Tanjore where "he had seen the great results of attention to irrigation, strongly urged the examination of the Delta by an experienced engineer, with a view to the execution of such a complete system of works for the regulation of water as would effectually lead to the realization of the wonderful amount of produce which the large tract of fertile soil might be expected to yield if it were supplied with water, relieved from floods, and provided with navigation." On this report Sir Arthur Cotton was asked in 1845, to report professionally on the possibility of building an anicut on the Godavari. An engineer by profession and a devout Christian, Arthur Cotton loved India but pitied her plight. In the words of his daughter Lady Hope. "India had taken hold of him. Not the India of romance, but the India in need".

Born on May 15, 1803, the tenth son of Henry Cotton who was himself the tenth son of Sir Lynch Cotton, Arthur Cotton came to India as an engineer and returned to England as one of mankind's great benefactors. Early in his career he discovered the rotary engine but injured his legs severely when the boiler burst. Cotton was, however, delighted that despite the injury he succeeded 'in getting 150 revolutions a minute.'

As an engineer in the service of the Madras Government, Cotton thought that the Carnatic region could become one of the most fertile areas in the world if only the water there was not allowed to run into the sea and "if the energies of its government were exerted, as they

must be, to bring out the capabilities of the country." He felt that it was normally indefensible on the part of the Europeans not to put their knowledge to use in helping the natives overcome the scourge of famine. Such indifference, he believed, was neither civilized, nor did it reflect true Christian spirit. How bold and noble was he when he declared that "so magnificent a country in such a state of ruin was the greatest disgrace to a civilized government".

(Dr. Dosagiri Rao is Associate Professor of Politics, AUPG Extn. Centre, Kakinada)

(Courtesy : Indo British Review, Vol.8 No.2)

(to be continued)

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - HURDLES AND OBSTACLES - III

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4) Discrimination and Oppression

Discrimination against women is rampant in all spheres of life. Reports of increasing number of dowry harassments, deaths, rape, violence against women, suicides and wife-battering are of serious concern. Gender discrimination and oppression are the two important factors that obstruct women empowerment. Discrimination occurs due to several factors- sometimes it is self-imposed, sometimes it has religious sanctions, and sometimes it is due to cultural norms and at other times it is externally imposed. All these have a cumulative effect on women and in the process they become vulnerable to exploitation. Discrimination is of two types- intended and unintended. In the former at least there are laws to protect but in the latter type of unintended discrimination, neither the discriminators nor the discriminated are aware of discrimination and its direct and indirect consequences. Hence no effort is made to end discrimination. For instance, the mother who does not send her daughter to school takes pride in saying that she is training her daughter to become a good homemaker. Discrimination sometimes transforms into oppression, which is seen both within the household and outside. Religion, patriarchy and class often work together resulting in oppression of women. Women are exploited in several ways and they have a limited voice in the household. Very few participate in the decision-making process. The discriminatory and oppressive attitudes against women have undermined the dignity of women. Protective discrimination, reservation, property rights in letter and spirit, recognition of domestic work and other social welfare measures are essential to empower women.

5) Tradition and Values

Women are subjugated in society due to several customs, traditions, superstitious beliefs and social norms. These are so deeply nurtured in the minds of people that

women have internalized in themselves the ideology of subordination (Fernandes 1991). They take pride in self-denial rather than self-assertion. Psychologists call this 'Cinderella Complex' wherein women like to be taken care of and always expect something external to happen for their development rather than through their own efforts.

Values play an important role in empowerment. One needs to distinguish between core values and peripheral values. Core values are virtues, the examples of which may be truthfulness, kindness, equality, justice, compassion, non-violence, concern for the well being of all, aspiration to build peace etc. These are ends in themselves. But the peripheral values such as charity, filial duties, spiritual discipline etc, are secondary in nature. Our Indian ethos is such that people are easily prompted to follow the peripheral values more than the core values. Because core values are relegated to a secondary position, we still find in our society tyranny, caste-war, exploitation of the poor, oppression of the subjugated and downtrodden. There is thus a strong need to rouse global consciousness for pursuing core values with that of the peripheral values so that our empowerment process, a process of social change will be in the expected direction to reach the desired goal.

6) Legislation

Efforts are being made to curb atrocities against women such as sati, dowry harassments and deaths, rape, child marriages etc. through legislation. Acts such as Dowry Prohibition Act, Equal Property Rights Act, Abolition of Child Marriage Act, and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) are all essential and important measures to empower women. At the same time there are problems in the effective implementation of these laws. For instance, a law that mandates 18 years as the minimum age before a girl can be married, if implemented can enhance the status of women. The paradox is that even today the average age at marriage for girls is around 17 years throughout India. This implies that the majority of girls are getting married before attaining the permissible age at marriage and becoming mothers proving the law ineffective. These laws only undermine the system, as they are impractical. In theory nothing prevents the courts from according punishment to violators of laws on dowry and rape, though in practice many escape unpunished. There is no clear-cut punishment for violators of the law on minimum age at marriage because of the sociological implications involved. To make sure the law is adhered to, all marriages are to be registered. At the time of registration birth certificates should necessarily be produced. This may not be the only solution but ways and means are to be evolved to make legislation effective, keeping in mind the larger interests of women and society. Social change can be effective only when there is political will and strong legislation.

Conclusion

Andre Beteille laments at the Indian way of empowerment, which ends up by the safe way of providing, as extensively as possible, quotas on the basis of community, caste and gender. By sanctioning power,

people hardly become powerful. There is strong need to see that the newly empowered do not lag behind in their performances. For this, the empowering institutions and persons need to take the responsibility.

Empowering the unempowered is a big task. There are many hurdles and no easy solutions. The Platform for Action of the Fourth World conference on Women held at Beijing in 1995 is an agenda for women's empowerment. The principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. For this a concerted effort is required from all- government, voluntary agencies, and public and above all, from women themselves. Unless women become self-reliant and there is a paradigm shift from 'culture of silence' to 'culture of participation', the present empowerment process will not yield the desired results.

In conclusion, it is stressed instead of believing that 'there is a woman behind every successful man' it is generally felt that 'behind every man (successful or not) there is an exhausted woman' and if it is so she needs to be relieved of this exhaustion to be empowered. The real empowerment of women will take place only when they are able to decide for themselves what is good for them, for their families and for the society.

Economic independence coupled with equal participation at all levels - social, economic and political, certainly brings a sea change in the status of women but the real question is whether we are in any way near that dream! Can we overcome the hurdles and obstacles?

(Concluded)

(Paper presented at the XXVI Indian Social Science Congress, January 2003, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam)

NEW RAILWAY ZONES-- A RETROGRADE STEP

Indian Railways have carved a niche for themselves in the hearts of millions of people for their significant role in national development. They carry people and goods to all parts of the huge country and provide employment to the largest workforce in the country. They are also carriers of cherished values integrating people and regions across the length and breadth of the country. Such a healthy and highly useful railway network system has, during the last twelve months, been subjected to unwarranted and unjustified fragmentation into seven new railway zones--two with effect from October 1, 2002 and five since April 1, 2003. The number of zones now has soared from nine to sixteen. The government, especially the Ministry of Railways, has to explain to the people how:

1. the restructuring is beneficial to the railways and the people
2. the new system will serve the people better

3. the railways will meet the additional financial burden
4. it will enhance the operational efficiency of the railways
5. such a big exercise was completed in such a short time

People also have a right to know whether all this has been done under pressure, external or internal, and whether this will lead to privatization of the railways causing large scale unemployment.

(CPS Research Bureau)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMA HAMSA – III

- Sri Challa Sivasankaram

Ekameva Advitiyam Brahma. The God is one without a second God is Aprameya. No evidence, no substantiation does he require for his immanence and transcendence. Ramakrishna was the living evidence, breathing substantiation if one looks askance at the Upanishadic mature expression *Ekameva Advitiyam Brahma*. It found eloquent and silencing expression in the life, actions and sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. God is qualified by no gender. He is above and beyond the pale of the three genders. He is He. He is Is. No comment on it. Sri Ramakrishna saw mother Kaali in the gross and in the subtle, in the evanescent and the permanent, in the chirp of the bird, and in the laugh of the babe, tangible and the intangible.

Sri Ramakrishna's yearning for moksha or self realization was overwhelming beyond the control of any spiritual palliative. The arduous and marathon ordeals he passed through to see God, to feel God, to enjoy God for twelve long years, and self-excruciating experimentation on his delicate frame resulted in intolerable burning sensation all over the body. It was the same way Gautama the Buddha passed through 2400 years earlier. It was prescribed by Yoga Sutras of yore. When Sri Ramakrishna found himself a total wreck unfit to attainment of higher stage in the way to Moksha there came a Brahmin lady of superlative beauty, transparent inward quietude coupled with the gait of a princely swan. She examined the ascetic in agony, anointed his body with Sandal wood paste, and covered the body from top to toe with fresh scented flowers. Within three days this treatment was able to drive away his mental anguish and soothe the body tortured by burning sensation for some years. It was said that it was the sign of deep agony caused by long separation of two beloveds. The same could be said of between God and devotee. The classical term is *Viraha tapamu*. She went away as unnoticed as she came. Her identity was not revealed. Inscrutable are the ways of God !

It was Bhairavi Brahmani that recognized him as an extra-ordinary Avadhuta. She could convince the

public that he was pure Avatar. At the age of twenty-eight Ramakrishna attained self-conquest. Then there appeared a messenger of Nirguna Parabrahma or impersonal God. It was Tota Puri a deliberate and consummate Avadhuta answering to the characteristics attributed to a full-grown Avadhuta in Srimad Bhagavatam. Tota Puri knocked down the facade concealing the impersonal God for Sri Ramakrishna to experience. The end for which Totapuri flashed on the scene was over. As Sadguru K. Sivananda Murty Varu explained the role of a teacher was akin to that of a boat to cross the rivulet. So Totapuri left. Beyond word, beyond thought Ramakrishna attained Brahman. True to the letter and spirit of Advaita Vedanta to Sri Ramakrishna Maya itself was God for duality was alien to monism.

Sri Ramakrishna was a singular Avatar - no miracles, no awe-inspiring adornments on today, no Ochre apparel, no sophisticated high-flown dialect. Simple, wholly human compassionate. Homely expressions were the mark of Sri Ramakrishna Avtar. He lived every inch in consonance with the sublime spirit of the verse (part) Sama lostasma Kanchana of Bhagavad Gita. He showed equal regard to earth, stone and gold.

Sri Ramakrishna a born yogin himself got acquainted with the full knowledge of Nirvikalpa stage of samadhi within a short period which made the guru bewildered, and the Guru in his bewilderment exclaimed, "My boy, what I realised after forty years of hard struggle and toil you have arrived at in just three days."

He drank deep in the tenets of Islam and Christianity. In a nutshell he was the embodiment of the Dharma of the Hindu, personification of impersonal Allah and Epitome of the compassionate Jesus Christ. Caste, Creed, Credo, identity extinct he was more free than freedom itself. There was one only in existence - the One devoid of the ego including himself. He felt it verily in accord with his attainment to serve the outcaste the human being trampled underfoot by the juggernaut of the demoniacal casteism. He went to their hutment, swept, cleaned and washed the sites littered by night soil, human excrement etc. He offered welcome asylum to the fallen women abandoned by hypocritical society and family : prostitutes, virgin mothers, (unmarried mothers) depraved men prohibited by decent society. It was God's Canopy where under all could live alike, saint and sinner, seer and knave, perfect and profane. If I am permitted to state he was a thousand mother Teresa and Florence nightingales sought in one. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the pure product of Suddha Chaitanya. He was the super-mind of Aurobindo. It was tragic that this man of God fell prey to the malignant malady, Cancer : Strict silence was advised by the physicians attended on him. The advice fell on deaf-ears. He continued his life's mission of curing men of their ignorance, indolence, greed, envy, sloth and ungodly tendencies. Till the last breath he remained cheerful, helpful, instructing, advising all that

approached him. After a while he went into *samadhi* which proved fatal and the death attained eternal absorption in Brahman. In the early hours of Monday August 16th 1886 Sri Rama Krishna departed. The river returned to the source become one with it. As in life he proved Master in death too.

A few sayings of Sri Rama Krishna. They are of absorbing interest.

1. God is formless and is with form too and He is that which transcends both form and formless. He alone can say what else he is.
2. Every being is Narayana, man or animal, Sage or knave, nay, the whole universe, is Narayana, the supreme spirit.
3. The manifestation of the Divinity must be understood to be in greater degree in those who are honored, respected, and obeyed by a large following. Then in those who have gained so much influence.
4. Says God "I am the snake that biteth and the Charmer that healeth, I am the judge that condemneth and the executor that whippeth."
5. The truly devotional and spiritual practice suited for this ironage (Kalinga) is the constant repetition of the name of the Lord of Love.
6. As a little boy or a little girl can have no idea of conjugal affection even so a worldly man cannot at all comprehend the ecstasy of Divine communion.
7. If thou livest in the world, make thyself feared and respected. In conclusion, I conclude my humble essay on Sri Ramakrishna with the prophetic words of M. Romain Rotland, the savant and abiding friend of India. "It is because Ramakrishna more fully than any other man not only conceived, but realised in himself the total unity of this river of God, open to all rivers and all streams, that I have given him my love and I have drawn a little of his sacred waters to slake the great thirst of the world".

(Concluded)

MEMOIRS OF AN EMINENT SOCIAL SCIENTIST

MEMOIRS: RAJNI KOTHARI, Rupa & co.,
New Delhi, 2002, pp 268 Rs.195

"Uneasy is the life of the mind" is the sub-title of this book by India's foremost political scientist and a leading social activist. Rajni Kothari is a trend-setter in the field of social science research having brought 'a new freshness' to political science, initiating 'a new methodology based on a clear understanding and interpretation of reality'. Kothari writes "Three Passions have engulfed my life's journey - ideas, institution building and politics." His seminal work *Politics in India* 'gave to Political Science in India' its first major empirical theoretical foundation. Kothari revises his own views in his latest book admitting "the folly of having accepted this particular version of semi-capitalist, semi-socialist model of development and calling it a mixed economy. Today we can see that far from being a mixed economy it has turned out to be a somewhat mixed-up model that has left large masses of the people out of the purview of economic and political development that India's presumably democratic framework was supposed to generate." He writes with characteristic candour on leaders and events placing the blame for the present ills on the policies of Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Narasimha Rao. His disenchantment with the democratic framework obtaining in India is expressed in strong terms and also leads him to explore new models and methodologies for solving the crisis. He calls for a new set of actors both individual and institutional to arrest the excesses of the state. In Atal Behari Vajpayee he finds an 'arch secularist among politicians' and adds that secularism "has clearly got a new lease of life under Vajpayee." His reference to the late Prof R. Bhaskaran of the Madras University as 'a scholar sage' is touching and appropriate. Rajni Kothari's fight now is two-fold-at the intellectual level against injustice, inequity and exploitation of the poor masses and at the personal level against intense grief over the sad demise of his wife, Hansa, who played 'an enormous role' in his life.

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