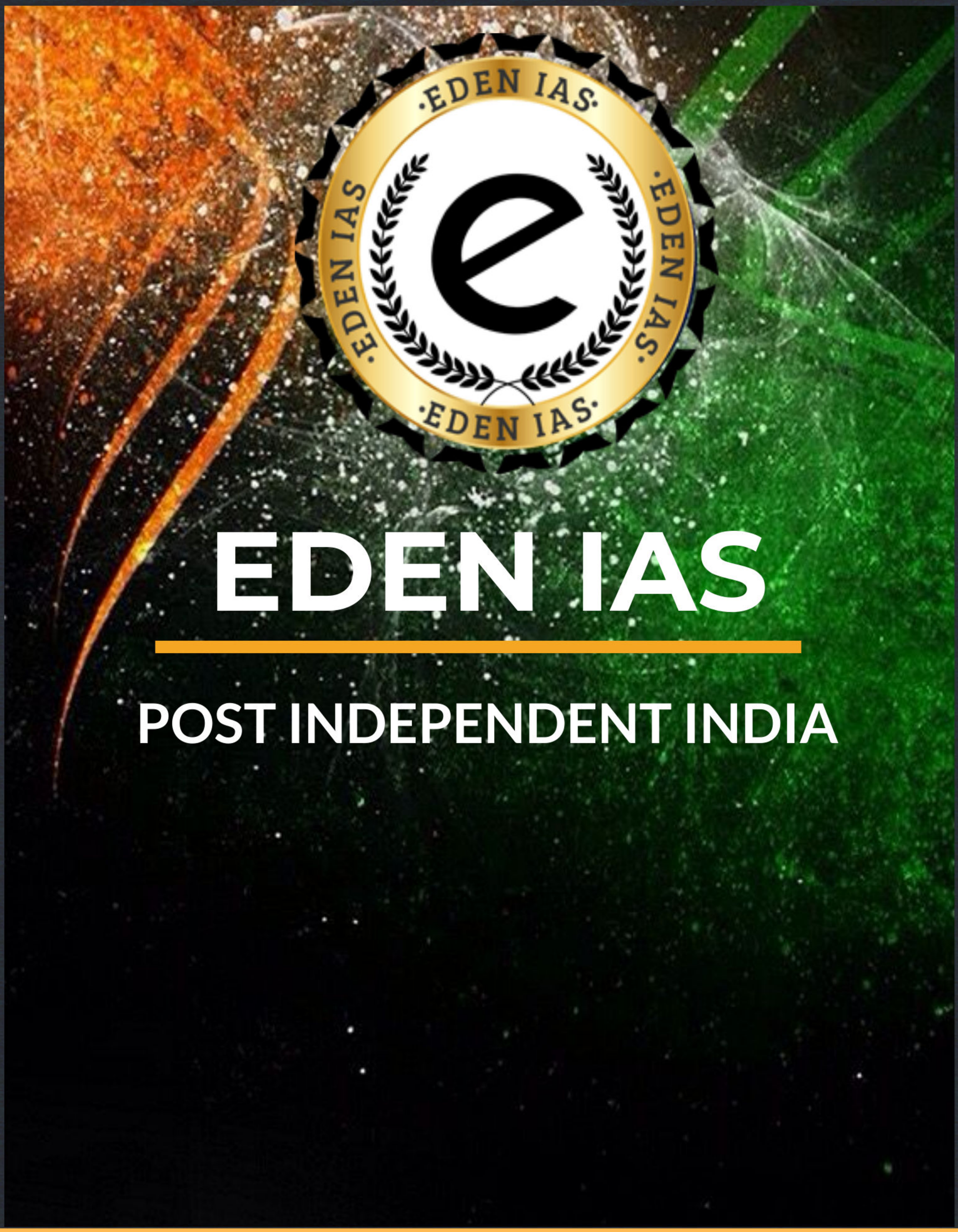
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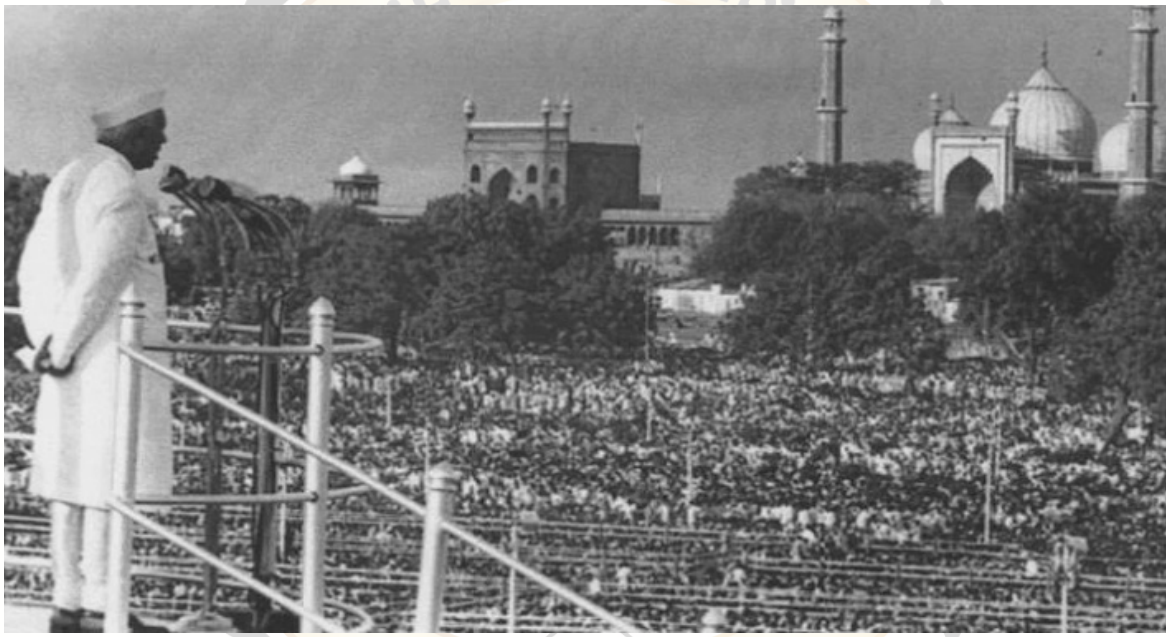
UNIT-I

THE CHALLENGES OF NATION BUILDING

CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW NATION

At the hour of midnight on 14-15 August 1947, India attained independence. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, addressed a special session of the Constituent Assembly that night. This was the famous 'tryst with destiny' speech that you are familiar with. This was the moment Indians had been waiting for. You are aware that there were many voices in our national movement. But there were two goals almost everyone agreed upon: one, that after Independence, we shall run our country through democratic government; and two, that the government will be run for the good of all, particularly the poor and the socially disadvantaged groups. Now that the country was independent, the time had come to realise the promise of freedom.

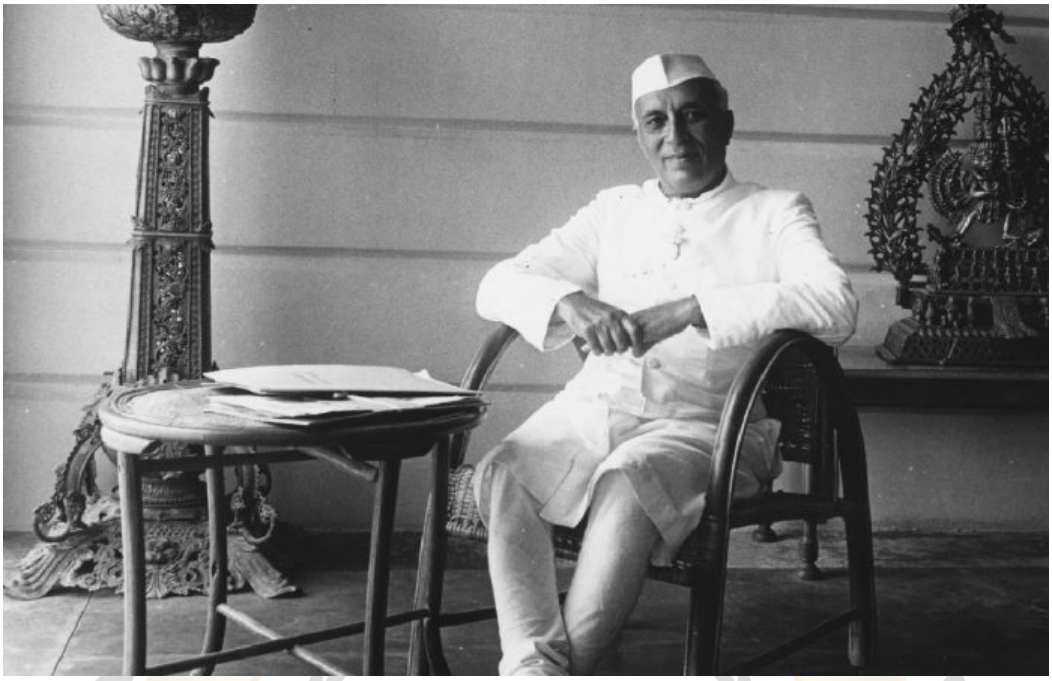


Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru speaking from the Red Fort, 15 August 1947

This was not going to be easy. India was born in very difficult circumstances. Perhaps no other country by then was born in a situation more difficult than that of India in 1947. Freedom came with the partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement. It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives. Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.

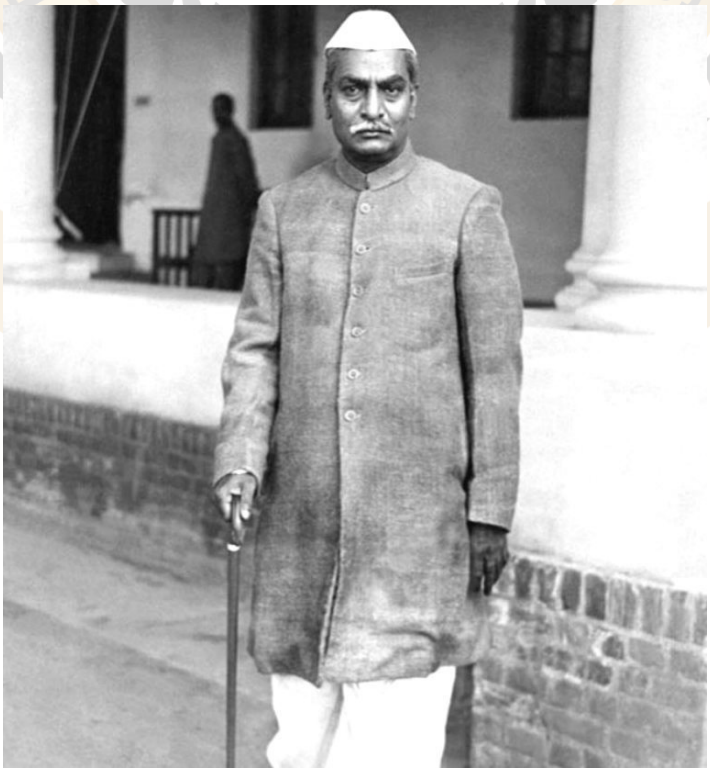
Fifteenth August, 1947, the first day of free India, was celebrated with much exuberance and elation. The sacrifices of generations of patriots and the blood of countless martyrs had borne fruit. But this joy was tainted by despair, for the country had been divided. Large parts of the two new nations were engulfed by communal riots. There was a mass exodus of people from both states across the new borders. There was scarcity of food and other consumer goods, and a fear of administrative breakdown.

Independence had been accompanied by a multitude of problems, and, of course, centuries of backwardness, prejudice, inequality, and ignorance still weighed on the land. The debris of two centuries of colonialism had to be cleared and the promises of the freedom struggle to be fulfilled. The long haul had just begun. As Nehru declared in his 14 August speech, 'The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements ... That future is not one of ease and resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken.'



First Prime Minister Jawahar lal Nehru

There were the immediate problems of the territorial and administrative integration of the princely states, the communal riots that accompanied Partition, the rehabilitation of nearly six million refugees who had migrated from Pakistan, the protection of Muslims threatened by communal gangs, the need to avoid war with Pakistan, and the Communist insurgency. Restoration of law and order and political stability and putting in place an administrative system, threatened with breakdown because of Partition and the illogical division of the army and higher bureaucracy virtually on religious lines, were other immediate tasks. As Nehru declared in 1947, 'First things must come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India.' Or in the words of the political scientist W.H. Morris-Jones, the task was 'to hold things together, to ensure survival, to get accustomed to the feel of being on the water, to see to it that the vessels keep afloat.'

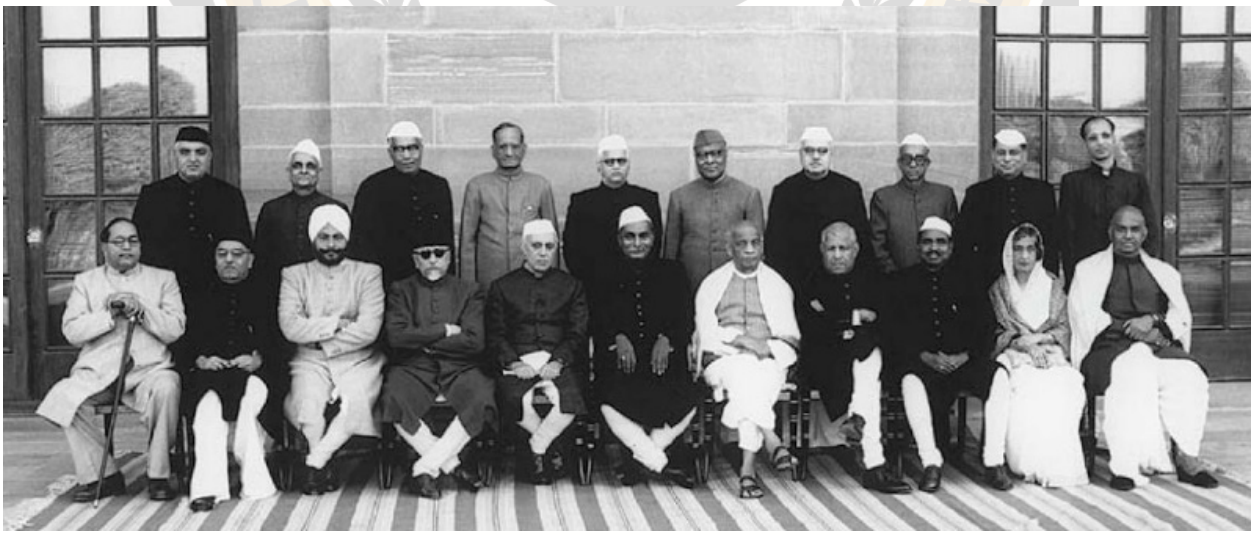


Dr. Rajendra Prasad

In addition there were the medium-term problems of framing a constitution and building a representative democratic and civil libertarian political order, organizing elections to put in place the system of representative and responsible governments at the Centre and in the states, and abolishing the semi-feudal agrarian order through thorough-going land reforms. The newly-formed independent government also had the long-term tasks of promoting national integration, pushing forward the process of nation-in-the-making, facilitating rapid economic development, removing endemic poverty, and initiation of the planning process. It also sought to bridge as quickly as possible the gap between mass expectations aroused by the freedom struggle and their fulfilment, to get rid of centuries-long social injustice, inequality, and oppression, and to evolve a foreign policy which would defend Indian independence and promote peace in a world increasingly engulfed by the Cold War and getting divided into hostile power blocs. All these problems had to be dealt with within the framework of the basic values to which the national movement had been committed and within the parameters of a broad national consensus.

The people and the political leadership set out to handle these short-term and long-term problems fuelled by an optimism, a certain faith in the country's future and with a joie de vivre. This mood was to persist for most of the Nehru years. Though many, especially on the left, were dissatisfied with and basically critical of Nehru and his policies, they too shared this feeling of hope. Those who have lived through the Nehru era often now feel that they were lucky to have done so. Nehru himself once again expressed this feeling after nearly a decade as prime minister: 'There is no lack of drama in this changing world of ours and, even in India, we live in an exciting age. I have always considered it a great privilege for people of this generation to live during this period of India's long history ... I have believed that there is nothing more exciting in the wide world today than to work in India.' Some of this euphoria disappeared with the India-China war of 1962. The war brought in a degree of realism but even so neither Nehru nor the country experienced any sense of defeatism. Nehru had always believed that 'India's greatest need is for a sense of certainty concerning her own success.' And it was this sense of excitement and of the coming success which he succeeded in imparting to the millions.

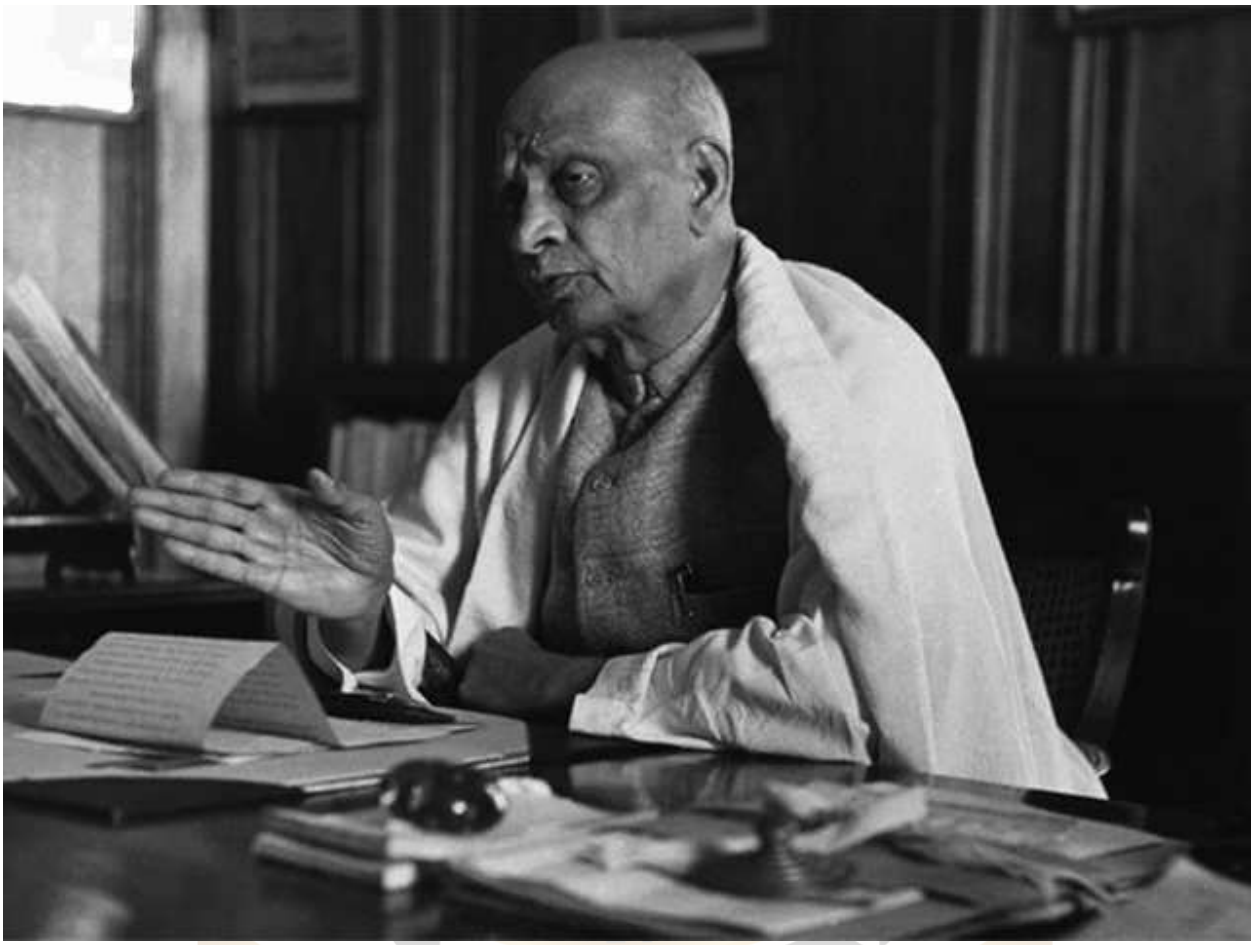
THE INITIAL LEADERSHIP



The First Nehru Cabinet Ministers

Independent India embarked on its tasks with the benefit of an outstanding leadership, having tremendous dedication and idealism besides the presence of a strong nation-wide party, the Congress. Beside the great Nehru stood a group of leaders who had played a notable role in the freedom movement. There was his deputy prime minister, Sardar Patel, a leader who possessed a strong will and was decisive in action and strong in administration. Then there were the learned Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the erudite Rajendra Prasad, and C. Rajagopalachari, endowed with a razor-sharp intellect. At the state level, were several leaders like Govind Ballabh Pant in U.P., B.C. Roy in West Bengal, and B.G. Kher and Morarji Desai in Bombay, who enjoyed unchallenged authority in their states. All these leaders had skills and experience to run a

modern and democratic administrative and political system which they had acquired through organizing a mass movement, building up a political party, and participating in colonial legislatures for decades. They also possessed a great deal of talent in consensus-building. The national movement had brought together different regions, sections of society and ideological currents around a common political agenda. Outside the Congress were the Socialists, Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan, the Communists, P.C. Joshi and Ajoy Ghosh, the Jan sangha leader, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, and the Dalit leader, Dr B.R. Ambedkar. On the periphery were Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the distinguished philosopher, Dr Zakir Hussain, the educationist, V.K. Krishna Menon, who had struggled for India's freedom in Britain, and a host of dedicated Gandhian leaders.



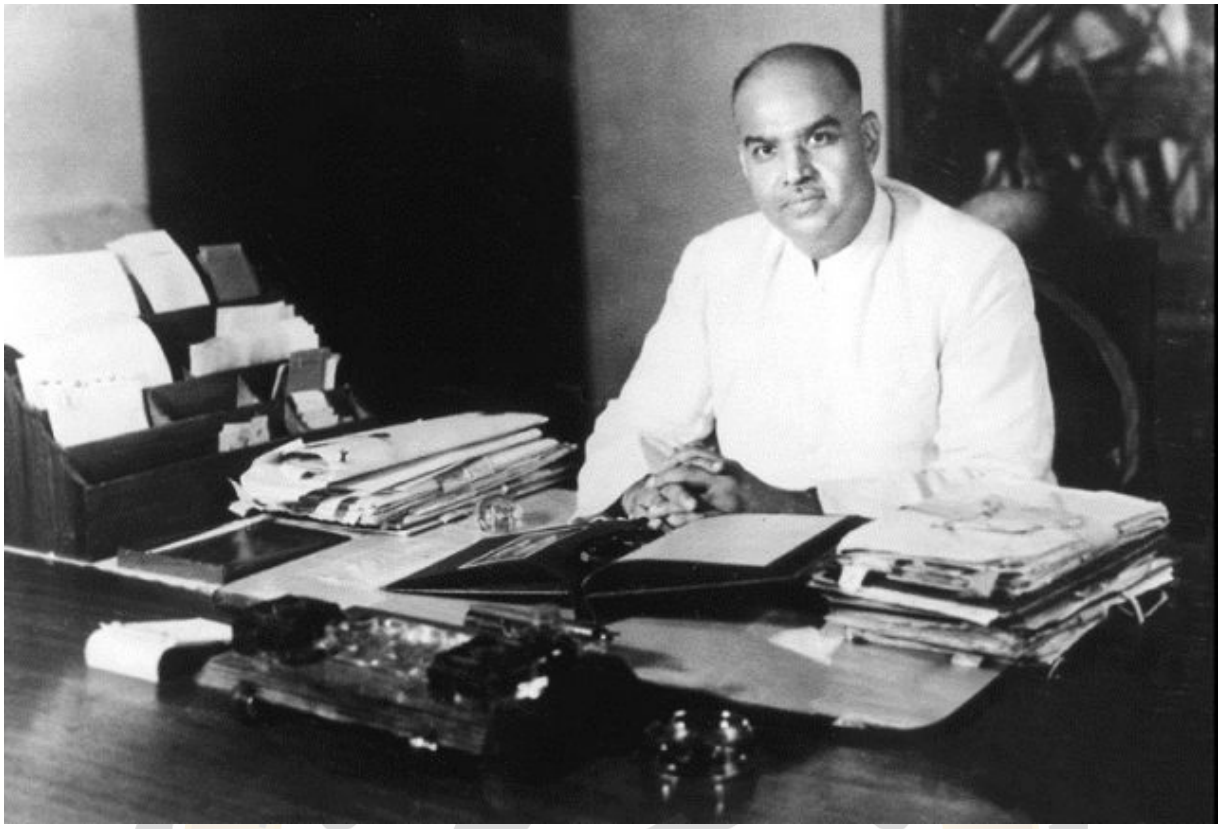
Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel (The Iron man of India)

The leaders of independent India were persons of total personal integrity and had an austere lifestyle. No finger was ever pointed at Sardar Patel, for example, even as he performed the unenviable but necessary task of gathering funds for the Congress from the rich. The Congress leaders also shared a common vision of independent India. They were committed to the goals of rapid social and economic change and democratization of the society and polity, and the values imparted by the national movement. Nehru's commitment to these values is well known. But, in fact, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari were equally committed to the values of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, and independent economic development, anti-imperialism, social reforms and had a pro-poor orientation. These leaders differed with Nehru primarily on the question of socialism and class analysis of society. We may point out, parenthetically, in this context that Patel has been much misunderstood and misrepresented both by admirers and critics.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (The architect of the Indian Constitution)

The right-wingers have used him to attack the Nehruvian vision and policies, while his leftist critics have portrayed him as the archetypal rightist. Both, however, have been wrong. In any case, it is important that Nehru and the other leaders shared the belief that for the country's development building-up of a national consensus was necessary. The leadership's position was strengthened by the fact they enjoyed tremendous popularity and prestige among almost every section of the people. On top of that, this team was headed by Jawaharlal Nehru who exercised, after December 1950, unchallenged authority in the party and the government.

Another positive feature of the Indian situation was the existence of Congress, a strong, democratically functioning, India-wide national party, with an established leadership and deep roots and strong support among the people. Except for the Communist party, its authority or legitimacy was questioned by nobody. Even as Congress was being transformed from a movement into a party and was struggling to retain its politically all-embracing and ideologically diverse character, its leadership was aware of the fact that in the troublesome post-partition period the country needed a government which would represent the widest possible consensus and carry with it different shades of opinion and sections of society for implementing a common programme.



Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

So, even though the Socialists and the Communists moved into the Opposition, and the Congress was in an overwhelming majority in the Constituent Assembly and enjoyed unchallenged power, the Congress leadership widened the base of the Constituent Assembly and the government by the inclusion of distinguished and representative non-Congressmen. The government virtually became a national government. For example, the first Nehru cabinet of fourteen included five non-Congressmen: Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, both of whom had opposed the Congress before 1947, John Mathai, C.H. Bhabha and Shanmukham Chetty. Dr B.R. Ambedkar was also made the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution. Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the first Vice-President and the second President of India, had never been a Congressman.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

India's colonial past has weighed heavily in her development since 1947. In the economic sphere, as in others, British rule drastically transformed India. But the changes that took place led only to what has been aptly described by A. Gunder Frank as the 'development of underdevelopment'. These changes —in agriculture, industry, transport and communication, finance, administration, education, and so on—were in themselves often positive, as for example the development of the railways. But operating within and as part of the colonial framework, they became inseparable from the process of underdevelopment. Further, they led to the crystallization of the colonial economic structure which generated poverty, a dependence on and subordination to Britain. There were four basic features of the colonial structure in India. First, colonialism led to the complete but complex integration of India's economy with the world capitalist system but in a subservient position. Since the 1750s, India's economic interests were wholly subordinated to those of Britain. This is a crucial aspect, for integration with the world economy was inevitable and was a characteristic also of independent economies. Second, to suit British industry, a peculiar structure of production and international division of labour was forced upon India. It produced and exported foodstuffs and raw materials—cotton, jute, oilseeds, minerals—and imported manufactured products of British industry from biscuits and shoes to machinery, cars and railway engines.

This feature of colonialism continued even when India developed a few labour-intensive industries such as jute and cotton textiles. This was because of the existing, peculiar pattern of international division of labour by which Britain produced high technology, high productivity and capital-intensive goods while India did the opposite. The pattern of India's foreign trade was an indication of the economy's colonial character. As late as 1935-39, food, drink, tobacco and raw materials constituted 68.5 per cent of India's exports while manufactured goods were 64.4 per cent of her imports. Third, basic to the process of economic development is the size and utilization of the economic surplus or savings generated in the economy for investment and therefore expansion of the economy. The net savings in the Indian economy from 1914 to 1946 was only 2.75 per cent of Gross National Product (i.e., national income). The small size may be contrasted with the net savings in 1971-75 when they constituted 12 per cent of GNP. The paltry total capital formation, 6.75 per cent of GNP during 1914-46 as against 20.14 per cent of GNP during 1971-75, reflects this jump. Moreover, the share of industry in this low level of capital formation was abysmally low, machinery forming only 1.78 per cent of GNP during 1914-46. (This figure was 6.53 for 1971-75).

Furthermore, a large part of India's social surplus or savings was appropriated by the colonial state and misspent. Another large part was appropriated by the indigenous landlords and moneylenders. It has been calculated that by the end of the colonial period, the rent and interest paid by the peasantry amounted to Rs 1400 million per year. By 1937, the total rural debt amounted to Rs 18,000 million. According to another estimate, princes, landlords and other intermediaries appropriated nearly 20 per cent of the national income. Only a very small part of this large surplus was invested in the development of agriculture and industry. Most of it was squandered on conspicuous consumption or used for further intensifying landlordism and usury.

Then there was the 'Drain', that is the unilateral transfer to Britain of social surplus and potential investable capital by the colonial state and its officials and foreign merchants through excess of exports over imports. India got back no equivalent economic, commercial or material returns for it in any form. It has been estimated that 5 to 10 per cent of the total national income of India was thus unilaterally exported out of the country. How could any country develop while undergoing such a drain of its financial resources and potential capital?

The fourth feature of colonialism in India was the crucial role played by the state in constructing, determining and maintaining other aspects of the colonial structure. India's policies were determined in Britain and in the interests of the British economy and the British capitalist class. An important aspect of the underdevelopment of India was the denial of state support to industry and agriculture. This was contrary to what happened in nearly all the capitalist countries, including Britain, which enjoyed active state support in the early stages of development. The colonial state imposed free trade in India and refused to give tariff protection to Indian industries as Britain, western Europe and the United States had done. After 1918, under the pressure of the national movement, the Government of India was forced to grant some tariff protection to a few industries. But this was inadequate and ineffective. Moreover, since the 1880s, the currency policy was manipulated by the government to favour British industry and which was to the detriment of Indian industry.

A very large part of India's social surplus was appropriated by the colonial state, but a very small part of it was spent by it on the development of agriculture or industry or on social infrastructure or nation-building activities such education, sanitation and health services. The colonial state devoted almost its entire income to meeting the needs of British-Indian administration, making payments of direct and indirect tribute to Britain and in serving the needs of British trade and industry. The bulk of public revenue was absorbed by military expenditure and civil administration which was geared to maintenance of law and order and tax collection. After 1890, military expenditure absorbed nearly 50 per cent of the central government's income. In 1947-48, this figure stood at nearly 47 per cent. Besides, the Indian tax structure was highly inequitable. While the peasants were burdened with paying a heavy land revenue for most of the colonial period and the poor with the salt tax, etc., the upper income groups—highly paid bureaucrats, landlords, merchants and traders—paid hardly any taxes. The level of direct taxes was quite low. The number of income-tax payers was only 360,000 in 1946-47. It was only under the pressure from the national and

peasant movements that the land revenue and salt tax started coming down in the twentieth century. As late as 1900-01 land revenue and salt tax formed 53 per cent and 16 per cent of the total tax revenue of the government.

ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS

Colonialism became a fetter on India's agricultural and industrial development. Agriculture stagnated in most parts of the country and even deteriorated over the years, resulting in extremely low yields per acre, and sometimes even reaching zero. There was a decline in per capita agricultural production which fell by 14 per cent between 1901 and 1941. The fall in per capita foodgrains was even greater, being over 24 per cent. Over the years, an agrarian structure evolved which was dominated by landlords, moneylenders, merchants and the colonial state. Subinfeudation, tenancy and share-cropping increasingly dominated both the zamindari and ryotwari areas. By the forties, the landlords controlled over 70 per cent of the land and along with the moneylenders and the colonial state appropriated more than half of the total agricultural production.

The colonial state's interest in agriculture was primarily confined to collecting land revenue and it spent very little on improving agriculture. Similarly, landlords and moneylenders found rack-renting of tenants and sharecroppers and usury far more profitable and safe than making productive investment in the land they owned or controlled. All this was hardly conducive to agricultural development. In many areas, a class of rich peasants developed as a result of commercialization and tenancy legislation, but most of them too preferred to buy land and become landlords or to turn to money lending. As a result capitalist farming was slow to develop except in a few pockets. On the other hand, the impoverished cultivators, most of them small peasants, tenants-at will and sharecroppers, had no resources or incentive to invest in the improvement of agriculture by using better cattle and seeds, more manure and fertilizers and improved techniques of production. For most of the colonial period, landlessness had been rising, so that the number of landless agricultural labourers grew from 13 per cent of the agricultural population in 1871 to 28 per cent in 1951. The increase in tenant-farming and sharecropping and overcrowding of agriculture was followed by an extreme subdivision of land into small holdings and fragmentation. Further, these holdings were scattered into non-contiguous parcels and which led to cultivation becoming uneconomic and incapable of maintaining the cultivator even at a subsistence level.

Of course, the linkage with the world market and development of roads and railways did lead to a large part of rural produce entering the urban and world markets and to the production of commercial crops. However, commercialization of agriculture did not lead to capitalist farming or improved technology. Its chief result was that better soil, available water and other resources were diverted from food crops to commercial crops. At a time when agriculture in the developed countries was being modernized and revolutionized, there was near absence of change in the technological or production base of Indian agriculture. Indian peasants continued to use the primitive implements they had used for centuries. For example, in 1951, there were only 930,000 iron ploughs in use while wooden ploughs numbered 31.3 million. The use of inorganic fertilizers was virtually unknown, while a large part of animal manure—cow dung, night soil and cattle bones—was wasted. In 1938-39, only 11 per cent of all cropped land was under improved seeds, their use being largely confined to non-food cash crops.

Agricultural education was completely neglected. In 1946, there were only 9 agricultural colleges with 3,110 students. There was hardly any investment in terracing, flood-control, drainage, and de-salination of soil. Irrigation was the only field in which some progress was made so that by the forties nearly 27 per cent of the total cultivated area was irrigated. But, then, India had always been quite advanced in irrigation cultivation. Another central aspect of India's economic backwardness was the state of its industry. During the nineteenth century, there was a quick collapse of Indian handicraft and artisanal industries largely because of the competition from the cheaper imported manufactures from Britain together with the policy of free trade imposed on India. The ruined artisans failed to find alternative employment. The only choice open to them was to crowd into agriculture as tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. Modern industries did develop in India from the second half of the nineteenth century. But, both in terms of produc-

tion and employment, the level of industrial development was stunted and paltry compared with that of the developed countries. It did not compensate even for the handicraft industries it displaced. Industrial development was mainly confined to cotton and jute and tea in the nineteenth century and to sugar, cement and paper in the nineteen thirties. There had been some development of the iron and steel industry after 1907, but as late as 1946, cotton and jute textiles accounted for nearly 30 per cent of all workers employed in factories and more than 55 per cent of the total value added by manufacturing. The share of modern industries in national income at the end of British rule was only 7.5 per cent. India also lagged in the development of electric power. Similarly, modern banking and insurance were grossly underdeveloped. An important index of India's industrial backwardness and economic dependence on the metropolis was the virtual absence of capital goods and machine industries. In 1950, India met about 90 per cent of its needs of machine tools through imports. The underdeveloped character of this modern part of the economy can be seen by comparing certain economic statistics for 1950 and 1984 (the figures for 1984 are given within brackets). In 1950 India produced 1.04 million tons of steel (6.9 million tons), 32.8 million tons of coal (155.2 million tons), 2.7 million tons of cement (29.9 million tons), 3 million rupees worth of machine tools and portable tools (3,28 million rupees), 7 locomotives (200), 99,000 bicycles (5,944,000), 14 million electrical lamps (317.8 million), 33,000 sewing machines (338,000), and it generated 14 kwh electricity per capita (160 kwh). In 1950, the number of bank offices and branches was 5,072; in 1983 the figure had risen to 33,055. In 1950, out of a population of 357 million only 2.3 million were employed in modern industries.

Another index of economic backwardness was the high rural-urban ratio of India's population because of growing dependence on agriculture. In 1951, nearly 82.3 per cent of the population was rural. While in 1901, 63.7 per cent of Indians had depended on agriculture, by 1941 this figure had gone up to 70. On the other hand the number of persons engaged in processing and manufacturing fell from 10.3 million in 1901 to 8.8 million in 1951 even though the population increased by nearly 40 per cent. Till the late thirties, foreign capital dominated the industrial and financial fields and controlled foreign trade as also part of the internal trade that fed into exports. British firms dominated coal mining, the jute industry, shipping, banking and insurance, and tea and coffee plantations. Moreover, through their managing agencies, the British capitalists controlled many of the Indian owned companies. It may be added that many of the negative effects of foreign capital arose out of the state power being under alien control. Lopsided industrial development was yet another striking feature. Industries were concentrated only in a few regions and cities of the country. This not only led to wide regional disparities in income but also affected the level of regional integration.

But there were some major changes that occurred in the Indian economy, especially during the thirties and forties that did impart a certain strength to it and provided a base for post-independence economic development. One positive feature was the growth of the means of transport and communication. In the forties, India had 65,000 miles of paved roads and nearly 42,000 miles of railway track. Roads and railways unified the country and made rapid transit of goods and persons possible. However, in the absence of a simultaneous industrial revolution, only a commercial revolution was produced which further colonialized the Indian economy. Also the railway lines were laid primarily with a view to link India's inland raw material-producing areas with the ports of export and to promote the spread of imported manufactures from the ports to the interior. The needs of Indian industries with regard to their markets and sources of raw materials were neglected as no steps were taken to encourage traffic between inland centres.

The railway freight rates were also so fixed as to favour imports and exports and to discriminate against internal movement of goods. Moreover, unlike in Britain and the United States, railways did not initiate steel and machine industries in India. Instead, it was the British steel and machine industries which were the beneficiaries of railway development in India. The Government of India also established an efficient and modern postal and telegraph system, though the telephone system remained underdeveloped. Another important feature was the development of the small but Indian owned industrial base. It consisted of several consumer industries such cotton and jute textiles, sugar, soap, paper and matches. Some intermediate capital goods industries such as iron and steel, cement, basic chemicals, metallurgy and engineering had also begun to come up, but on a paltry scale. By 1947, India already possessed a core of scientific and technical manpower, even though facilities for technical education were grossly inadequate, there being only 7 engineering colleges with 2,217 students in the country in 1939. Also, most of the managerial and

technical personnel in industry were non-Indian. There was also, after 1914, the rise of a strong indigenous capitalist class with an independent economic and financial base. The Indian capitalists were, in the main, independent of foreign capital. Unlike in many other colonial countries, they were not intermediaries or middlemen between foreign capital and the Indian market, or junior partners in foreign-controlled enterprises. They were also perhaps more enterprising than the foreign capitalists in India, with the result that investment under Indian capital grew considerably faster than British and other foreign investment. By the end of World War II, Indian capital controlled 60 per cent of the large industrial units. The small-scale industrial sector, which generated more national income than the large-scale sector, was almost wholly based on Indian capital.

By 1947, Indian capital had also made a great deal of headway in banking and life insurance. Indian joint-stock banks held 64 cent of all bank deposits, and Indian-owned life insurance companies controlled nearly 75 per cent of life insurance business in the country. The bulk of internal trade and part of foreign trade was also in Indian hands. These positive features of the Indian economy have, however, to be seen in a wider historical context. First, the development of Indian industry and capitalism was still relatively stunted and severely limited. Then, occurring within the framework of a colonial economy, this industrialization took place without India undergoing an industrial revolution as Britain did. The economy did not take-off. Whatever development occurred was not because of, but inspite of colonialism and often in opposition to colonial policies. It was the result of intense economic and political struggle against colonialism in the context of Britain's declining position in the world economy and the two world wars and the Great Depression of the thirties. Lastly, fuller, unfettered or autonomous economic development or take-off could not have taken place without a break with and destructuring of colonialism. The end result of colonial underdevelopment was the pauperization of the people, especially the peasantry and the artisans. Extreme and visible poverty, disease and hunger and starvation were the lot of the ordinary people. This found culmination in a series of major famines which ravaged all parts of India in the second half of the nineteenth century; there were regular scarcities and minor famines in one or the other part of the country throughout British rule. The last of the major famines in 1943 carried away nearly 3 million people in Bengal. There were many other indications of India's economic backwardness and impoverishment. Throughout the twentieth century, per capita income had stagnated if not declined. During 1941-50, the annual death rate was 25 per 1,000 persons while the infant mortality rate was between 175 and 190 per 1,000 live births. An average Indian born between 1940 and 1951 could expect to live for barely thirty-two years. Epidemics like small pox, plague and cholera and diseases like dysentery, diarrhoea, malaria and other fevers carried away millions every year. Malaria alone affected one-fourth of the population. Health services were dismal. In 1943, there were only 10 medical colleges turning out 700 graduates every year and 27 medical schools turning out nearly 7,000 licentiates. In 1951, there were only about 18,000 graduate doctors, most of them to be found in cities. The number of hospitals was 1,915 with 1, 16,731 beds and of dispensaries 6,589, with 7,072 beds. The vast majority of towns had no modern sanitation and large parts of even those cities which did, were kept out of the system, modern sanitation being confined to areas where the Europeans and rich Indians lived. A modern water supply system was unknown in villages and absent in a large number of towns. The vast majority of towns were without electricity, and electricity in the rural areas was unthinkable.

Already by the end of the nineteenth century it was fully recognized that education was a crucial input and economic development, but the vast majority of Indians had almost no access to any kind of education and, in 1951, nearly 84 per cent were illiterate, the rate of illiteracy being 92 per cent among women. There were only 13,590 middle schools and 7,288 high schools. These figures do not adequately reflect the state of the vast majority of Indians, for they ignore the prevalence of the extreme inequality of income, resources and opportunities. A vast human potential was thereby left untapped in societal development for very few from the poorer sections of society were able to rise, to its middle and upper levels. It is also to be noted that a high rate of population growth was not responsible for the poverty and impoverishment, for it had been only about 0.6 per cent per year between 1871 and 1941. Thus, a stagnating per capita income, abysmal standards of living, stunted industrial development and stagnating, low-productivity; semi-feudal agriculture marked the economic legacy of colonialism as it neared the end.

THE COLONIAL STATE

The British evolved a general educational system, based on English as the common language of higher education, for the entire country. This system in time produced an India-wide intelligentsia which tended to have a similar approach to society and common ways of looking at it and which was, at its best, capable of developing a critique of colonialism—and this it did during the second half of the nineteenth century and after. But English-based education had two extremely negative consequences. One, it created a wide gulf between the educated and the masses. Though this gulf was bridged to some extent by the national movement which drew its leaders as well its cadres from the intelligentsia, it still persisted to haunt independent India. Second, the emphasis on English prevented the fuller development of Indian languages as also the spread of education to the masses. The colonial educational system, otherwise also suffered from many weaknesses which still pervade India's schools and colleges. It encouraged learning by rote, memorization of texts, and proof by authority. The rational, logical, analytical and critical faculties of the students remained underdeveloped; in most cases they could reproduce others' opinions but had difficulty in formulating their own. A major weakness of the colonial educational system was the neglect of mass education as also of scientific and technical education. There was also the almost total lack of concern for the education of girls, so that in 1951 only eight out of 100 women in India were literate.

The character of the colonial state was quite paradoxical. While it was basically authoritarian and autocratic, it also featured certain liberal elements, like the rule of law and a relatively independent judiciary. The administration was normally carried out in obedience to laws interpreted by the courts. This acted as a partial check on the autocratic and arbitrary administration and to a certain extent protected the rights and liberties of a citizen against the arbitrary actions of the bureaucracy. The laws were, however, often repressive. Not being framed by Indians, and through a democratic process, they left a great deal of arbitrary power in the hands of the civil servants and the police. There was also no separation of powers between administrative and judicial functions. The same civil servant administered a district as collector and dispensed justice as a district magistrate. The colonial legal system was based on the concept of equality of all before the law irrespective of a person's caste, religion, class or status, but here too it fell short of its promise. The court acted in a biased manner whenever effort was made to bring an European to justice. Besides, as court procedures were quite costly, the rich had better access to legal means than the poor.

Colonial rulers also extended a certain amount of civil liberties in the form of the freedoms of the Press, speech and association in normal times, but curtailed them drastically in periods of mass struggle. But after 1897, these freedoms were increasingly tampered with and attacked even in normal times. Another paradox of the colonial state was that after 1858 it regularly offered constitutional and economic concessions while throughout retaining the reins of state power. At first, British statesmen and administrators strongly and consistently resisted the idea of establishing a representative regime in India, arguing that democracy was not suited to India. They said only a system of 'benevolent despotism' was advisable because of India's culture and historical heritage. But under Indian pressure, elections and legislatures were introduced both at the Centre and in the provinces. Nevertheless, the franchise, or the right to vote, was extremely narrow. Only about 3 per cent Indians could vote after 1919, and about 15 per cent after 1935. The government thus hoped to co-opt and thereby weaken the national movement and use the constitutional structure to maintain its political domination. The legislatures, however, did not enjoy much power till 1935 and even then supreme power resided with the British. The government could take any action without the approval of the legislatures and, in fact, could do what it liked, when it liked. But the legislators did have the possibility to expose the basic, authoritarian character of the government and the hollowness of colonial constitutional reforms.

The legislatures did, however, provide some Indians experience of participating in elections at various levels and working in elected organs. This experience was useful after 1947 when Indians acquired representative institutions. Meanwhile, the nationalists used the constitutional space in conjunction with mass struggles and intense political, ideological campaigns to overthrow colonial rule. The colonial legacy about the unity of India was marked by a strange paradox. The colonial state brought about a greater political

and administrative unification of India than ever achieved before. Building on the Mughal administrative system, it established a uniform system which penetrated the country's remotest areas and created a single administrative entity. The British also evolved a common educational structure which in time produced an India-wide intelligentsia which shared a common outlook on society and polity, and thought in national terms. Combined with the formation of a unified economy and the development of modern means of communication, colonialism helped lay the basis for making of the Indian nation. But having unified India, the British set into motion contrary forces. Fearing the unity of the Indian people to which their own rule had contributed, they followed the classic imperial policy of divide and rule. The diverse and divisive features of Indian society and polity were heightened to promote cleavages among the people and to turn province against province, caste against caste, class against class, Hindus against Muslims, and the princes and landlords against the national movement. They succeeded in their endeavours to a varying extent, which culminated in India's Partition.

The British ruled India through a modern bureaucracy headed by the highly-paid Indian Civil Service (ICS) whose members were recruited through merit based on open competition. The bureaucracy was rule-bound, efficient and, at the top, rather honest. Following Indian pressure the different services were gradually Indianized after 1918—by 1947, nearly 48 per cent of the members of the ICS were Indian—but positions of control and authority were up to the end retained by the British. Indians in these services too functioned as agents of British rule. Though their senior echelons developed certain traditions of independence, integrity, hard work, and subordination to higher political direction they also came to form a rigid and exclusive caste, often having a conservative and narrow social, economic and political outlook. When massive social change and economic development was sought after 1947, the rigidity and the outlook of the bureaucracy became a major obstacle. While the ICS was more or less free of corruption, it flourished at the lower levels of administration, especially in departments where there was scope for it, such as public works and irrigation, the Royal Army Supply Corps, and the police. During the Second World War, because of government regulation and controls, corruption and black marketing spread on a much wider scale in the administration as also did tax evasion, once rates of income tax and excise were revised to very high levels. There was also the rise of the parallel, black economy.

The British left behind a strong but costly armed force which had acted as an important pillar of the British regime in India. The British had made every effort to keep the armed forces apart from the life and thinking of the rest of the population, especially the national movement. Nationalist newspapers, journals and other publications were prevented from reaching the soldiers' and officers' messes. The other side of the medal, of course, was the tradition of the army being 'apolitical' and therefore also being subordinated, as was the civil service, to the political authorities. This would be a blessing in the long run to independent India, in contrast to the newly-created Pakistan. Referring reproachfully to the legacy bequeathed by colonialism, **Rabindranath Tagore** wrote just three months before his death in 1941:

The wheels of fate will someday compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth will they leave behind them.

UNIT-II

CONSOLIDATION OF INDIA AS A NATION

ASSASINATION OF GANDHIJI

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated at the age of 79 at the Birla House (now Gandhi Smriti) in New Delhi on January 30, 1948. As per reports, he was shot at 5:12 in the evening after which he died sometime later. Gandhi was on his way to a prayer meeting when Nathuram Godse, an extremist, interrupted him. Godse, aged 36, shot Gandhi three times in the chest at point-blank range with a Beretta M 1934 semi-automatic pistol. Gandhi is said to have been carried back inside the Birla House after being shot, where he died. Godse and Narayan Apte, a fellow conspirator, were given death sentences for assassinating Gandhi, while six others - including Godse's brother, Gopal - were sentenced to life imprisonment. It is widely stated that Gandhi last words were "Hey Ram", which he uttered after being shot. There is said to have been five prior unsuccessful attempts to kill Gandhi. The first attempt to kill Gandhi was a bomb attack in 1934. In 1944, Godse was caught twice trying to approach him with a dagger. On January 20, 1948, Godse and his fellow conspirators had failed to pull off a planned shooting. Two days before his assassination, Gandhi is said to have made this statement:

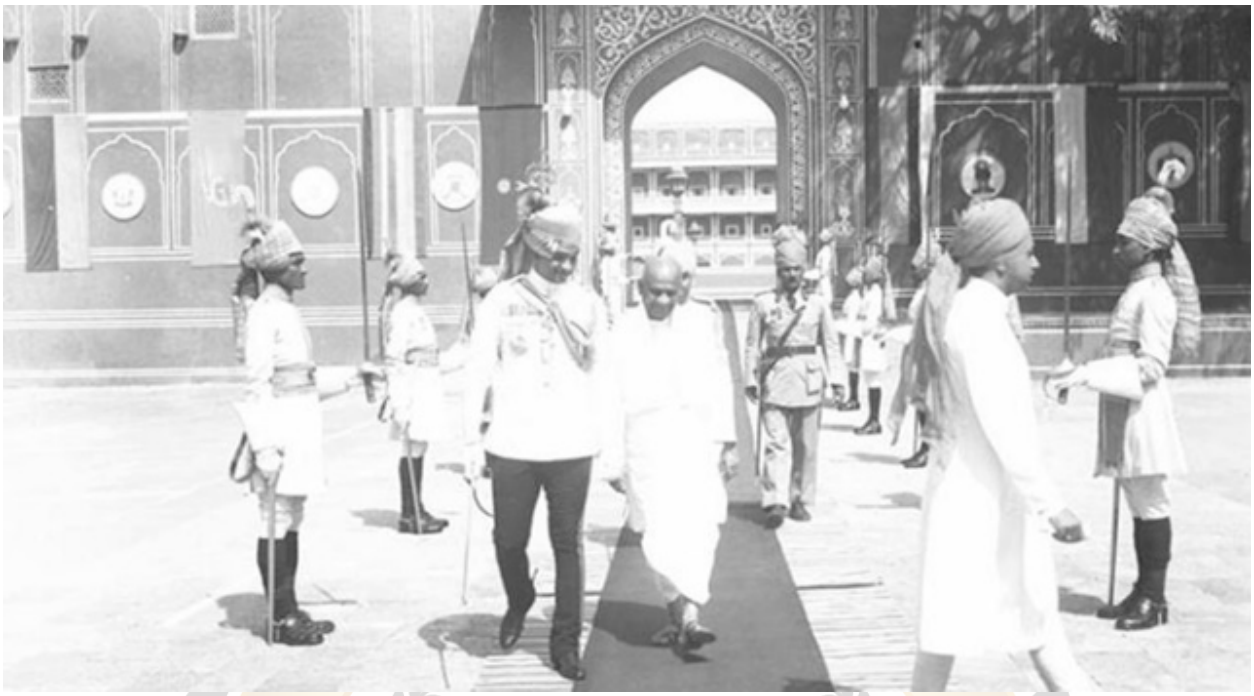
"If I'm to die by the bullet of a mad man, I must do so smiling. God must be in my heart and on my lips. And if anything happens, you are not to shed a single tear."

POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF INDIA

Present-day India owes an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the vision, tact, diplomacy and pragmatic approach of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the indomitable man who integrated 562 princely states with the Union of India and prevented the Balkanisation of the newly-independent country. Back in 1947, India had finally gained a hard-fought independence but it had come with besetting problems — partition, communal riots and a refugee crisis. Add to that crippling resource constraint, fledgling institutions and an ill-equipped colonial machinery and it's not difficult to understand why India's new government found the integration of more than 500 princely states a tough nut to crack. Patel, India's first deputy prime minister and the minister of home affairs, would not just handle these problems with deftness and dexterity but would go on to truly become the "Architect of Modern India".

Having made his mark in the Kheda and Bardoli satyagrahas (during which he earned the title of 'Sardar'), by 1946, Vallabhbhai Patel had already become one of the most popular leaders of the freedom struggle. Stoic and simple in his habits, he was a man of few words but when he did talk, people listened. This is why he was given the formidable task of integrating the princely states as India's first deputy prime minister and home minister. With the swiftness of a military commander and skill of an innate diplomat, he got to work, ably assisted by V.P. Menon (then the Constitutional Adviser to Lord Mountbatten and later, the secretary of the Ministry of the States). Back then, the princely states covered 48% of the area of pre-Independent India and constituted 28% of its population. While these kingdoms were not legally a part of British India, in reality, they were completely subordinate to the British Crown.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 (based on the Mountbatten Plan) provided for the lapse of paramountcy of the British Crown over the Indian states. It also gave each of these rulers the option to accede to the newly born dominions India or Pakistan or continue as an independent sovereign state. Realising the need to get these 500-odd chiefdoms to accede to India before the day of independence, Patel and Menon began using all the tricks in the bag — including the use of both force and friendly advice — to achieve their integration with the Indian dominion. But the process was far from simple. Mollycoddled as well as exploited by the British for decades, many of the rulers saw the departure of the British as the ideal moment to declare autonomy and announce their independent statehood on the world map. However, the brilliant team of Patel (who laid out the framework) and Menon (who did the actual groundwork) persevered.



Sardar Patel with the Maharaja of Jaipur

From invoking the patriotism of the princes to reminding them of the possibility of anarchy on event of their refusal to join, he kept trying to convince them to join India. He also introduced the concept of "privy purses" — a payment to be made to royal families for their agreement to merge with India. Through the spring of 1947, Patel threw a series of lunch parties, where he urged his princely guests to help the Congress in framing a new constitution of India. Patel's tireless efforts paid off when most of the rulers agreed to the dissolution of their respective states, surrendering control of thousands of villages, jagirs, palaces, institutes, cash balances amounting to crores and a railway system of about 12,000 miles to the Indian government without receiving any compensation. By 15 August 1947, the process of integration of princely states was almost complete except for a few, who held out. Some simply delayed signing the Instrument of Accession — like Piploda, a small state in central India that did not accede to India until March 1948. The biggest problems, however, arose with Jodhpur, which tried to negotiate better deals with Pakistan, with Junagadh, which actually did accede to Pakistan, and with Hyderabad and Kashmir, both of which declared that they intended to remain independent.

In June 1947, with the transfer of power looming on the horizon, **Maharaja Hanvant Singh** ascended the throne of Jodhpur and began faltering in the commitment his predecessor had made about joining India. Young and inexperienced, he reckoned that may get a better "deal" from Pakistan since his state was contiguous with the country. So Hanvant Singh entered into negotiations with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who is reported to have given the Maharaja a signed blank sheet of paper to list all his demands. From free access to the Karachi port to arms manufacturing and importing, the princely state was allowed to accede to Pakistan on any terms it chose. Seeing the risks in the border state acceding to Pakistan, Patel immediately met Hanvant Singh and assured him that importing arms would be allowed, that Jodhpur would be connected to Kathiawar by rail and that India would supply grain to it during famines. After the carrots, came the stick in the form of more important warnings — it was pointed out that the accession of a predominantly Hindu state to Pakistan would violate the basic tenet of the two-nation theory and was very likely to cause communal violence in the State. Thus, Jinnah's blank cheque was quickly negated and Jodhpur acceded to India.

The Nawab of Junagarh

Junagarh-the princely state, situated on the **southwestern end of Gujarat,** also did not accede to the Indian union by August 15, 1947. It was the most important among the group of Kathiawar states and contained a **large Hindu population** ruled by the **Nawab, Muhammad Mahabat Khanji III. On September 15, 1947,** Nawab Mahabat Khanji chose to accede to Pakistan ignoring Mountbatten's views, arguing that Junagadh adjoined Pakistan by sea. The rulers of two states that were subject to the suzerainty of Junagadh — **Mangrol and Babariawad** — reacted by declaring their independence from Junagadh and acceding to India. In response, the Nawab of Junagadh militarily occupied the two states. Rulers of the other neighbouring states reacted angrily, sending troops to the Junagadh frontier, and appealed to the Government of India for assistance. India believed that if Junagadh was permitted to accede to Pakistan, **communal tension already simmering in Gujarat would worsen,** and refused to accept the Nawab's choice of accession. The government pointed out that the state was 80% Hindu, and called for a **plebiscite** to decide the question of accession. India **cut off supplies of fuel and coal** to Junagadh, severed air and postal links, sent troops to the frontier, and occupied the principalities of Mangrol and Babariawad that had acceded to India. Pakistan agreed to discuss a plebiscite, **subject to the withdrawal of Indian troops,** a condition India rejected.

On 26 October, the Nawab and his family fled to Pakistan following clashes with Indian troops. Before leaving, the Nawab had emptied the state treasury of its cash and securities. On November 7, 1947 Junagadh's court, facing collapse, invited the Government of India to take over the State's administration. The Dewan of Junagadh, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, the father of the more famous Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, decided to invite the Government of India to intervene. The government of India accepted the invitation of the Dewan to intervene. A plebiscite was conducted in February 1948, which went almost unanimously in favour of accession to India. Junagadh became a part of the Indian state of Saurashtra until November 1, 1956, when Saurashtra became part of Bombay state. In 1960, Bombay state was split into the linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, in which Junagadh was located and since then Junagadh is part of Gujarat.

Kashmir was a princely state with a **Hindu king ruling over a predominant Muslim population** which had remained reluctant to join either of the two dominions. The case of this strategically located kingdom was not just very different but also one of the toughest as it had important international boundaries. The ruler of Kashmir **Maharaja Hari Singh** had **offered a proposal of standstill agreement to both India and Pakistan,** pending a final decision on the state's accession. **Pakistan entered into the standstill agreement but it invaded the Kashmir** from north with an army of soldiers and Pakistani lashkars (armed tribesmen) carrying weapons. In the early hours of 24th October, 1947, thousands of tribal Pathan swept into Kashmir. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir appealed to India for help. He sent his representative **Sheikh Abdullah** to Delhi to ask for India's help. On 26th October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh fled from

Srinagar and arrived in Jammu where he signed an **'Instrument of Accession'** of J&K state. According to the terms of the document, the Indian jurisdiction would extend to **external affairs, communications and defence.** After the document was signed, Indian troops were airlifted into the state and fought alongside the Kashmiris. On 5th March, 1948, Maharaja Hari Singh announced the formation of an interim popular government with **Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah as the Prime Minister.** In 1951, the **state constituent assembly** was elected. It met for the first time in Srinagar on 31st October 1951. In 1952, the **Delhi Agreement** was signed between Prime Ministers of India and Jammu & Kashmir giving special position to the state under Indian Constitutional framework. On 6th February 1954, the J&K constituent assembly ratified the accession of the state to the Union of India. The President subsequently issued the constitution order under **Article 370** of the Constitution extending the Union Constitution to the state with some exceptions and modifications.

As per **Section 3** of the J&K constitution, Jammu & Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India. On **5th of August 2019,** the President of India promulgated the **Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019.** The order effectively **abrogates the special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir** under the provision of Article 370 - whereby provisions of the Constitution which were applicable to other states were not applicable to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

The Hindustan Times

LARGEST CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN, NORTH-WESTERN AND CENTRAL INDIA

KASHMIR ACCEDES TO INDIA

PLEBISCITE SOON ON RULER'S DECISION

Troops And Arms Flown To Srinagar

SHEIKH ABDULLA TO FORM INTERIM GOVT.

UNION TROOPS RUSHED FOR PROTECTION OF STATE

26 October, 1947

Indian troops in Baramulla, November 1947

Meanwhile, the ruling clique in Hyderabad (the largest and richest of all princely states) had blatantly refused to join the Indian dominion. Both requests and threats from Patel and others mediators failed to change the mind of the wily Nizam, who kept expanding his army by importing arms from Europe. Things took a turn for the worse when armed fanatics (called Razakars) unleashed violence targeted at Hyderabad's Hindu residents. Patel acted again. On September 17, 1948, Indian forces marched into Hyderabad under what came to be known as **'Operation Polo'**. The armed encounter (that lasted four days), forced the Nizam to surrender and merge his kingdom with the Indian Union, 13 months after India had become an independent country. Later, in an attempt to reward the Nizam for his submission, he was made the governor of the state of Hyderabad.

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and the Nizam of Hyderabad (Nizam Mir Usman Ali)

The southern Indian maritime state of **Travancore** was strategically placed for maritime trade and was rich in both human and mineral resources. It was one of the first princely states to refuse accession to the Indian union and question the Congress' leadership of the nation. By 1946, the Dewan of Travancore, Sir C.P. Ramamswamy Aiyar declared his intention of forming an independent state of Travancore that would be open to the idea of signing a treaty with the Indian union. Sir C.P. Aiyar is also said to have had secret ties with the UK government who were in support of an independent Travancore in the hope that they would get exclusive access to a mineral called monazite that the area was rich in, and would give an edge to Britain in the nuclear arms race. He stuck to his position till as late as July 1947. He changed his mind soon after he survived an assassination attempt by a member of the Kerala Socialist Party. On July 30 1947, Travancore joined India.

Bhopal was another state that wished to declare independence. Here a **Muslim Nawab**, **Hamidullah Khan**, was ruling over a **majority Hindu population.** He was a close friend of the Muslim League and staunchly opposed the Congress rule. He had made clear his decision to attain independence to Mountbatten. However, the latter wrote back to him stating that **"no ruler could run away from the dominion closest to him".** By July 1947, the Prince became aware of the large number of princes who had acceded to India and decided to join India.

Interestingly, while Patel's roles in bringing these royal territories into the fold of the Indian union is pretty well-known, few people know about that he also integrated Lakshadweep in time, ensuring that the beautiful coral atolls remained with India. Immediately after August 15, 1947, Pakistan had started eyeing the strategically located and almost "out-of-sight" island archipelago that was barely informed of the Independence. The attempts of the Pakistani Navy to seize Lakshadweep were thwarted

when Patel acted with alacrity to send Indian naval ships to defend the island. **Thus, the ever-pragmatic Patel and his brilliant secretary accomplished the monumental task of unifying the princely states into the Indian union.**

Article 1 of the Constitution states that **"India, that is, Bharat, shall be a Union of States**". And there is no person who can claim greater credit for the creation of modern India than Sardar Vallabhai Patel. At a time when differences, disputes and divides in the country are on the rise, its time we remembered the words this legendary leader had said during the Quit India Movement,

"We have to shed mutual bickering, shed the difference of being high or low and develop the sense of equality…We have to live like the children of the same father".

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The Indian nation is the product of a historical process and has been therefore in the making for very long, at least some five centuries. The roots of India's nationhood lie deep in its history and also in its experience of the struggle for independence. Pre-colonial India had already acquired some elements of common existence and common consciousness. Despite its immense cultural diversity, certain strands of a common cultural heritage had developed over the centuries, knitting its people together and giving them a sense of oneness, even while inculcating tolerance of diversity and dissent. As the poet Rabindranath Tagore put it, the unity of India is the 'unity of spirit.' Elements of political, administrative and economic unity had developed especially under the Mughals. The politics of the rulers and their territorial ambitions often cut across regions and were, at their most ambitious, sub-continental in their reach. Also, despite backward means of transport and communication, a great deal of India wide trade, specialization of production and credit networks developed, especially during the late medieval period. A feeling of Indianness, however vague, had come into being, as testified by the currency of the concepts of Bharat Varsha and Hindustan. As pointed out in an earlier chapter, the colonialization of Indian economy, society and polity further strengthened the process of India's unification. From the middle of the nineteenth century, Indians were more and more sharing common economic and political interests and social and cultural development even though they continued to be differentiated by language and ethnicity.

The national movement played a pivotal role in welding Indians together politically and emotionally into a nation and integrating them into 'a common framework of political identity and loyalty.' The depth, duration and deep social penetration of this movement carried the feeling of unity and nationhood to the mass of the people. The leaders of the national movement realized that the making of the nation was a prolonged and continuous process, and which was open to continuous challenges and interruption, disruption and even reversal. One such disruption had already occurred in 1947. As founders of the Republic, these leaders were therefore fully aware that after independence too the process of unifying India and national integration was to be carefully sustained, promoted and nurtured through ideological and political endeavours. In fact, the leaders of India after 1947 saw the preservation and consolidation of India's unity as their biggest challenge. As Nehru put it in 1952, 'the most important factor, the overriding factor, is the unity of India.'1 To quote him again: 'Personally, I feel', he said in 1957, 'that the biggest task of all is not only the economic development of India as a whole, but even more so the psychological and emotional integration of the people of India.'

India's complex diversity is legend. It consists of a large number of linguistic, cultural and geographic-economic zones. It has followers of different religions, Hindus, Muslims, Christians. Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists and Jews, apart from the tribals with a myriad belief systems. In 1950, the Indian Constitution recognized fourteen major languages, besides hundreds others, many of which were spoken by just a million persons. The 1961 Census listed 1549 languages as mother tongues. The tribals, constituting over six per cent of the population, are dispersed all over India. Given this diversity, the leaders of the national movement realized that the Indian nation had to be built on a very broad foundation. India could be unified and its segmentation overcome only by accepting this immense diversity and not counterposing it to the process of nation-in-the-making. The emergence of a strong national identity and the preservation of India's rich diversity

were seen as simultaneous processes. Regional cultural identities would develop not in conflict with but as part of the all-India identity. This entire outlook was epitomized in Nehru's approach who wrote in early 1951:

'We have to remember always that India is a country with a variety of cultures, habits, customs and ways of living ... It is very necessary, I think, for all of us to remember that this wonderful country of ours has infinite variety and there is absolutely no reason why we should try to regiment it after a single pattern. Indeed that is ultimately impossible.' At the same time the hope as well as the answer were there: 'But India is far greater, far richer and more varied than any part of it. We have to develop an outlook which embraces all this variety and considers it our very own.' Thus, the differences in language, culture, religion and ethnic were to be seen not as obstacles to be overcome, not as antithetical to national consolidation, but as positive features that were sources of strength to emerging nationhood. Consequently, the consolidation of independent India was to occur around the concept of 'unity in diversity'.

It was, however, recognized that the diversity of India could also be a source of weakness. Diversity could be used for divisive purposes and transformed into disruptive tendencies, such as communalism, casteism, linguist, and regional exclusiveness. The problem of integrating diverse loyalties was therefore quite real, especially as rapid social changes led to increase in the scale and number of social conflicts. The issues of jobs, educational opportunities, access to political power and share in the larger economic cake could and did fuel rivalries and conflicts based on religion, region, caste, and language. Special efforts were necessary, different from those in other parts of the world, to carefully promote national unity. The broad strategy for national consolidation after 1947 involved territorial integration, mobilization of political and institutional resources, economic development, adoption of policies which would promote social justice, remove glaring inequalities and provide equal opportunities. The leadership evolved a political institutional structure conducive to national consolidation. At the heart of this structure lay the inauguration of a democratic and civil libertarian polity. The argument was rejected that democracy and national integration were not compatible in case of newly liberated and developing countries, and that an authorian political structure was needed to hold together such a diverse nation as India. On the contrary, precisely because India was so diverse it needed democracy rather than force or coercion to bind it. Nehru repeatedly warned his countrymen that in India 'any reversal of democratic methods might lead to disruption and violence.' India, he underlined, could only be held together by a democratic structure with full freedom as also opportunity for the diverse socioeconomic, cultural and political voices to express themselves. The constitutional structure established in 1950 encompassed the demands of diversity as well as the requirements of unity. It provided for a federal structure with a strong Centre but also a great deal of autonomy for the states.

The makers of the Constitution kept in view the difference between decentralization and disintegration and between unity and integration and centralization. The constitutional structure was not only conducive to national integration but provided the basic framework within which the struggle against divisive forces could be carried on. The political leadership was to use elections both to promote national consolidation and to legitimize its policies of integration. The parliament was the institution where basic and ultimate power resided and which acted as the open arena where different political trends could express themselves as also contend for power. Invariably, the issues and problems, as also programmes and policies, debated there were all-India in scale. As Asoka Mehta put it, the parliament acted as the great unifier of the nation.

Also, political parties acted as a great integrating force. All the major post-1947 political parties—Socialist party, Communist Party of India, the Jan Sangh and later the Swatantra party—were all-India in character and in their organization and ideology; they stood for the unity of the country. They strove for national goals and mobilized people on an all-India basis and on all-India issues even when their capacity to do so was limited to particular regions. All this was perhaps even more true of Congress in the post-independence years. It had a strong and large organization covering almost all parts of the country. It was able to maintain internal party coherence and unity, and was also willing to play the role of a cementing force in society and polity. It is important to remember that immediately after independence, with the rapid marginalization of

the communal parties, the major divide in Indian politics and among the intelligentsia was on political and ideological grounds rather than on the basis of caste, religion or language. It is also significant that the major vocal social groups and classes—the bourgeoisie, the working class and the intelligentsia—were all-India in outlook and stood for national unity Indian nationalism, both before and after independence, had little difficulty in coming to terms with the emerging class consciousness as also class organizations such as trade unions and Kisan Sabhas on one side and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on the other. No section of Indian society or polity saw loyalty to a class or class organizations as threatening national cohesion.

The role of the leadership and its manner of functioning in nation-making and national consolidation is quite important. The leaders of the national movement thought in national terms and were fully committed to national unity and consolidation, and this commitment was widely accepted. Further, the prominent leaders of independent India—Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad—were not associated with any one region, language, religion, or caste. This was also true of the prominent opposition leaders such as Jayaprakash Narayan, J.B. Kripalani, Rammanohar Lohia, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, B.T. Ranadive and Ajoy Ghosh.

A major asset of the Congress leadership was that it was well-versed in accommodative politics. It had been able to keep united diverse political and ideological trends during the anti-imperialist struggle. Following this, after 1947, despite near total political dominance, it was willing to conciliate and accommodate, to listen to and appease the opposition parties and dissenting groups. In particular, it was quite sensitive to popular rumblings on linguistic or other cultural issues. Reacting strongly to violence, it responded, often sympathetically, to demands pressed through non-violent means and mass backing. Nehru, for example, was willing to persuade and accommodate the Communists once they gave up recourse to violence. Other political parties too, including the CPI, came to share after some time the same means, methods and values for resolving social conflicts, differing only in rhetoric.

The Indian army and administrative services were also a force for forging national unity. India developed after 1947 a national administrative service with recruitment to its top echelons, the IAS, the IPS, and other central services, taking place on the basis of individual merit, irrespective of caste or religion, from all regions and linguistic areas. These services were all-India in character and sentiment and all officers selected were given common training and owed allegiance to the central government, which also had the ultimate power to promote or discipline them. The central services, as also the state services, were basically non-political and accepted the authority of the party which was voted to power by the people. Likewise, the army was a national force whose officers and ranks were recruited from all parts of the country. The Indian economy, national market, and transport and communication networks were further unified after 1947. Industrial development was promoted on a national scale and dams, steel mills, fertilizer plants, cement factories, and heavy machinery and electric plants soon became symbols of national endeavour as well as national unity.

Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders saw economic development as essential for national consolidation. Soon after independence, the government set up a Planning Commission and took active measures for planned economic development. Though the government and the Planning Commission did not succeed in putting an end to regional economic disparities; they did avoid inequality in the distribution of economic resources among states. In general, the central government followed accommodative policies towards the states. Consequently, though there was constant grumbling and plenty of grievances there was no serious discontent in the states and regions on grounds of discrimination by the central government and therefore no separatist feelings on that account.

National integration also required policies which would promote social justice and greater social and economic equality. The national movement had also linked the process of nation-in-the-making with socio-economic changes in the interests of the oppressed and the deprived. Consolidation of the nation after independence had to be judged in terms of how it affected their lives. The entire Indian people and not merely the middle and upper classes had to benefit from the coming of independence and processes of

economic development and political democracy. The Constitution laid the basis for reduction of social disparity by putting an end to any discrimination on grounds of religion caste or sex. Redeeming the national movement's major pledge to the depressed sections of society, it provided reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in educational institutions, employment and in the legislatures. Soon after 1947, a number of social reforms and welfare laws were passed. Landlordism was abolished and there was some redistribution of land. A law was passed making untouchability an offence. Unfortunately, no struggle against the hierarchical caste system followed, so that, on the one hand caste discrimination and oppression continued, on the other, casteism or the use of caste solidarity for electoral and other political purposes began to grow. The momentum of social reform was lost by the early fifties. Removal of social oppression and social discrimination and exploitation, based on caste, religion, language or ethnicity, and of gross economic inequality has remained the weakest part of the agenda for national integration.

From the start, the founding fathers stood for secularism as the basis for the nation. Undaunted by Partition and the accompanying riots, they remained loyal to the secular vision of the national movement. They also dealt firmly with communal violence and on the whole succeeded in protecting the religious minorities. Independent India's foreign policy served as another unifying force. The policy of non-alignment and anti-colonialism and Nehru's growing stature as a world figure contributed to a sense of national pride in India among all sections of people all over the country and irrespective of their political alignment. At the moment of freedom the need for unity was urgent but also present was the problem of integrating diverse loyalties. The strategies and approaches promoting integration required time but the people were in a hurry and there was plenty of scope for conflicts. Many observers, infact, predicted growing disunity and even break-up of the country.

THE ISSUE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The language problem was the most divisive issue in the first twenty years of independent India, and it created the apprehension among many that the political and cultural unity of the country was in danger. People love their language; it is an integral part of culture. Consequently, linguistic identity has been a strong force in all societies. This is even more true of a multilingual society like India's. Linguistic diversity would inevitably give birth to strong political currents around issues linked to language, such as educational and economic development, job and other economic opportunities and access to political power.

The Indian Constitution recognizes sixteen major languages, including English and Sanskrit. In addition, there are a myriad languages spoken by the tribals and others, with or without their own scripts. The model that independent India has adopted is not that of assimilation into, or suppression of the many languages by one of them. This is in any case impossible in a democratic polity. The feasible option is to accept and live with this 'multiplicity' in a manner that conflict situations do not emerge or persist for long.

The problem posed to national consolidation by linguistic diversity has taken two major forms. These are discussed here in two separate sections: (i) The dispute over official language of the union, and (ii) The linguistic reorganization of the states.

The controversy on the language issue became most virulent when it took the form of opposition to Hindi and tended to create conflict between Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi speaking regions of the country. The dispute was not over the question of a national language that is one language which all Indians would adopt after some time, since the view that one national language was essential to an Indian national identity had already been rejected overwhelmingly by the secular majority of the national leadership. India was a multilingual country and it had to remain so. The Indian national movement had carried on its ideological and political work through the different Indian regional languages. Its demand then was for the replacement of English by the mother tongue as the medium for higher education, administration and courts in each linguistic area. Jawaharlal Nehru had clearly put across this view in 1937: 'Our great provincial languages ... are ancient languages with a rich inheritance, each spoken by many millions of persons, each tied up inextricably with the life and culture and ideas of the masses as well as of the upper classes. It is axiomatic that the masses can only grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own language. There-

fore, it is inevitable that we lay stress on the provincial languages and carry on most of our work through them … Our system of education and public work must therefore be based on the provincial languages.'

The issue of a national language was resolved when the Constitution makers virtually accepted all the major languages as 'languages of India' or India's national languages. But the matter could not end there, for the country's official work could not be carried on in so many languages. There had to be one common language in which the central government would carry on its work and maintain contact with the state governments. The question arose what would be this language of all-India communication? Or what would be India's official and link language? Only two candidates were available for the purpose: English and Hindi. The Constituent Assembly heatedly debated which one should be selected. But, in fact, the choice had already been made in the pre-independence period by the leadership of the national movement, which was convinced that English would not continue to be the all-India medium of communication in free India. For example, even while appreciating the value of English as a world language, through which Indians could access world science and culture and modern western ideas, Gandhiji was convinced that the genius of a people could not unfold nor could their culture flower in a foreign language.

In fact, Gandhiji, during the twenties emphasized that English is 'a language of international commerce, it is the language of diplomacy, it contains many a rich literary treasure, and it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture.' But he argued English occupied in India 'an unnatural place due to our unequal relations with Englishmen.'6 English 'has sapped the energy of the nation … it has estranged them from the masses … The sooner therefore educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people.' And he wrote in 1946: 'I love the English tongue in its own place, but I am its inveterate opponent if it usurps a place which does not belong to it. English is today admittedly the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language.' Nehru echoed these sentiments in his 1937 article on 'The Question of Language' and also during the Constituent Assembly debates.

Hindi or Hindustani, the other candidate for the status of the official or link language, had already played this role during the nationalist struggle, especially during the phase of mass mobilization. Hindi had been accepted by leaders from non-Hindi speaking regions because it was considered to be the most widely spoken and understood language in the country. Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji, C. Rajagopalachari, Subhas Bose, and Sardar Patel were some of Hindi's enthusiastic supporters. In its sessions and political work, the Congress had substituted Hindi and the provincial languages in place of English. In 1925, Congress amended its constitution to read: 'The proceedings of the Congress shall be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani. The English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker is unable to speak Hindustani or whenever necessary. The proceedings of the Provincial Congress Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the Province concerned. Hindustani may also be used.' Reflecting a national consensus, the Nehru Report had laid down in 1928 that Hindustani which might be written in Devanagari or Urdu script would be the common language of India, but the use of English would be continued for some time. It is interesting that ultimately the Constitution of free India was to adopt this stand, except for replacing Hindustani by Hindi.

The real debate in the Constituent Assembly occurred over two questions: Would Hindi or Hindustani replace English? And what would be the timeframe for such a replacement to happen? Sharp differences marked the initial debates as the problem of the official language was highly politicized from the beginning. The question of Hindi or Hindustani was soon resolved, though with a great deal of acrimony. Gandhiji and Nehru both supported Hindustani, written in Devnagari or Urdu script. Though many supporters of Hindi disagreed, they had tended to accept the Gandhi-Nehru viewpoint. But once the Partition was announced, these champions of Hindi were emboldened, especially as the protagonists of Pakistan had claimed Urdu as the language of Muslims and of Pakistan. The votaries of Hindi now branded Urdu 'as a symbol of secession'. They demanded that Hindi in Devnagari script be made the national language.

Their demand split the Congress party down the middle. In the end the Congress Legislative Party decided for Hindi against Hindustani by 78 to 77 votes, even though Nehru and Azad fought for Hindustani. The Hindi bloc was also forced to compromise; it accepted that Hindi would be the official and not the national language.

The issue of the time-frame for a shift from English to Hindi produced a divide between Hindi and non-Hindi areas. The spokespersons of Hindi areas were for the immediate switchover to Hindi, while those from non-Hindi areas advocated retention of English for a long if not indefinite period. In fact, they wanted the status quo to continue till a future parliament decided to shift to Hindi as the official language. Nehru was for making Hindi the official language, but he also was in favour of English continuing as an additional official language, making the transition to Hindi gradual, and actively encouraging the knowledge of English because of its usefulness in the contemporary world.

The case for Hindi basically rested on the fact that it was the language of the largest number, though not of the majority, of the people of India; it was also understood at least in the urban areas of most of northern India from Bengal to Punjab and in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The critics of Hindi talked about it being less developed than other languages as a literary language and as a language of science and politics. But their main fear was that Hindi's adoption as the official language would place non-Hindi areas, especially South India, at a disadvantage in the educational and economic spheres, and particularly in competition for appointments in government and the public sector. Such opponents tended to argue that imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi areas would lead to their economic, political, social and cultural domination by Hindi areas.

The Constitution-makers were aware that as the leaders of a multi-lingual country they could not ignore, or even give the impression of ignoring, the interest of any one linguistic area. A compromise was arrived at, though this led to the language provisions of the Constitution becoming 'complicated, ambiguous and confusing in some respects.' The Constitution provided that Hindi in Devnagari script with international numerals would be India's official language. English was to continue for use in all official purposes till 1965, when it would be replaced by Hindi. Hindi was to be introduced in a phased manner. After 1965 it would become the sole official language. However, the parliament would have the power to provide for the use of English for specified purposes even after 1965. The Constitution laid upon the government the duty to promote the spread and development of Hindi and provided for the appointment of a Commission and a Joint Committee of the Parliament to review the progress in this respect. The state legislatures were to decide the matter of official language at the state level, though the official language of the Union would serve as the language of communication between the states and the Centre and between one state and another. Implementation of the language provisions of the Constitution proved to be a formidable task even though the Congress party was in power all over the country. The issue remained a subject of intense controversy, and which became increasingly acrimonious with passage of time, though for many years nobody challenged the provision that Hindi would eventually, become the sole official language.

The Constitution-makers had hoped that by 1965 the Hindi protagonists would overcome the weaknesses of Hindi, win the confidence of non-Hindi areas, and hold their hand for a longer period till such time they had done so. It was also hoped that with the rapid growth of education Hindi too would spread and resistance to Hindi would gradually weaken and even disappear. But, unfortunately, the spread of education was too slow to make an impact in this respect. Moreover, the chances of Hindi's success as an official language were spoilt by the proponents of Hindi themselves. Instead of taking up a gradual, slow and moderate approach to gain acceptance of Hindi by non-Hindi areas and to rely on persuasion, the more fanatics among them, preferred imposition of Hindi through government action. Their zeal and enthusiasm tended to provoke a counter-movement. As Nehru told the parliament in 1959, it was their over-enthusiasm which came in the way of the spread and acceptance of Hindi for 'the way they approach this subject often irritates others, as it irritates me.'

Hindi suffered from the lack of social science and scientific writing. In the fifties, for example there were hardly any academic journals in Hindi outside the literary field. Instead of developing Hindi as a means of communication in higher education, journalism, and so on, the Hindi leaders were more interested in mak-

ing it the sole official language. A major weakness of the Hindi protagonists was that, instead of developing a simple standard language which would get wide acceptance or at least popularize the colloquial Hindi as spoken and written in Hindi areas as also in many other parts of India, they tried to Sanskritize the language, replacing commonly understood words with newly manufactured, unwieldy and little understood ones in the name of the 'purity' of language, free of alien influences. This made it more and more difficult for non-Hindi speakers (or even Hindi speakers) to understand or learn the new version. All India Radio, which could have played an important role in popularizing Hindi, instead took to so Sanskritizing its Hindi news bulletins that many listeners would switch off their radios when the Hindi news was broadcast. Nehru, a Hindi speaker and writer, was to complain in 1958 that he was unable to understand the language in which his own Hindi speeches were being broadcast. But the purifiers of Hindi did not relent and resisted all attempts to simplify the Hindi of news broadcasts. This led many uncommitted persons to join the ranks of the opponents of Hindi.

Nehru and the majority of Indian leaders however remained committed to the transition to Hindi as the official language. They believed that, though the study of English was to be encouraged, English could not continue forever as India's official language. In the interests of national unity as also economic and political development they also realized that full transition to Hindi should not be time-bound and should await a politically more auspicious time when the willing consent of the non-Hindi areas could be obtained. The non-Hindi leaders became also less and less open to persuasion and their opposition to Hindi increased with time. One result of this alienation of non-Hindi language groups was that they too were not open to rational arguments in favour of Hindi. Instead they veered towards an indefinite continuance of English.

Sharp differences on the official language issue surfaced during 1956-60, once again revealing the presence of disruptive tendencies. In 1956, the Report of the Official Language Commission, set up in 1955 in terms of a constitutional provision, recommended that Hindi should start progressively replacing English in various functions of the central government with effective change taking place in 1965. Its two members from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and P. Subbaroyan, however, dissented, accusing the members of the Commission of suffering from a pro-Hindi bias, and asked for the continuation of English. Ironically, Professor Chatterjee was in charge of the Hindi Pracharini Sabha in Bengal before independence. The Commission's Report was reviewed by a special Joint Committee of the Parliament. To implement the recommendations of the Joint Committee, the President issued an order in April 1960 stating that after 1965 Hindi would be the principal official language but that English would continue as the associate official language without any restriction being placed on its use. Hindi would also become an alternative medium for the Union Public Commission examinations after some time, but for the present it would be introduced in the examinations as a qualifying subject. In accordance with the President's directive, the central government took a series of steps to promote Hindi. These included the setting up of the Central Hindi Directorate, publication of standard works in Hindi or in Hindi translation in various fields, compulsory training of central government employees in Hindi, and translation of major texts of law into Hindi and promotion of their use by the courts.

All these measures aroused suspicion and anxiety in the non-Hindi areas and groups. Nor were the Hindi leaders satisfied. For example, Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, an eminent linguist and a former staunch advocate and promoter of Hindi, stated in his dissenting note to the Report of the Official Language Commission that the outlook of the Commission was one of the 'Hindi speakers who are to profit immediately and for a long time to come, if not forever.' Similarly, in March 1958, C. Rajagopalachari, ex-President of the Hindi Pracharini Sabha in the South, declared that 'Hindi is as much foreign to the non-Hindi speaking people as English to the protagonists of Hindi.' On the other hand, two major champions of Hindi, Purshottamdas Tandon and Seth Govind Das, accused the Joint Parliamentary Committee of being pro-English. Many of the Hindi leaders also attacked Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Minister of Education, for dragging their feet in implementing the constitutional provisions and deliberately delaying the replacement of English. They insisted that the deadline for the changeover to Hindi laid down in the Constitution must be rigidly observed. In 1957, Dr Lohia's Samyukta Socialist Party and the Jan Sangh launched a militant movement, which continued for nearly two years, for the immediate replacement of English by Hindi. One of the

agitational methods adopted by the followers of Lohia on a large scale was to deface English signboards of shops and in other places.

Fully aware of the danger that the official language issue could pose to Indian polity, the leadership of the Congress took the grievances of the non-Hindi areas seriously and handled the issue with great care and caution. The attempt was to work for a compromise. Nehru time and again made it clear that an official language could not and would not be imposed on any region of the country and that the pace of transition to Hindi would have to be determined keeping in view the wishes of the non-Hindi people. In this he was supported by the leaders of Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Communist Party of India (CPI). PSP criticized Hindi extremism and said that it 'might severely strain the unity of a multilingual country like India.'

The highlight of Nehru's approach was a major statement in the parliament on 7 August 1959. To allay the fears of the non-Hindi people, he gave a definite assurance: 'I would have English as an alternate language as long as the people require it, and I would leave the decision not to the Hindi-knowing people, but to the non-Hindi-knowing people.' He also told the people of the South that 'if they do not want to learn Hindi, let them not learn Hindi.' He repeated this assurance in the parliament on 4 September 1959. In pursuance of Nehru's assurances, though with delay caused by internal party pressures and the India-China war, an Official Languages Act was passed in 1963. The object of the Act, Nehru declared, was 'to remove a restriction which had been placed by the Constitution on the use of English after a certain date, namely, 1965.'

But this purpose was not fully served as the assurances were not clearly articulated in the Act. The Act laid down that 'the English language may … continue to be used in addition to Hindi.' The non-Hindi groups criticized the use of the word 'may' in place of the word 'shall'. This made the Act ambiguous in their eyes; they did not regard it as a statutory guarantee. Many of them wanted a cast iron guarantee not because they distrusted Nehru but because they were worried about what would happen after Nehru, especially as the pressure from the Hindi leaders was also growing. The death of Nehru in June 1964 increased their apprehensions which were further fuelled by certain hasty steps taken and circulars issued by various ministries to prepare the ground for the changeover to Hindi in the coming year. For example, instructions were given that the central government's correspondence with the states would be in Hindi, though in case of non-Hindi states an English translation would be appended.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, Nehru's successor as prime minister, declared that he was considering making Hindi an alternative medium in public service examinations. This meant that while non-Hindi speakers could still compete in the all-India services in English, the Hindi speakers would have the advantage of being able to use their mother tongue.

Many non-Hindi leaders in protest changed their line of approach to the problem of official language. While previously they had wanted a slowing down of the replacement of English, now they started demanding that there should be no deadline fixed for the changeover. Some of the leaders went much further. The Dravida Munnetra Kazagham and C. Rajagopalachari, for example, demanded that the Constitution should be amended and English should be made the official language of India.

As 26 January 1965 approached, a fear psychosis gripped the non-Hindi areas, especially Tamil Nadu, creating a strong anti-Hindi movement. On January, the DMK organized the Madras State Anti-Hindi Conference which gave a call for observing 26 January as a day of mourning. Students, concerned for their careers and apprehensive that they would be outstripped by Hindi-speakers in the all-India services, were the most active in organizing a widespread agitation and mobilizing public opinion. They raised and popularized the slogan: 'Hindi never, English ever.' They also demanded amendment of the Constitution. The students' agitation soon developed into state-wide unrest. The Congress leadership, though controlling both the state and the central governments, failed to gauge the depth of the popular feeling and the widespread character of the movement and instead of negotiating with the students, made an effort to repress it. Widespread rioting and violence followed in the early weeks of February leading to large-scale destruction of railways and other union property. So strong was the anti-Hindi feeling that several Tamil youth, including four students, burned themselves to death in protest against the official language policy. Two Tamil ministers,

C. Subramaniam and Alagesan, resigned from the Union Cabinet. The agitation continued for about two months, taking a toll of over sixty lives through police firings. The only eminent central leader to show concern for the agitators was Indira Gandhi, then the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. At the height of the agitation she flew to Madras, 'rushed to the storm-centre of trouble', showed some sympathy for the agitators and thus became, after Nehru, the first northern leader to win the trust of the aggrieved Tamils as well as of the people of the South in general. Efforts were made by the Jan Sangh and the SSP to organize counter agitation in the Hindi areas against English, but they did not get much public support. The agitation forced both the Madras and the Union governments and the Congress party to revise their stand. They now decided to yield to the intense public mood in the South, change their policy and accept the major demands of the agitators. The Congress Working Committee announced a series of steps which were to form the basis for a central enactment embodying concessions and which led to the withdrawal of the Hindi agitation. This enactment was delayed because of the Indo-Pak war of 1965, which silenced all dissension in the country.

With the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in January 1966, Indira Gandhi became the prime minister. As she had already won the trust of the people of the South, they were convinced that a genuine effort would be made to resolve the long-festering dispute. Other favourable factors were the Jan Sangh's muting of their anti-English fervour and the SSP's acceptance of the basic features of the agreement worked out in 1965. Despite facing economic problems and the weakening of the Congress's position in parliament in the 1967 elections, Indira Gandhi moved the bill to amend the 1963 Official Language Act on 27 November. The Lok Sabha adopted the bill, on 16 December 1967, by 205 to 41 votes. The Act gave an unambiguous legal fortification, to Nehru's assurances of September 1959. It provided that the use of English as an associate language in addition to Hindi for the official work at the Centre and for communication between the Centre and non-Hindi states would continue as long as the non-Hindi states wanted it, giving them full veto powers on the question. A virtual indefinite policy of bilingualism was adopted. The parliament also adopted a policy resolution laying down that the public service examinations were to be conducted in Hindi and English and in all the regional languages with the proviso that the candidates should have additional knowledge of Hindi or English. The states were to adopt a three-language formula according to which, in the non-Hindi areas, the mother tongue, Hindi and English or some other national language was to be taught in schools while in the Hindi areas a non-Hindi language, preferably a southern language, was to be taught as a compulsory subject. The Government of India took another important step on the language question in July 1967. On the basis of the Report of the Education Commission in 1966, it declared that Indian languages would ultimately become the medium of education in all subjects at the university level, though the time-frame for the changeover would be decided by each university to suit its convenience.

After many twists and turns, a great deal of debate and several agitations, small and big, and many compromises India had arrived at a widely-accepted solution of the very difficult problem of the official and link language for the country. Since 1967, this problem has gradually disappeared from the political scene, demonstrating the capacity of the Indian political system to deal with a contentious problem on a democratic basis, and in a manner that promoted national consolidation. Here was an issue which emotionally divided the people and which could have jeopardized the unity of the country, but to which a widely acceptable solution was found through negotiations and compromise. And it was not only the national leadership provided by the Congress, with some hiccups on the way, which came up to the mark; the opposition parties too measured up when it came to the crunch. In the end, the DMK, in whose rise to power the language issue played an important role, also helped by cooling down the political temper in Tamil Nadu.

Of course, no political problem is solved for all times to come. Problem solving in a nation as complex as India is bound to be a continuous process. But it is significant that Hindi has been making rapid progress in non-Hindi areas through education, trade, tourism, films, radio and television. The use of Hindi as an official language has also been growing though English is still dominant. Simultaneously, English, as a second language has been spreading fast, including in the Hindi-speaking areas. A witness of this is the number of private English-medium schools, however poor in staff and other facilities, which now dot the countryside from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. The standards of spoken and written English have fallen but the En-

glish-knowing classes have multiplied manifold. Both English and Hindi are likely to grow as link languages just as regional languages are more and more occupying the official, educational and media space. The proof of the growth of Hindi, English and regional languages lies in the rapid growth of newspapers in all of them. In fact, English is not only likely to survive in India for all times to come, but it remains and is likely to grow as a language of communication between the intelligentsia all over the country, as a library language, and as the second language of the universities. Hindi, on the other hand, has so far failed to perform any of the three roles. Of course, the ideal of making Hindi the link language of the country remains. But the way the enthusiastic protagonists of Hindi promoted Hindi's cause, they pushed back the chances of this happening for a long time to come.

THE LINGUISTIC ORGANISATION OF THE STATES

Between 1947 and about 1950, the territories of the princely states were politically integrated into the Indian Union. Most were merged into existing provinces; others were organised into new provinces, such as Rajputana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, and Vindhya Pradesh, made up of multiple princely states; a few, including Mysore, Hyderabad, Bhopal, and Bilaspur, became separate provinces. The Government of India Act 1935 remained the constitutional law of India pending adoption of a new Constitution. The new Constitution of India, which came into force on 26 January 1950, made India a sovereign democratic republic. The new republic was also declared to be a "Union of States". The constitution of 1950 distinguished between four types of states:

- **Nine Part A states**, which were the former governors' provinces of British India, were ruled by an elected governor and state legislature. The nine Part A states were Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (formerly Central Provinces and Berar),Madras, Orissa, Punjab (formerly East Punjab), Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces), and West Bengal.
- The **eight Part B states** were former princely states or groups of princely states, governed by a rajpramukh and an elected legislature. The rajpramukh was appointed by the President of India. The Part B states were Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Rajasthan, Saurashtra, and Travancore-Cochin.
- The **ten Part C states** included both the former chief commissioners' provinces and some princely states, and each was governed by a chief commissioner appointed by the President of India. The Part C states were Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Tripura, and Vindhya Pradesh.
- The sole **Part D state** was the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were administered by a lieutenant governor appointed by the central government.

Movement for linguistic states during prior to independence-Demand of states on linguistic basis was developed even before independence of India under British rule. Lokmanya Tilak was perhaps the first national leader to appreciate the diversity of languages and urge the Congress to commence working in vernacular languages; he also advocated reorganisation of the provinces on a linguistic basis. As early as in 1891, he wrote in Kesari, "The present administrative division of India is the result of a certain historical process and in some cases purely result of accident… if they are replaced by units formed on a linguistic basis, each of them will have some measure of homogeneity and will provide encouragement to the people and languages of the respective regions." The decision of the All India Congress Committee of the Indian National Congress on 8th April 1917 to constitute a separate Congress Province (Andhra Provincial Congress Committee) from out of the Telugu speaking districts of the Madras Presidency strengthened the argument for the linguistic re-organization of British India provinces. Already a consensus was evolving in British India among several Indian leaders that, for the effective administration, the language of governance and education should be the dominant language of the people, and that provinces, for this purpose, should be re-organized on linguistic lines. But Gandhi thought otherwise, when the proposal to re-organize the provincial committees on linguistic lines came up before the AICC in 1917. Gandhi thought that the question might wait the implementing of Reforms [initiated by the British] but Lokamanya Tilak saw the point, namely, that Linguistic Provinces were an essential condition prerequisite to real Provincial autonomy. The first generation of freedom fighters realised the importance of linguistic states at the time of the partition of Bengal in 1905. European capitalism had had good experience of the democratic effects of language based administrative units. British colonial rule skillfully crafted multilingual administrative territories in India. In pursuit of this policy, H S Risley, the then home secretary, submitted a note to the Crown in December 1903, suggesting the division of Bengal, and then Lord Curzon did divide Bengal, a linguistically homogenous unit, into two religiously heterogeneous units, in order to stem the freedom movement. But this colonial administrative action helped the Bengali speaking people to learn to think in terms of linguis-

tic unity. The movement for reunification of Bengal also gave an impetus to a movement to reorganise the provinces on the basis of language in the eastern region of India. Reflecting this popular sentiment, at its Calcutta session in 1905, Indian National Congress opposed Curzon's decision. Its resolution stated, "This congress recommends the adoption of some arrangement which would be consistent with administrative efficiency and would place the entire Bengali speaking community under an undivided administration." Finally, colonial administration was forced to undo the bifurcation of Bengal on religious basis, but at the same time it carved out Assam and Bihar as separate provinces in 1911 on a linguistic basis. However, the acceptance of federalism by the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916 inspired the demands for several such states. On April 8, 1917, on the basis of its Lucknow session's recommendation, the AICC demanded a Telugu-speaking state carved out of the Madras Presidency. The Home Rule movement also emphasised the need for creation of linguistic provinces. In fact, this movement served as an important milestone in the reorganisation of linguistically homogenous areas. In her presidential address in the Calcutta Congress session in 1917, Annie Besant said, "Sooner or later, preferably sooner, provinces will have to be re-delimited on a linguistic basis." Why Annie Besant favoured language based provinces? Annie Besant's Home Rule movement attracted mostly the South Indians, whose participation was perhaps responsible for the early acceptance of the legitimacy of linguistic identities. Also Mrs. Besant shot in to prominence in the wake of the agitation against the partition of Bengal, an agitation, which should be considered the precursor to subsequent linguistic movements in the country. Subsequently, in its 1920 Nagpur session, the Congress accepted in principle the creation of linguistic states. With this spirit, first the Congress took initiatives to organise their provincial committees on linguistic basis. The process that started with the formation of a separate Linguistic Circle of the Indian National Congress for the Telugu-speaking territory became a basic principle for the recognition of the linguistic identity of various populations to carve out the administrative units in India. Language was yet to receive a more serious and detailed scrutiny in relation to the demands for Self-Government. The role of the Indian vernacular for mass-based agitations and for mass communication was very well recognized even in the earliest part of the history of the Indian National Congress, but the demand for its role in administration and education began to be debated with great strength only in the 1920s within the Indian National Congress with the emergence of Gandhi as its supreme leader. In 1927, the Congress again declared that it was committed to "the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis", and reaffirmed its stance several times, including in the election manifesto of 1945-46. The emerging idea of federalism forced the colonial administration in India to appoint a commission on linguistic reorganisation of provinces, headed by Sir John Simon, in 1927. Though diverse claims were put forward before the commission for redistribution of the provincial territories on linguistic basis, the commission observed, "…in no case the linguistic or racial principle can be accepted as the sole test." It was in response to Simon Commission's observation that the Nehru Committee submitted its own report in 1928. Consisting of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Subhash Chandra Bose etc and presided over by Motilal Nehru, this committee represented various trends in the freedom movement, and its report for the first time formally incorporated the demand for linguistic reorganisation of the provinces. The report provided an elaborate justification of the demand, "Partly geographical and partly economic and financial, but the main considerations must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned. Hence, it becomes most desirable for provinces to be regrouped on a linguistic basis." Odisha was the first Indian state formed on linguistic basis in the year 1936 due to the efforts of Madhusudan Das and became Orissa Province. In Odisha, linguistic movement had started in the year 1895 and intensified later years with the demand of separate province from Bihar and Orissa Province. Meanwhile, at the ground level, aspirations for such states within the territory of India caught the people's imagination. This principle was subsequently officially adopted by the Congress and included in its election manifesto. On November 27, 1947, in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Prime Minister Nehru on behalf of the government of India accepted the principle underlying the demand for linguistic provinces. Though after independence, partition led to fear of further division on the basis of language and many leaders changed their views regarding language based states.

Movement for linguistic states after independence-After independence again Political movements for the creation of new, linguistic-based states developed. The Congress-led Government became concerned that the states formed solely on a linguistic basis might be unsuitable, and might even pose a risk to the

national unity. This fear was generated mainly due to division of India. In the interregnum, movements for Ayikya Kerala, Samyukta Maharashtra and Vishalandhra picked up momentum. The Communist Part of India took the lead in forging these movements and popularising the concept of linguistic states in India and its efficacy in democratisation of independent India. A separate linguistic state of Andhra turned out to be a hot issue. In the Constituent Assembly itself, the government of India made a statement that Andhra could be mentioned as a separate unit in the new constitution, thus prompting the drafting committee to constitute a separate committee to inquire into the demands of linguistic states. It was thus that the Dhar commission came into existence with a mandate to examine and report on the formation of new provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra.

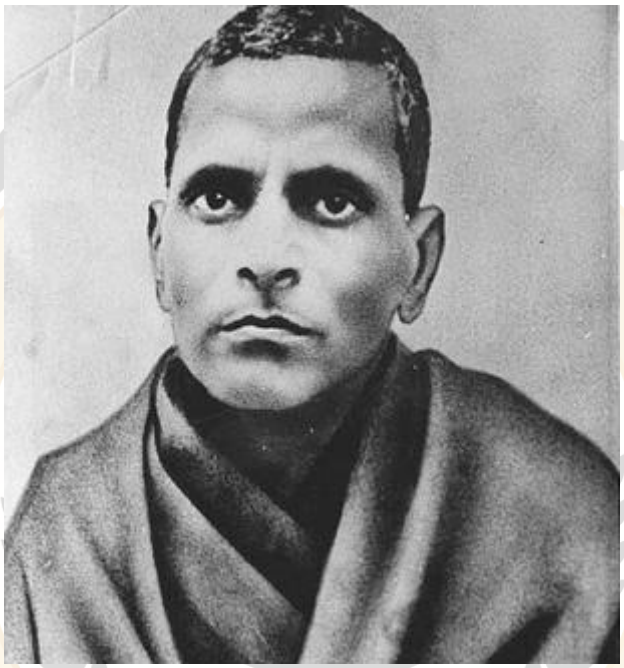
Linguistic Provinces Commission (or Dar Commission): On 17 June 1948, Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, set up the Linguistic Provinces Commission to recommend whether the states should be reorganized on linguistic basis or not. The committee included SK Dar (retired Judge of the Allahabad High Court), JN Lal (lawyer) and Panna Lal (retired Indian Civil Service officer). In its 10 December 1948 report, the Commission recommended that "the formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations is not in the larger interests of the Indian nation". The commission went on to say, "bilingual districts in border areas, which have developed an economic and organic life of their own, should not be broken up and should be disposed of on considerations of their own special needs." The commission asked the government of India to reorganise the states on the basis of geographical continuity, financial self-sufficiency, administrative convenience and capacity for future development.

The JVP committee: Soon after the report was published, the Congress, at its Jaipur session, set up the "JVP committee" to study the recommendations of the Dar Commission. The committee comprised Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, in addition to the Congress president Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The committee shifted the emphasis from language as the basis to security, unity and economic prosperity, thus backtracking on the party's own election manifesto. This was perhaps influenced by the situation prevailing immediately after the partition. The three-member committee felt that, in Patel's words, supporting "such federal demands will come in the way of growth of India as a nation." In its report dated 1 April 1949, the Committee stated that the time was not suitable for formation of new provinces, but also stated "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we, as democrats, have to submit to it, but subject to certain limitations in regard to the good of India as a whole."

Views of National leaders- B. R. Ambedkar submitted a Memorandum (dated 14 October 1948) to the Dar Commission, supporting the formation of linguistic provinces, specifically the formation of the Marathi majority Maharashtra state with Bombay as its capital. To address the concern of national unity, he suggested that the official language of every province should be same as the official language of the Central Government. Ambedkar supported "One state, One language" but not "One language, One state "**KM Munshi**, a Gujarati leader opposed to incorporation of Bombay in the proposed Maharashtra state. He opposed the linguistic reorganization proposal, saying that "the political ambition of a linguistic group can only be satisfied by the exclusion and discrimination of other linguistic groups within the area. No safeguards and no fundamental rights can save them from the subtle psychological exclusion which linguism implies." **Nehru** saw more clearly than most the dangers of linguistic chauvinism as he did the menace of communalism. Given the Congress' endorsement of the idea of linguistic provinces over 30 years ago, Nehru and Patel fought a rearguard action to stave off the inevitable. Nehru's confidant **V.K. Krishna Menon's** asserted that the agitation for a Malayalam-speaking State was a recent and artificial one and backed only by parties seeking 'conquest of power'. Krishna Menon alleged that the anticipated recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission pertaining to the creation of separate Kerala and Tamil States was inspired by the personal views of one of the members of the Commission (the reference being to **K. M. Panikkar**), and said that the recommendation was inadvisable for economic, political, administrative, strategic and national security reasons. As a sectarian sub-nationalism of fascist orientation was developing in the Tamil country, he argued, a separate Tamil province would be very anti-national, while the Kerala State would doubtless go Communist after the next general elections with disastrous domestic and international consequences. Krishna Menon added: 'We will Balkanise India if we further dismember the State instead of creating larger

units'." In his note to Nehru of September 28, 1955, Krishna Menon suggested the creation of "a Southern State, a **Dakshin Pradesh**, as a corollary to Uttar Pradesh, which could include the present Tamil Nadu, Travancore, Cochin, Malabar and possibly Kanara up to Kasaragode."

Andhra Pradesh: The first linguistic state- This was the time when the Communist Party of India and Andhra Mahasabha were mobilising the masses in the princely state of Hyderabad against the Nizam's rule. Formation of a separate state of Vishalandhra, consisting of all Telugu speaking people scattered across three regions, was one of the slogans of Andhra Mahasabha. As the movement progressed, this slogan caught the people's imagination. A majority of the landlords and razakars opposed the formation of Vishalandhra and supported the Hyderabad commissionery as it could protect their proprietary interests.



Potti Sri Ramulu

The Telangana struggle of 1946-51 brought the key issues of land reforms and linguistic states back on the agenda and the central government had to finally take note of these issues. The whole development proved very costly for the Congress. In the first general elections held in 1952, the Telugu people elected with thumping majorities those who had fought for Vishalandhra. In the Madras legislative assembly, the Congress could get a mere 43 out of the 140 seats falling in the Andhra region. Though with some difficulties, the Congress foisted upon the province Rajagopalachari as the chief minister, and thus was scuttled the chances for the formation of a non-Congress government in undivided Madras, which would have been the first non-Congress government in independent India. Backed by the tremendous support from Telugu people for Vishalandhra, on July 16, 1952, P Sundarayya moved a private member's bill in parliament seeking the formation of a linguistic Andhra state. In this speech, Sundarayya said, "Rather than with this kind of multilingual states, the country will be more united once the linguistic reorganisation of states is done… If these demands are not met, the situation will be more volatile." Sundarayya also tried to assuage Nehru's fears about security and integrity of the newly independent India by saying, "The linguistic states, instead of being a threat to the integrity of the country, can support and consolidate national security and integrity in a much more effective way." But Nehru and the Congress were not convinced and Nehru refused to concede the demand. On the other hand, dissatisfied with Congress inaction on the demand, **Potti Sri Ramulu**, a prominent Congress leader from Andhra region, died after 58 days of fast. Sri Ramulu's death engulfed the entire Andhra in a chaos. The spontaneous protests were so widespread and intense that the central government was forced to give in to the demand and for this purpose brought a bill in parliament on September 2, 1953. The government at that time took enough caution not to use the word "linguistic state." Speaking in Rajya Sabha on this occasion, Sundarayya criticised the Nehru government severely. He said, "Even after 30 years of experience, the government is trying to negate the principle of linguistic states

by merely refuting it. People will succeed in getting the linguistic states formed." Subsequently, in 1953, the 16 northern, Telugu-speaking districts of Madras State became the new State of Andhra. This sparked of agitations all over the country, with linguistic groups demanding separate statehoods. Finally, Nehru had to come to terms with the popular sentiments and announce on the floor of Lok Sabha the formation of Andhra Rashtram with undisputed 14 districts. Thus on October 1, 1953, the new state of Andhra Rashtram came into being through bifurcation of Madras province. (But still Hyderabad regions of Telugu speaking areas, what we call Telangana, were not included). Creation of Andhra Rashtram strengthened the struggle for Vishalandhra (which would contain all Telugu speaking areas) and also for United Kerala and Samyukta Maharashtra. Yielding to pressures and mass mobilisation, the Nehru government set up a States Reorganisation Commission (SRC), also known as Fazal Ali commission.

State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) or Fazl Ali Commission: In order to reorganise the states, the Government of India constituted the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) under the chairmanship of Fazl Ali, a former Supreme Court judge. The other two members of the commission were H. N. Kunzru and K. M. Panikkar. The efforts of this commission were overseen by Govind Ballabh Pant, who served as the Home Minister from December 1954. The Commission submitted its report on 30 September 1955, with the following recommendations:

- The three-tier (Part-A/B/C) state system should be abolished
- The institution of Rajapramukh and special agreement with former princely states should be abolished.
- The general control vested in Government of India by Article 371 should be abolished
- Only the following 3 states should be the Union Territories: Andaman & Nicobar, Delhi and Manipur.

The other Part-C/D territories should be merged with the adjoining states In Part II of Report of the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) 1955, titled "Factors Bearing on Reorganization", the Commission clearly said that "it is neither possible nor desirable to reorganise States on the basis of the single test of either language or culture, but that a balanced approach to the whole problem is necessary in the interest of our national unity." The States Reorganisation Act, 1956: The States Reorganisation Act, 1956 was a major reform of the boundaries of India's states and territories, organising them along linguistic lines. Although additional changes to India's state boundaries have been made since 1956, the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 remains the single most extensive change in state boundaries since the independence of India in 1947. The Act came into effect at the same time as the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, which (among other things) restructured the constitutional framework for India's existing states and the requirements to pass the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 under the provisions of Articles 3 & 4 of the constitution. Under the Seventh Amendment, the existing distinction among Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D states was abolished. The distinction between Part A and Part B states was removed, becoming known simply as "states". A new type of entity, the union territory, replaced the classification as a Part C or Part D state. A further Act also came into effect on 1 November, transferring certain territories from Bihar to West Bengal. The States Reorganisation Act of 1956 implemented some of the recommendations of the SRC. In addition to the three Union Territories (UTs) proposed by the SRC, it also established Laccadive, Minicoy & Amindivi Islands, Himachal Pradesh and Tripura as UTs. It established a total of 14 states in addition to these UTs. The states were Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Zonal Council: With a view to promoting cooperation among various states, the act provided for five zonal councils—-for the northern, central, eastern, western and southern zone states, respectively. Each zonal council consisted of a union minister appointed by the President; the chief ministers of states in the zones, two ministers of each state in the zone, one member from each union territory nominated by the President (if such a territory was included in the zone), and the advisor to the Governor of Assam in the case of the eastern zone.

Following recommendations of the commission were not accepted:

- **Vidarbha**- The SRC recommended formation of separate Vidarbha State by splitting majority Marathi speaking areas from Madhya Pradesh state. However, the Indian government has not accepted the recommendation and merged these areas in the predominantly Marathi speaking Bombay state.

- **Andhra- Telangana**- Telangana state would have been the second state for the Telugu speaking people beside Andhra state as per the SRC recommendation but it was not accepted in the Act. The Commission's report judged the arguments for and against the merger of the Telugu majority Telangana region (of Hyderabad State) and the Andhra State (created in 1953). It was recommended that it will be in the interests of Andhra as well as Telangana, if for the present, the Telangana area is to constitute into a separate State, which may be known as the Hyderabad State with provision for its unification with Andhra after the general elections likely to be held in or about 1961 if by a two thirds majority the legislature of the residency Hyderabad State expresses itself in favor of such unification". Hyderabad Chief Minister in his letter to Congress President said Communist parties supported the merger for their political calculations. Hyderabad PCC chief said overwhelming majority from Congress party opposed the merger. In Hyderabad assembly more than two-third MLA's supported the merger and opposed the Fazal Ali Commission's recommendation to keep Telangana as a separate State for 5 years. An agreement was reached between Telangana leaders and Andhra leaders on 20 February 1956 to merge Telangana and Andhra with promises to safeguard Telangana's interests. The Gentlemen's agreement of Andhra Pradesh was signed between Telangana and Andhra leaders before the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. The agreement provided safeguards with the purpose of preventing discrimination against Telangana by the government of Andhra Pradesh. Following the Gentlemen's agreement, the central government established a unified Andhra Pradesh on November 1, 1956. There have been several movements to invalidate the merger of Telangana and Andhra, major ones occurring in 1969, 1972 and 2000s onwards. The Telangana movement gained momentum over decades becoming a widespread political demand of creating a new state from the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. In early 2014, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 was approved by the Indian parliament, and Telangana became India's 29th state on 2 June 2014. The violations of this agreement are cited as one of the reasons for formation of separate statehood for Telangana.

- **Belgaum border dispute**- After India became independent in 1947; the Belgaum district (which was in the erstwhile Bombay Presidency) became a part of the Bombay State. The award of the Belgaum district to the Kannada-majority Mysore State (later Karnataka) was contested by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, which wanted it to be included in the proposed Marathi-majority Maharashtra state.

- **Punjabi Subah**- The Akali Dal, a Sikh-dominated political party active mainly in Punjab, sought to create a Punjabi Subah province. This new state would be a Sikh-majority state, which caused concern among the Punjabi Hindus. The Sikh leaders such Fateh Singh tactically stressed the linguistic basis of the demand, while downplaying its religious basis — a state where the distinct Sikh identity could be preserved. The Hindu newspapers from Jalandhar, exhorted the Punjabi Hindus to declare Hindi as their "mother tongue", so that the Punjabi Subah proponents could be deprived of the argument that their demand was solely linguistic. The States Reorganization Commission rejected the demand for a Punjabi-majority state saying that it lacked a majority support and that Punjabi was not grammatically very distinct from Hindi. , Though the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) was merged with Punjab. Akali Dal continued its movement, and in 1966 the Punjab Reorganisation Act split Punjab into the Sikh-majority Punjab state and the Hindu-majority state of Haryana, with Chandigarh, administered as a separate union territory, as the shared capital of the two states. Union Territory of Himachal was also made state by including hilly areas of Punjab.

- **Kerala-Madras**- On the basis of the percentage of the people speaking Tamil, the S.R. Commission recommended for the transfer of four taluks namely, Agasteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode to Tamil Nadu from the State of Travancore-Cochin. The same yard stick was used for the transfer of Shenkotta Taluk to Tamil Nadu. While dealing with Devikulam and Peermede taluks, even though the majority was Tamil-speaking people and the representatives to the State Assembly were Tamils, the commission used a different yard stick and recommended to retain in Travancore-Cochin State due to geographical reasons. Even though Shenkotta was fully transferred by the commission, the Joint Committee appointed to fix the exact boundaries of the states, divided Shenkotta Taluk and allowed Travancore–Cochin State to retain a major portion.

From 1956 to Present Division:

(Maharashtra and Gujarat) In 1960, as a result of agitation and violence (In Mahagujarat Movement, Bombay State was reorganised on linguistic lines), the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created by bifurcating the state of Bombay. With this the strength of the Indian states rose to 15 Territories from France and Portuguese After the acquisition of Chandernagore, Mahe, Yaman and Karikal from France, and the territories of **Goa, Daman and Diu** from the Portuguese, these were either merged with the neighbouring states or given the status of union territories. **Dadra and Nagar Haveli** -The Portuguese ruled this territory until its liberation in 1954. Subsequently, the administration was carried on till 1961 by an administrator chosen by the people themselves. It was converted into a union territory of India by the 10th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1961. Goa, Daman and Diu India acquired these three territories from the Portuguese by means of a police action in 1961. They were constituted as a union territory by the 12th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1962. Later, in 1987, Goa was conferred a statehood Consequently, Daman and Diu was made a separate union territory. **Puducherry**- The territory of Puducherry comprises the former French establishments in India known as Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. The French handed over this territory to India in 1954. Subsequently, it was administered as an 'acquired territory', till 1962 when it was made a union territory by the 14th Constitutional Amendment Act. **Formation of Nagaland** -In 1963, the state of Nagaland was formed to placate the Nagas taking the Naga Hills and Tuensang area out of the state of Assam. However, before providing it the status of a full- fledged state, it was placed under the control of the Governor of Assam in 1961. With this the strength of the Indian states rose to 16.

Shah Commission and formation of Haryana, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh -In 1966, the Parliament passed the Punjab Reorganization Act after an agitation for the formation of Punjabi Subah. This step was taken on the recommendation of the Shah Commission appointed in April, 1966. As a result of this act, the Punjabi-speaking areas were constituted into the state of Haryana and the hilly areas were merged with the adjoining Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh was made a Union Territory and was to serve as a common capital of Punjab and Haryana. The two states were also to have a common High Court, common university and joint arrangement for the management of the major components of the existing irrigation and power system. With the division of Punjab, the strength of states rose to 17.

Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya- In 1972, the two Union Territories of Manipur and Tripura and the Sub-State of Meghalaya got statehood and the two union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh (originally known as North-East Frontier Agency—NEFA) came into being. With this, the number of states of the Indian Union increased to 21 (Manipur 19th, Tripura 20th and Meghalaya 21st). Initially, the 22nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1969) created Meghalaya as an 'autonomous state' or 'sub-state' within the state of Assam with its own legislature and council of ministers. The union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were also formed out of the territories of Assam.

Sikkim- Till 1947, Sikkim was an Indian princely state ruled by Chogyal. In 1947, after the lapse of British paramountcy, Sikkim became a 'protectorate' of India, whereby the Indian Government assumed responsibility for the defence, external affairs and communications of Sikkim. In 1974, Sikkim expressed its desire for greater association with India. Accordingly, the 35th Constitutional Amendment Act (1974) was enacted by the parliament. This amendment introduced a new class of statehood under the constitution by

conferring on Sikkim the status of an 'associate state' of the Indian Union. For this purpose, a new Article 2A and a new schedule (Tenth Schedule having the terms and conditions of association) were inserted in the Constitution. In a referendum held in 1975, people of Sikkim voted for the abolition of the institution of Chogyal and Sikkim becoming an integral part of India. The 36th Constitutional Amendment Act (1975) was enacted to make Sikkim a full-fledged state of the Indian Union (the 22nd state). This amendment amended the First and the Fourth Schedules to the Constitution and added a new Article 371-F to provide for certain special provisions with respect to the administration of Sikkim. It also repealed Article 2A and the Tenth Schedule that were added by the 35th Amendment Act of 1974.

Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa- In 1987, three new States of Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa came into being as the 23rd, 24th and 25th states respectively. The Union Territory of Mizoram was conferred the status of a full state as a sequel to the signing of a memorandum of settlement (Mizoram Peace Accord) in 1986 between the Central government and the Mizo National Front, ending the two-decade-old insurgency. Arunachal Pradesh had also been a union territory from 1972. The State of Goa was created by separating the territory of Goa from the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand In 2000, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand were created out of the territories of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar respectively. These became the 26th, 27th and 28th states of the Indian Union respectively. **Telangana Became 29th state of India after division of Andhra Pradesh.**

The United Provinces was renamed 'Uttar Pradesh' in 1950. In 1969, Madras was renamed 'Tamil Nadu'. In 1973, Mysore was renamed 'Karnataka' and Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands were renamed 'Lakshadweep'. In 1992, the Union Territory of Delhi was redesignated as the National Capital Territory of Delhi (without being conferred the status of a full-fledged state) by the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1991. In 2006, Uttaranchal was renamed as 'Uttarakhand' and Pondicherry was renamed as 'Puducherry'. In 2011, Orissa was renamed as 'Odisha'.

Note: In August 2019, two new Union territories viz Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir were created by Union Parliament. (This development must be seen in the context of abrogation of the special status granted by Article 370 of the Indian constitution; However this is only a transitional arrangement as far as the UT of J&K is concerned, as it will be elevated to the status of Statehood as soon as normalcy and peace returns to the valley and when the Government deems it fit to do so)

MINORITY LANGUAGES

An important aspect of the language problem has been the status of minority languages. Unilingual states were not possible in whatever manner their boundaries were drawn. Consequently, a large number of linguistic minorities, that is, those who speak a language other than the main or the official language of the state, continue to exist in linguistically reorganized states. Overall nearly 18 per cent of India's population do not speak the official language of the states where they live as their mother tongue. There is of course a great deal of variation among the states on this count. According to the 1971 census, the percentages of linguistic minorities to total population ranged from 4 in Kerala to 34 in Karnataka, 3.9 in Assam to 44.5 in Jammu and Kashmir.

From the beginning, the important point to be decided upon was the status and rights of these minorities in their states. On the one hand, there was the question of their protection, for there was the ever-present danger of them being meted out unfair treatment, on the other, there was the need to promote their integration with the major language group of a state. A linguistic minority had to be given the confidence that it would not be discriminated against by the majority and that its language and culture would continue to exist and develop. At the same time, the majority had to be assured that meeting the needs of the linguistic minority would not generate separatist sentiments or demands and that the minorities would develop a degree of state loyalty.

To confront this problem certain fundamental rights were provided to the linguistic minorities in the Constitution. For example, Article 30 states that 'all minorities, whether based an religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice' and, more important, 'that the state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.' Article 347 lays down that on a demand being made on behalf of a minority, the President may direct that its language shall be officially recognized throughout the state or any part thereof for such purposes as he might specify. The official policy since 1956, sanctioned by a constitutional amendment in that year, has been to provide for instruction in the mother tongue in the primary and secondary classes wherever there are sufficient number of children to form a class. The amendment also provides for the appointment of a Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities to investigate and report regularly on the implementation of these safeguards. On the whole, the central government has tended to play a very positive role in defence of the rights of the minorities, but the implementation of the minority safeguards is within the purview of the state governments and therefore differs from state to state.

In general, despite some progress in several states, in most of them the position of the linguistic minorities has not been satisfactory. The constitutional safeguards have quite often been inadequately enforced. The Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities has in his reports regularly noted innumerable cases of discrimination against linguistic minorities in matters of schooling, admission to technical and medical institutions and employment in the state public services because of lack of proficiency in the official language of the state. However, a redeeming feature is that quite often facilities for primary education in the mother tongue of the minorities have been provided, though these maybe inadequate in terms of competent teachers and textbooks. But even here the big exception is the all-round failure in the case of tribal minority languages.

Among the minority languages, Urdu is a special case. It is the largest minority tongue in India. Nearly 23.3 million people spoke Urdu in 1951. Urdu speakers constituted substantial percentages of the population in U.P. (10.5), Bihar (8.8), Maharashtra (7.2), Andhra Pradesh (7.5) and Karnataka (9). Moreover, an overwhelming majority of Muslims, India's largest religious minority, claimed Urdu as their mother tongue. Urdu is also recognized as one of India's national languages and is listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

While nearly all the major languages of India were also the official languages of one state or the other, Urdu was not the official language of any state except the small state of Jammu and Kashmir where the mother tongues were in any case Kashmiri, Dogri and Ladakhi. Consequently, Urdu did not get official support in any part of the country. On the contrary, it faced official discrimination and hostility both in U.P. and Bihar. We may briefly take up the case of U.P., though the position was no different in Bihar. The U.P. government decided early on to declare Hindi as the only official language of the state; the subterfuge was that Hindi and Urdu were not two separate languages and therefore there was no need to make Urdu a second official language! In practice, Urdu began to be abolished in many primary schools. Its use as a medium of instruction was also increasingly limited. For example, in 1979-80, only 3.69 per cent of primary school students received instruction in Urdu while the number of Urdu speakers in 1981 was 10.5 per cent. The Hindi protagonists also began to eliminate Urdu words from written Hindi. The neglect of Urdu in the state led the well-known, left-wing Urdu critic, S. Ehtesham Husain, to complain: 'Urdu is being constantly termed as only an off-shoot or variety of Hindi, a foreign language, a language of the Muslims, an instrument of communal hatred and an enemy of Indian unity. All these contrary things are said in the same breath, to suppress it.'

Urdu speakers, therefore, were persistent in demanding that Urdu should be recognized as the second official language in the states where it had a large presence, especially in U.P. and Bihar. The U.P. government was equally consistent and successful in opposing the demand; its main justification being that the States Reorganization Commission had recommended that at least 30 per cent population in a state should speak a language before it could be made the second official or regional language. Jawaharlal Nehru, in particular, was very supportive of Urdu and critical of the anti-Urdu thinking and activities of a large number of per-

sons, including Congressmen, in northern India. 'Urdu', he told the parliament, 'is an example of integration in India, not only of languages but of minds, literatures and cultures. It is cent per cent an Indian language.' He pointed out that Urdu had 'enriched Indian culture and thought.' He asked the chief minister of U.P. to declare Urdu as a second official language in districts where it was widely used and in other areas to give it the full facilities of a minority language. But even when Nehru succeeded in persuading the U.P. government to agree to take certain steps in this regard, they were nullified by laxity in their implementation. The U.P. government refused to pass legislation giving legal sanctity to the rights granted to Urdu on the ground that such a step might lead to communal riots. The governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were more supportive of Urdu. In Andhra, Urdu has been recognized since 1968 as an additional language for the Telengana region. And in both the states, adequate facilities are provided for instruction through the medium of Urdu in the primary stage and for instruction in Urdu at the higher school stages. Two other aspects of Urdu's position may be noted. First, unfortunately the question of Urdu has got entangled with the communal question. While many Muslims regard it as the language of their community as such, many Hindu communalists are hostile to it because of their anti-Muslim ideological position. Second, despite active hostility of many and official neglect, Urdu continues not only to exist but even grow in terms of literary output, journals and newspapers and especially as the language of films and television because of its inherent vigour and cultural roots among the Indian people.

INTEGRATION OF TRIBALS

The task of integrating the tribal people into the mainstream was extremely complex, given the varied conditions under which they live in different parts of the country, and their different languages and distinct cultures. The 1971 census recorded over 400 tribal communities numbering nearly 38 million people and constituting nearly 6.9 per cent of the Indian population. Spread all over India, their greatest concentration is in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, north-eastern India, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. Except in the North-East, they constitute minorities in their home states. Residing mostly in the hills and forest areas, in colonial India they lived in relative isolation, and their traditions, habits, cultures and ways of life were markedly different from those of their non-tribal neighbours. Nevertheless, except in the North-East, the two had for centuries interacted culturally, socially, economically and politically.

In most parts of the country, colonialism brought radical transformation of the tribals as their relative isolation was eroded by the penetration of market forces and they were integrated with the British and princely administrations. A large number of money-lenders, traders, revenue farmers and other middlemen and petty officials invaded the tribal areas and disrupted the tribals' traditional way of life. They were increasingly engulfed in debt and lost their lands to outsiders, often being reduced to the position of agricultural labourers, sharecroppers and rack-rented tenants. Many were forced to retreat further into the hills. Belated legislation to prevent alienation of land by the tribal people failed to halt the process. Verrier Elwin, who lived nearly all his life among the tribal people in central and north-eastern India and who was one of the formative influences in the evolution of the new government's policies towards the tribes, was to refer to the fate of the tribal people under British rule as follows: 'But now they suffered oppression and exploitation, for there soon came merchants and liquor-venders, cajoling, tricking, swindling them in their ignorance and simplicity until bit by bit their broad acres dwindled and they sank into the poverty in which many of them still live today.'

Simultaneously, 'missionaries were destroying their art, their dances, their weaving and their whole culture.' Colonialism also transformed the tribals' relationship with the forest. They depended on the forest for food, fuel and cattle feed and raw materials for their handicrafts. In many parts of India the hunger for land by the immigrant peasants from the plains led to the destruction of forests, depriving the tribals of their traditional means of livelihood. To conserve forests and to facilitate their commercial exploitation, the colonial authorities brought large tracts of forest lands under forest laws which forbade shifting cultivation and put severe restrictions on the tribals' use of the forest and their access to forest products. Loss of land, indebtedness, exploitation by middlemen, denial of access to forests and forest products, and oppression and extortion by policemen, forest officials, and other government officials was to lead to a series of tribal

uprisings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—for example the Santhal uprising and the Munda rebellion led by Birsa Munda—and to the participation of the tribal people in the national and peasant movements in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

The approaches to the development of the tribal people in India can, be divided into three categories such as: 1. Isolationist Approach, 2. Assimilation Approach and 3. Integration Approach

Isolationist Approach:

- It was followed by the British after the policies of the British led to revolts against them by the Tribes. It manifested in the form of British designating tribal areas as 'excluded areas ' based on the principle of non-interference
- Under British rule, the extension of a centralized administration over areas, which previously were outside the effective control of princely rulers, **deprived many aboriginal tribes of their autonomy.**
- Though British administrators **had no intention of interfering with tribesmen's rights and traditional manner of living**, the very process of establishment of law and order in outlying areas exposed the tribes to the pressure of more advanced populations.
- The areas which had previously been virtually un-administered have been unsafe for outsiders who did not enjoy the confidence and goodwill of the tribal inhabitants**, traders and money-lenders could now establish themselves under the protection of the British** administration and in many cases they were followed by settlers who succeeded in acquiring large stretches of tribes' land.
- **Administrative officers who did not understand tribal system of land tenure introduced uniform methods of revenue collection**. But these had the un-intended effect of **facilitating the alienation of tribal land** to members of advanced populations.
- There were some **tribes,** however, who **rebelled against an administration**, which allowed outsiders to deprive them of their land.
- **In the Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas such rebellions of desperate tribesmen recurred throughout the nineteenth century**, and there were minor risings in the Agency tracts of Madras and in some of the districts of Bombay inhabited by Bhils.
- Santhals are believed to have lost about 10,000 men in their rebellion of 1855. **None of these insurrections were aimed primarily at the British administration, but they were a reaction to their exploitation and oppression by Hindu landlords and money-lenders**.
- In some cases these **rebellions led to official inquiries and to legislative enactments aimed at protecting tribes' right to their land**. Seen in historical perspective it appears that land alienation laws had, on the whole, only a palliative effect. **In most areas encroachment on land held by tribes continued even in the face of protective legislation**.

Assimilation Approach

- This believed in mainstream Tribals and their culture completely eroding their culture completely by making them accept the mainstream culture
- **Acceptance or denial of the necessity for assimilation with Hindu society** is ultimately a question of values. In the past, Hindu society had been tolerant of groups that would not conform to the standards set by the higher castes.

- Those groups were **denied equal ritual status**; but no efforts were made to deflect them from their chosen style of living. In recent years this attitude has changed.
- It is the influence of the Western belief in universal values which has encouraged a spirit of intolerance vis-a-vis cultural and social divergences.
- India is a multilingual, a multiracial country and multi-cultural. And as long **as the minorities are free to follow their traditional way of life**, it would seem only fair that the culture and the social order of tribes however distinct from that of the majority community should also be respected.
- **Assimilation will occur automatically and inevitably** where small tribal groups are enclosed within numerically stronger Hindu populations.
- In India's northern and north-eastern frontier live vigorous tribal populations which **resist assimilation as well as inclusion within Hindu caste system.**

Integration approach

- The Government of India has adopted a policy of integration of tribals with the mainstream **aiming at developing a creative adjustment between the tribes and non tribes leading to a responsible partnership**.
- By adopting the **policy of integration or progressive acculturation** the Government has laid the foundation for the uninhibited march of the tribals towards **equality, upward mobility, and economic viability and assured proximity to the national mainstream**.
- The constitution has committed the nation to **two courses of action in respect of scheduled tribes, viz.**

    a) Giving protection to their distinctive way of life.

    b) Protecting them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation and discrimination and bringing them at par with the rest of the nation so that they may be integrated with the national life.

Thus by the Constitution Order 1950 issued by the President of India in exercise of powers conferred by Article 342 of the Constitution of India 255 tribes in 17 states were declared to be scheduled tribes

ROOTS OF INDIA's TRIBAL POLICY

The preservation of the tribal people's rich social and cultural heritage lay at the heart of the government's policy of tribal integration. As Jawaharlal Nehru, the main influence in shaping the government's attitude towards the tribals put it: 'The first problem we have to face there (in the tribal areas) is to inspire them (the tribal people) with confidence and to make them feel at one with India, and to realize that they are part of India and have an honoured place in it.' At the same time, 'India to them should signify not only a protecting force but a liberating one.' Indian nationalism, Nehru thought, was capable of accommodating the uniqueness of the tribal people. There were two major approaches regarding the place to be accorded to tribals in Indian society. One approach was to leave the tribal people alone, uncontaminated by modern influences operating outside their world and to let them stay more or less as they were. The second approach was that of assimilating them completely and as quickly as possible into the Indian society all around them. The disappearance of the tribal way of life was not to be regretted; it was to be welcomed for that would represent their 'upliftment.'

Jawaharlal Nehru rejected both these approaches. The first approach, of treating the tribal people 'as museum specimens to be observed and written about,' was, he said, 'to insult them.' The tribal people, he wrote, 'could not be left cut off from the world as they were.' Isolation was in any case impossible at this stage,

for the process of penetration by the outside world had already gone too far and 'it was not possible or desirable to isolate them.' The second approach of allowing them 'to be engulfed by the masses of Indian humanity,' or of their assimilation through the operation of normal outside forces was also wrong, according to Nehru. This would lead to the loss of the tribals' social and cultural identity and of the many virtues they possessed. In fact, he pointed out, 'if normal factors were allowed to operate, unscrupulous people from outside would take possession of tribal lands … and forests and interfere with the life of the tribal people.' This would also 'upset their whole life and culture, which had so much of good in them.' Instead of these two approaches, Nehru favoured the policy of integrating the tribal people in Indian society, of making them an integral part of the Indian nation, even while maintaining their distinct identity and culture. There were two basic parameters of the Nehruvian approach: 'the tribal areas have to progress' and 'they have to progress in their own way'. Progress did not mean 'an attempt merely to duplicate what we have got in other parts of India.' Whatever was good in the rest of India would 'be adopted by them gradually.' Moreover, whatever changes were needed would be 'worked out by the tribals themselves.'

The problem was how to combine these two seemingly contradictory approaches. Nehru stood for economic and social development of the tribal people in multifarious ways, especially in the fields of communication, modern medical facilities, agriculture and education. In this regard, he laid down certain broad guidelines for government policy. First, the tribals should develop along the lines of their own genius; there should be no imposition or compulsion from outside. The non-tribals should not approach them with a superiority complex. Rather, the understanding should be that they had an equal contribution to make to the evolution of the common culture and social and political life of the country. Second, tribal rights in land and forests should be respected and no outsider should be able to take possession of tribal lands. The incursion of the market economy into tribal areas had to be strictly controlled and regulated. Third, it was necessary to encourage the tribal languages which 'must be given all possible support and the conditions in which they can flourish must be safeguarded.'

Fourth, for administration, reliance should be placed on the tribal people themselves, and administrators should be recruited from amongst them and trained. As few as possible outsiders should be introduced as administrators in tribal areas and they should be carefully chosen. They should have a sympathetic and understanding approach, and should not consider themselves superior to or apart from the tribal people. They should be prepared to share their life with the tribal people among whom they work. Fifth, there should be no over-administration of tribal areas. The effort should be to administer and develop them through the tribals own social and cultural institutions.

Nehru's approach was in turn based on the nationalist policy towards tribals since the twenties when Gandhiji set up ashrams in the tribal areas and promoted constructive work. After independence this policy was supported by Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, and other major political leaders. To give shape to the government's policy, a beginning was made in the Constitution itself which directed under Article 46 that the state should promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the tribal people and should protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation, through special legislation. The governors of the states in which tribal areas were situated were given special responsibility to protect tribal interests, including the power to modify central and state laws in their application to tribal areas, and to frame regulations for the protection of tribals' right to land and also their protection from moneylenders. The application of the fundamental rights was amended for this purpose. The Constitution also extended full political rights to the tribal people. In addition, it provided for reservation of seats in the legislatures and positions in the administrative services for the Scheduled Tribes as in the case of the Scheduled Castes. The Constitution also provided for the setting up of Tribal Advisory Councils in all states containing tribal areas to advise on matters concerning the welfare of tribals. A Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was appointed by the President to investigate whether the safeguards provided for them were being observed.

Legislative as well as executive action was taken by the state governments to prevent loss of tribal lands to non-tribal people and to prevent exploitation of the tribals by moneylenders. The central and the state

governments created special facilities and organized special programmes for the welfare and development of the tribal areas and the tribal people including the promotion of cottage and village industries and generation of employment among them. Large expenditures were undertaken and large sums set apart in the Plans for the purpose. The funding for tribal welfare significantly increased after 1971. In spite of the constitutional safeguards and the efforts of the central and state governments, the tribals' progress and welfare has been very slow, and even dismal. Except in the North-East, the tribals continue to be poor, indebted, landless and often unemployed. The problem often lies in weak execution of even well-intentioned measures. Quite often there is a divergence between the central and the state government policies, the latter being less in tune with tribal interests. In particular, state governments have been relatively ineffective in administering the positive policies and laws laid down by the central government or by the state governments themselves, as repeatedly shown by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and in the reports of the Planning Commission. Quite often the funds allocated for tribal welfare are not spent or are spent without corresponding results, or are even misappropriated. One of the watchdogs of tribal interests, the Tribal Advisory Councils, have not functioned effectively.

Often the administrative personnel are ill-trained or even prejudiced against tribals. But sympathetic officials are also known to be quickly transferred out of tribal areas under the pressure of traders, moneylenders, forest contractors and land-grabbers. A major handicap from which tribals suffer is denial of justice, often because of their unfamiliarity with the laws and the legal system. Laws preventing transfer of land to outsiders have continued to be evaded, leading to alienation of land and eviction of tribal. Rapid extension of mines and industries has worsened their conditions in many areas. While deforestation proceeds apace through the cooperation of corrupt officials and politicians with forest contractors, the tribals' traditional right of access to the forest and its produce is continuously curtailed. Forest laws and regulations are also used by unsympathetic and often corrupt forest officials to harass and exploit the tribal people. As a result of loss of land, deforestation and restrictions on the access to the forest, the tribal people have been facing growing unemployment and have been increasingly driven into more inaccessible stretches of hills and jungles.

The progress of education among the tribal people has been disappointingly slow. In many areas, primary education through the tribal languages has taken place, but in others the state governments have tended to neglect tribal languages and education through their medium. Tribal society almost everywhere has also been gradually developing class differences and a class structure with those belonging to the upper crust often joining forces with the upper crust of the outsiders. Further, the major gains of whatever development takes place in the fields of education, employment in administration, economy and political patronage are reaped by the small segment of the tribal elites which has slowly emerged and grown. On the whole, though there are a few danger signals, certain positive developments in the tribal sphere have occurred since 1947. Legislation to protect tribal rights and interests, activities of the tribal welfare departments, Panchayati Raj, spread of literacy and education, reservations in government services and in higher educational institutions, and repeated elections have led to increasing confidence among the tribal people and greater political participation by them—or at least by the growing middle classes and intelligentsia among them—in the constitutional political processes. They are now insisting on a greater and more active political role for themselves, and acquiring increasing representation in different political structures and institutions. Above all, they are demanding a greater share in national economic development.

Protest movements have sprung up among tribals out of their frustration with the lack of development and welfare. These are bound in time to produce positive results. The government policy has usually been conciliatory, through not necessarily successful in redressing tribal grievances. But some of the protest movements have taken to violence, leading to strong state action against them. Little ground has been gained by them, though they have often dramatically drawn national attention to the tribal condition. The growing tribal antagonism towards the non-tribal people or outsiders living in tribal areas has been another unfortunate development. Undoubtedly, some of the outsiders like traders, moneylenders, landlords and government officials have been a scourge of the tribal areas, but, over decades, many other outsiders—peasants, workers, teachers, doctors and other middle and lower middle class persons—have now settled

there, outnumbering the tribals in almost all tribal areas outside the North-East. The mass of the tribals and non-tribals are equally poor and have a common interest in economic and social development as also social and economic justice. Besides, most of the middleclass non-tribals, including many of the traders and industrialists, do perform useful economic functions in the tribal areas. Any undue antagonism and antipathy between the tribals and non-tribals would be inimical and even dangerous to both. It is no longer true that the only relationship that can exist between the two is an exploitative one. Tribals cannot expect to revert to isolation from their non-tribal neighbours or to prevent massive interaction with them, including their in-migration. In fact, the two can protect and promote their interests only through mutual cooperation.

TRIBALS IN THE NORTH-EAST

The tribes of north-eastern India, consisting of over hundred groups, speaking a wide variety of languages and living in the hill tracts of Assam, shared many of the features and problems of the tribal people in the rest of the country. But their situation was different in several respects. For one, they constituted the overwhelming majority of the population in most of the areas they inhabited. Then, non-tribals had not penetrated these areas to any significant extent, though economic contacts between the tribal and the nontribal areas had been developing over time. This was because of the British policy in the late nineteenth century.

The tribal areas occupied by the British then formed part of the Assam province but were given a separate administrative status. Their socio-political structure was not disturbed and a deliberate policy of excluding the outsiders from the plains was followed. In particular, no non-tribal plainsmen were allowed to acquire land in the tribal areas because of which the tribals suffered little loss of land.

At the same time, the British government permitted and even encouraged the Christian missionaries to move in and establish schools, hospitals and churches and to proselytise, thus introducing change and modern ideas among some of the tribal youth. The missionaries, in turn, collaborated with the colonial authorities and helped keep the nationalist influence out of the tribal areas, besides encouraging their isolation from the rest of the population of Assam and India. Infact, immediately after independence, some of the missionaries and other foreigners even promoted sentiment in favour of separate and independent states in north-eastern India.

The virtual absence of any political or cultural contact of the tribals in the North-East with the political life of the rest of India was also a striking difference. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, a powerful factor in the unification of the Indian people as a nation was the common bonds forged in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle. But this struggle had little impact among the tribals of the North-East. To quote Jawaharlal Nehru: 'The essence of our struggle for freedom was the unleashing of a liberating force in India. This force did not even affect the frontier people in one of the most important tribal areas.' And again: 'Thus they never experienced a sensation of being in a country called India and they were hardly influenced by the struggle for freedom or other movements in India. Their chief experience of outsiders was that of British officers and Christian missionaries who generally tried to make them anti-Indian.'

The tribal policy of the Government of India, inspired by Jawaharlal Nehru was therefore even more relevant to the tribal people of the North-East. 'All this North-East border area deserves our special attention,' Nehru said in October 1952, 'not only the governments, but of the people of India. Our contacts with them will do us good and will do them good also. They add to the strength, variety and cultural richness of India.' A reflection of this policy was in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution which applied only to the tribal areas of Assam. The Sixth Schedule offered a fair degree of self-government to the tribal people by providing for autonomous districts and the creation of district and regional councils which would exercise some of the legislative and judicial functions within the overall jurisdiction of the Assam legislature and the parliament. The objective of the Sixth Schedule was to enable tribals to live according to their own ways. The Government of India also expressed its willingness to further amend the constitutional provisions relating to the tribal people if it was found necessary to do so with a view to promote further autonomy. But this did not mean, Nehru clarified that the government would countenance secession from India or independence by any area or region, or would tolerate violence in the promotion of any demands.

Nehru's and Verrier Elwin's policies were implemented best of all in the North-East Frontier Agency or NEFA, which was created in 1948 out of the border areas of Assam. NEFA was established as a Union Territory outside the jurisdiction of Assam and placed under a special administration. From the beginning, the administration was manned by a special cadre of officers who were asked to implement specially designed developmental policies without disturbing the social and cultural pattern of the life of the people. As a British anthropologist who spent nearly all his life studying the tribal people and their condition wrote in 1967, 'A measure of isolation combined with a sympathetic and imaginative policy of a progressive administration has here created a situation unparalleled in other parts of India.' NEFA was named Arunachal Pradesh and granted the status of a separate state in 1987. While NEFA was developing comfortably and in harmony with the rest of the country, problems developed in the other tribal areas which were part of Assam administratively. The problems arose because the hill tribes of Assam had no cultural affinity with the Assamese and Bengali residents of the plains. The tribals were afraid of losing their identities and being assimilated by what was, with some justification, seen to be a policy of Assimilation. Especially distasteful to them was the attitude of superiority and even contempt often adopted by non-tribals working among them as teachers, doctors, government officials, traders, etc. There was also a feeling among them that the Assamese government failed to understand them and tended to neglect their interests. This feeling represented not so much the reality as the failure of the political leadership of Assam to redress tribal grievances in time and with deep concern. Soon, resentment against the Assam government began to mount and a demand for a separate hill state arose among some sections of the tribal people in the mid-fifties. But this demand was not pressed with vigour; nor did the Government of India encourage it, for it felt that the future of the hill tribes was intimately connected with Assam though further steps towards greater autonomy could be envisaged.

But the demand gained greater strength when the Assamese leaders moved in 1960 towards making Assamese the sole official language of the state. In 1960, various political parties of the hill areas merged into the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) and again demanded a separate state within the Indian union. The passage of the Assam Official Language Act, making Assamese the official language of the state, and thus the refusal of the demand for the use of the tribal languages in administration, led to an immediate and strong reaction in the tribal districts. There were hartals and demonstrations, and a major agitation developed. In the 1962 elections, the overwhelming majority of the Assembly seats from the tribal areas were won by the advocates of a separate state, who decided to boycott the State Assembly. Prolonged discussions and negotiations followed. Several commissions and committees examined the issue. Finally, in 1969, through a constitutional amendment, Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as 'a state within a state' which had complete autonomy except for law and order which remained a function of the Assam government. Meghalaya also shared Assam's High Court, Public Service Commission and Governor. Finally, as a part of the reorganization of the North-East, Meghalaya became a separate state in 1972, incorporating the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia tribes. Simultaneously, the Union Territories of Manipur and Tripura were granted statehood. The transition to statehood in the case of Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh was quite smooth. Trouble arose in the case of Nagaland and Mizoram where secessionist and insurrectionary movements developed.

Nagaland-The Nagas were the inhabitants of the Naga Hills along the North-East frontier on the Assam-Burma border. They numbered nearly 500,000 in 1961, constituted less than 0.1 per cent of India's population, and consisted of many separate tribes speaking different languages. The British had isolated the Nagas from the rest of the country and left them more or less undisturbed though Christian missionary activity was permitted, and which had led to the growth of a small educated stratum. Immediately after independence, the Government of India followed a policy of integrating the Naga areas with the State of Assam and India as a whole. A section of the Naga leadership, however, opposed such integration and rose in rebellion under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo, demanding separation from India and complete independence. They were encouraged in this move by some of the British officials and missionaries. In 1955, these separatist Nagas declared the formation of an independent government and the launching of a violent insurrection.

The Government of India responded with a two-track policy in line with Jawaharlal Nehru's wider approach towards the tribal people discussed earlier in this chapter. On the one hand, the Government of India made it clear that it would firmly oppose the secessionist demand for the independence of Naga areas and would not tolerate recourse to violence. Towards a violent secessionist movement it would firmly follow a policy of suppression and non-negotiations. As Nehru put it, 'It does not help in dealing with tough people to have weak nerves.' Consequently, when one section of the Nagas organized an armed struggle for independence, the Government of India replied by sending its army to Nagaland in early 1956 to restore peace and order.

On the other hand, Nehru realized that while strong and quick military action would make it clear that the rebels were in a no-win situation, total physical suppression was neither possible nor desirable, for the objective had to be the conciliation and winning over of the Naga people. Nehru was wedded to a 'friendly approach'. Even while encouraging the Nagas to integrate with the rest of the country 'in mind and spirit'; he favoured their right to maintain their autonomy in cultural and other matters. He was, therefore, willing to go a long way to win over the Nagas by granting them a large degree of autonomy. Refusing to negotiate with Phizo or his supporters as long as they did not give up their demand for independence or the armed rebellion, he carried on prolonged negotiations with the more moderate, nonviolent and non-secessionist Naga leaders, who realized that they could not hope to get a larger degree of autonomy or a more sympathetic leader to settle with than Nehru.

In fact, once the back of the armed rebellion was broken by the middle of 1957, the more moderate Naga leaders headed by Dr Imkongliba Ao came to the fore. They negotiated for the creation of the State of Nagaland within the Indian union. The Government of India accepted their demand through a series of intermediate steps; and the State of Nagaland came into existence in 1963. A further step forward was taken in the integration of the Indian nation. Also, politics in Nagaland since then followed, for better or worse, the pattern of politics in the other states of the union. With the formation of Nagaland as a state the back of rebellion was broken as the rebels lost much of their popular support. But though the insurgency has been brought under control, sporadic guerilla activity by Naga rebels trained in China, Pakistan and Burma and periodic terrorist attacks continue till this day.

We may also refer to one other feature of the Naga situation. Even though the record of the Indian army in Nagaland has been on the whole clean, especially if the difficult conditions under which they operate are kept in view, it has not been without blemish. Its behaviour has been sometimes improper and in rare cases even brutal. Too many times innocent people have suffered. But then it has also paid a heavy price through the loss of its soldiers and officers in guerilla attacks.

Mizoram-A situation similar to that in Nagaland developed few years later in the autonomous Mizo district of the North-East. Secessionist demands backed by some British officials had grown there in 1947 but had failed to get much support from the youthful Mizo leadership, which concentrated instead on the issues of democratization of Mizo society, economic development and adequate representation of Mizos in the Assam legislature. However, unhappiness with the Assam government's relief measures during the famine of 1959 and the passage of the Act in 1961, making Assamese the official language of the state, led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF), with Laldenga as president. While participating in electoral politics, the MNF created a military wing which received arms and ammunition and military training from East Pakistan and China. On March 1966, the MNF declared independence from India, proclaimed a military uprising and attacked military and civilian targets. The Government of India responded with immediate massive counter-insurgency measures by the army. Within a few weeks the insurrection was crushed and government control restored, though stray guerilla activity continued. Most of the hard core Mizo leaders escaped to East Pakistan.

In 1973, after the less extremist Mizo leaders had scaled-down their demand to that of a separate state of Mizoram within the Indian union, the Mizo district of Assam was separated from Assam and as Mizoram given the status of a Union Territory. Mizo insurgency gained some renewed strength in the late seventies but was again effectively dealt with by Indian armed forces. Having decimated the ranks of the separatist insurgents, the Government of India, continuing to follow the Nehruvian tribal policy, was now willing to

show consideration, offer liberal terms of amnesty to the remnants of the rebel forces and conduct negotiations for peace. A settlement was finally arrived at in 1986. Laldenga and the MNF agreed to abandon underground violent activities, surrender before the Indian authorities along with their arms, and re-enter the constitutional political stream. The Government of India agreed to the grant of full statehood to Mizoram, guaranteeing full autonomy in regard to culture, tradition, and land laws, etc. As a part of the accord, a government with Laldenga as chief minister was formed in the new State of Mizoram in February 1987.

Jharkhand-Jharkhand, the tribal area of Bihar consisting of the Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas, has for decades spawned movements for state autonomy. In this area are concentrated several major tribes of India, namely Santhal, Ho, Oraon and Munda. Unlike traditional tribes, nearly all of these practice settled plough agriculture on the basis of family farms. Economic differentiation has set in; there are a significant number of agricultural labourers and a growing number of mining and industrial workers. The land-holding pattern among tribals is as unequal and skewed as among non-tribals. A large class of moneylenders has also developed among them. The tribal society in Jharkhand has increasingly become a class-divided society. Most of tribals practise two formal religions—Hinduism and Christianity. The Jharkhand tribes, however, share some features with other Indian tribes. They have lost most of their land, generally to outsiders, and suffer from indebtedness, loss of employment and low agricultural productivity. They organized several major rebellions during the nineteenth century; and many of them actively participated in the national movement after 1919. In 1951, the Scheduled Tribes constituted 31.15 per cent of the population in Chota Nagpur (30.94 in 1971) and 44.67 per cent of the population in the Santhal Parganas (36.22 in 1971). Thus, nearly two-thirds of Jharkhand's population in 1971 was non-tribal. The overwhelming majority of both tribals and non-tribals were equally exploited poor peasants, agricultural labourers and mining and industrial workers. Inequality in land-holding and the moneylender menace were equally prevalent among the two as was the commercialization of agriculture and commercial activity.

With the spread of education and modern activity in the tribal areas, a movement for the formation of a separate tribal state of Jharkhand, incorporating Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas of South Bihar and the contiguous tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal, started during the late thirties and forties. Realizing that the interests of the tribal people could be best promoted and their domination by non-tribals ended if they had a state of their own within the Union of India, the Jharkhand party was founded in 1950 under the leadership of the Oxford-educated Jaipal Singh. The party achieved a remarkable success in 1952 elections when it won 32 seats in Chota Nagpur and emerged as the main opposition party in the Bihar Assembly. It won 25 seats in 1957.

But the Jharkhand party faced a major dilemma. While it demanded a state where the tribal people would predominate, the population composition of Jharkhand was such that they would still constitute a minority in it. To overcome this problem the party tried to give its demand a regional character by opening its membership to the non-tribals of the area and underplaying its anti-non-tribal rhetoric, even while talking of the empowerment of tribals and their dominance of the new state. The States Reorganization Commission of 1955, however, rejected the demand for a separate Jharkhand state on the ground that the region did not have a common language. The central government also held that tribals being a minority in Jharkhand could not claim a state of their own. By the early sixties the rank and file of the party began to get disheartened and frustrated. The Jharkhand party could win only 20 seats to the Bihar Assembly in 1962. In 1963, a major part of the leadership of the party, including Jaipal Singh, joined Congress, claiming that by 'working from within Congress' it stood a better chance of getting its demand for a separate state accepted by the government.

Several tribal parties and movements developed in Jharkhand after 1967, the most prominent being the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), which was formed in late 1972. The JMM revived the demand for the Jharkhand state, but it made two innovations. It recognized the hard reality that nearly two-thirds of the population of Jharkhand was non-tribal and that; therefore, a movement which appealed only to the tribal people could not acquire the requisite political strength. The JMM, therefore began to assert that all the

older residents of the Jharkhand region, whether tribal or non-tribal, were exploited, discriminated against and dominated by North Bihar and the recent migrants. It, therefore, put forward the demand for a separate state as a regional one on behalf of the peasants and workers of the region.

Concentrating on economic issues, it also acquired the support of the nontribal poor; several non-tribal leaders and political activists joined it, though the bulk of its following was still that of tribals. The tribal leaders felt that despite the minority character of tribals in the projected Jharkhand state, they would have a far greater representation and weight in the new state than they had in Bihar as a whole.

The JMM turned to a radical programme and ideology. Joined by other groups, especially leftist groups such as the Marxist Coordination Centre, it organized several militant agitations on issues such as recovery of alienated land, moneylenders' exploitation, employment of tribals in mines and industries and improved working conditions and higher wages in the latter, police excesses, high-handedness of forest officials and increasing liquor consumption. Shibu Soren emerged as the charismatic leader of the JMM during the early seventies.

Cooperation with the leftists did not, however, last long; nor did the tribal/non-tribal alliance. The movement for the Jharkhand state underwent constant ups and downs and splits over the years with new groups coming up every so often. Major differences among the Jharkhand leaders pertained to the question of cooperation or alliance with the main all-India parties. Many of them believed that in parliamentary democracy, a small number of MPs or MLAs could not on their own easily get their demands accepted. Shibu Soren, his followers and some others were also aware of the futility of permanently confronting state power and the inevitable recourse to violence and armed struggle as advocated by the movement's ultra-leftist fringe. The movement also found it difficult to shift completely from tribal to class-based regional politics, since it was basically built around tribal identity and tribal demands. In particular, the policy of reservations for tribals contained the continuing seeds of differences between tribals and non-tribals. Tribal society was also not homogeneous; it also contained landlords, rich peasants, traders and moneylenders. Above all, the maximum the movement was able to extract from the ruling parties in Bihar and the Centre was a promise of regional autonomy within the Bihar state for the Jharkhand region. In fact, as of today, the various constituents of the Jharkhand movement have also accepted the regional autonomy formula, with differences existing only in regard to its exact form and content.

REGIONALISM AND REGIONAL INEQUALITY

In the fifties, many saw regionalism as a major threat to Indian unity. But, in fact, regionalism, at no stage was a major factor in Indian politics and administration; over time, it tended to become less and less important. What precisely is regionalism needs to be first understood for appreciating its role in Indian politics.

Local patriotism and loyalty to a locality or region or state and its language and culture do not constitute regionalism nor are they disruptive of the nation. They are quite consistent with national patriotism and loyalty to the nation. To have pride in one's region or state is also not regionalism. A person can be conscious of his or her distinct regional identity—of being a Tamil or a Punjabi, a Bengali or a Gujarati—without being any the less proud of being an Indian, or being hostile to people from other regions. This was put very well by Gandhiji in 1909: 'As the basis of my pride as an Indian, I must have pride in myself as a Gujarati. Otherwise, we shall be left without any moorings.'

The Indian national movement too functioned on this understanding. From the beginning it functioned as an all-India movement and not as a federation of regional national movements. It also did not counterpose the national identity to regional identities; it recognized both and did not see the two in conflict.

Aspiring to or making special efforts to develop one's state or region or to remove poverty and implement social justice there, is not to be branded as regionalism. In fact, a certain inter-regional rivalry around the achievement of such positive goals would be quite healthy—and in fact we have too little of it. Also local

patriotism can help people overcome divisive loyalties to caste or religious communities. Defending the federal features of the Constitution is also not to be seen as regionalism. The demand for a separate state within the Indian union or for an autonomous region within an existing state, or for devolution of power below the state level, may be objected to on several practical grounds, but not as regionalist, unless it is put forward in a spirit of hostility to the rest of the population of a state. If the interests of one region or state are asserted against the country as a whole or against another region or state in a hostile manner and a conflict is promoted on the basis of such alleged interests it can be dubbed as regionalism.

In this sense, there has been very little inter-regional conflict in India since 1947, the major exception being the politics of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu in the fifties and early sixties. The DMK has also increasingly given up its regionalist approach over the years. Some cite the example of Punjab in the eighties, but, Punjab's was a case of communalism and not regionalism.

Regionalism could have flourished in India if any region or state had felt that it was being culturally dominated or discriminated against. In 1960, Selig Harrison, US scholar and journalist, in his famous work, *India—The Most Dangerous Decades,* had seen a major threat to Indian unity because of conflict between the national government and the regions as the latter asserted their separate cultural identities. But, in fact, the Indian nation has proved to be quite successful in accommodating and even celebrating—in Nehru's words—India's cultural diversity. The different areas of India have had full cultural autonomy and been enabled to fully satisfy their legitimate aspirations. The linguistic reorganization of India and the resolution of the official language controversy have played a very important role in this respect, by eliminating a potent cause of the feeling of cultural loss or cultural domination and therefore of inter-regional conflict.

Many regional disputes, of course, do exist and they have the potential of fanning inter-state hostility. There has been friction between different states over the sharing of river waters; for example, between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Karnataka and Andhra, and Punjab and Haryana and Rajasthan. Boundary disputes have arisen out of the formation of linguistic states as in the case of Belgaum and Chandigarh. Construction of irrigation and power dams has created such conflicts. But, while these disputes tend to persist for a long time and occasionally arouse passions, they have, as a whole, remained within narrow, and we might say acceptable, limits. The central government has often succeeded in playing the role of a mediator, though sometimes drawing the anger of the disputants on itself, but thus preventing sharper inter-regional conflicts.

ECONOMIC IMBALANCES AND REGIONALISM

Economic inequality among different states and regions could be a potential source of trouble. However, despite breeding discontent and putting pressure on the political system, this problem has not so far given rise to regionalism or feeling of a region being discriminated against. At independence, the leadership recognized that some regions were more backward than others. Only a few enclaves or areas around Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had undergone modern industrial development. For example, in 1948, Bombay and West Bengal accounted for more than 59 per cent of the total industrial capital of the country and more than 64 per cent of the national industrial output. Under colonialism, agriculture had also stagnated, but more in eastern India than in northern or southern India. Regional economic disparity was also reflected in per capita income. In 1949, while West Bengal, Punjab and Bombay had per capita incomes of Rs 353, 331 and 272 respectively, the per capita incomes of Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan were Rs 200, 188 and 173 respectively.

From the beginning, the national government felt a responsibility to counter this imbalance in regional development. Thus, for example, the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution of the Government of India asserted that 'only by securing a balanced and coordinated development of the industrial and agricultural economy in each region can the entire country attain higher standards of living.' Similarly, recognizing 'the importance of regional balance in economic development as a positive factor in promoting national integration,' the National Integration Council of 1961 urged that 'a rapid development of the economically backward

regions in any State should be given priority in national and State plans, at least to the extent that the minimum level of development is reached for all states within a stated period.'

From the beginning, the central government adopted a whole range of policies to influence the rates of growth in poorer states and regions so as to reduce their economic distance from the richer states and regions. A major government instrument in bringing this about was the transfer of financial resources to the poorer states. Important in this respect was the role of the Finance Commission, provided for in the Constitution and appointed periodically by the President. The Commission decides the principles on which disbursement of central taxes and other financial resources from the central government to the states occurs. Various Financial Commissions have tried not only to do justice among the states but also to reduce inter-state disparity by giving preferential treatment to the poorer states, by allocating larger grants to them than their population would warrant and by transferring resources from the better-off states to them.

Planning was also seen as powerful instrument that could be used to remove regional inequality. The Second Plan reflected this objective and it was reiterated in the succeeding Plans. The Third Plan explicitly stated that 'balanced development of different parts of the country, extension of the benefits of economic progress to the less developed regions and widespread diffusion of industry are among the major aims of planned development.' For this purpose, the Planning Commission allocated greater plan assistance to the backward states. This assistance is given in the form both of grants and loans on the basis of a formula which assigns an important place to the degree of backwardness of a state. Moreover, bias in favour of backward states in the devolution of resources from the Centre to the states, in the form both of financial and plan transfers, has tended to increase with time.

Public investment by the central government in major industries such as steel, fertilizers, oil refining, petrochemicals, machine-making, heavy chemicals and in power and irrigation projects, roads, railways, post offices and other infrastructural facilities has been a tool for the reduction of regional inequality. India has relied heavily on public investment since the beginning of the Second Plan in 1957 and an effort has been made to favour backward states in regard to this investment. In the planning and location of the public sector enterprises balanced regional growth has been an important consideration, though this has entailed a certain economic cost to the enterprises concerned. Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have gained the most from such investment; Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and the north-eastern states have also benefitted a great deal from the development of infrastructure, especially roads. Government incentives have been provided to the private sector to invest in backward areas through subsidies, tax concessions, and concessional banking and institutional loans at subsidised rates. The system of licensing of private industrial enterprises, which prevailed from 1956 to 1991, was also used by the government to guide location of industries in backward areas. Following nationalization of banks in 1969, the expansion of the network of their branches was used to favour backward areas. Banks and other public sector financial institutions were directed to promote investment in these areas. Also, various ministries have evolved schemes for development of backward areas. In particular, poverty eradication programmes, such as the Food for Work programme and the Intensive Rural Development programme, adopted since the seventies, and to some extent education, health and family planning programmes and the public distribution system have favoured poorer states.

One sector where the principle of the reduction of regional disparity has not been kept in view is that of investment in irrigation and subsidies to agricultural development. This has been especially so since the sixties when the Green Revolution began and investment in rural infrastructure and technological innovation was concentrated in Punjab, Haryana and western U.P., namely areas where irrigation was or could be made available readily. In particular, investment in and development of rain-fed dry land agriculture was neglected. The result was an increase in regional agricultural disparity. The spread of the Green Revolution technology during the seventies to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, eastern U.P. and parts of Rajasthan, and during the eighties to the eastern states of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam has redressed the regional imbalance to a certain extent.

Economic mobility of population through migration of unskilled labour from the backward regions and of skilled labour to them can also contribute to the lessening of regional disparity; and the Indian Constitution guarantees this mobility. There has been a great deal of migration from one state to another. Some states—Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Kerala—have benefitted from out-migration just as Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra have benefitted from in-migration. Certain other states, like Punjab and Karnataka have had the benefit of both out-migration and in-migration. Unfortunately, as we shall see in the next section, efforts have been made by some states to put checks on inter-state migration.

It would be appropriate here to ask how far have the various efforts of the national government succeeded in reducing regional inequality. The picture that emerges is a mixed one. There has been a marginal improvement but regional inequality especially in terms of per capita income, continues to remain a prominent feature of the Indian economy. Possibly, the situation would have been much worse but for the government's actions which has prevented the widening of the economic gap between states and regions. There are also other dimensions to be observed with regard to the impact of these policies. For one, there has certainly been a decline in inter-state industrial disparity, especially in the organized manufacturing sector. There is also less disparity in terms of social welfare as represented by life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy, though a few states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have moved far ahead. As we have seen above, the increased disparity in agriculture is also gradually getting redressed though the rain-fed dry areas are still lagging behind. While the percentage of people below the poverty line has steadily declined in all the states it is in the advanced states that maximum progress has been made, so that the inter-regional disparity in the distribution of poverty has been growing. Overall, while there has been economic growth in all states, the rates of growth of different states have been highly differential, leading to inter-state disparities remaining quite wide.

Some backward states have managed to pick themselves up, while others have failed to do so, with the result that there has been a change in the hierarchy of states in terms of development and per capita income. Thus, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa are still at the bottom. Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat continue to remain on the top. There has been an improvement in the position of the previously underdeveloped states of Haryana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, while there has been deterioration in that of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and U.P, with U.P. moving to the bottom level and West Bengal to the middle. Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have stagnated, remaining just above the bottom level. On the whole, Haryana is an example of the states which have improved their position and Bihar of one of those whose position has worsened.

Why then does regional inequality persist on such a wide scale? What are the constraints on its decline? Or why have Bihar and U.P. performed so poorly. It emerges that the constraint is not essentially of geography, that is, of inequality in size or natural resources. Bihar, U.P. and Orissa are, for example, very well endowed by nature; their people well known for their industriousness because of which they are welcomed in the rest of the country, and indeed overseas in the West Indies, Mauritius and Fiji to where some have migrated.

The major reason, at the all-India level, for continuing regional disparity has been the low rate of economic growth. To make a dent on this requires a high rate of national growth so that large revenues can be raised and devoted to the development of the backward regions without adversely affecting national growth itself. The rate of growth of the Indian economy was around 3.5 per cent till the end of seventies and around 5 per cent in the eighties. This was not high enough to have a significant impact on regional inequality despite policies consciously designed to favour backward regions being followed. It is only in the last few years that the rate of growth of the economy has touched 7 per cent, while population growth has also slowed down. A reduction in economic inequality may come about, provided the right type of regional developmental policies continue to be followed. Some states' backwardness lies in their socio-economic and political organization itself. For example, the agrarian structure in Bihar and eastern U.P. is quite regressive and in many parts of these states land reforms have been inadequately implemented. (This was also true of Orissa till recently.) The feudal mentality is still quite strong. Also, in Bihar and Orissa land consolidation has been tardy, which played an important role in the agricultural development of Punjab and Haryana.

The backward states have a lower level of infrastructural facilities, such as power, irrigation, roads, telephones, and modern markets for agricultural produce. These are essential for development and have to be developed by the states themselves being mostly State subjects. States also have a low level of social expenditure on education and public health and sanitation, which are also State subjects. Besides, they suffer from a lack of financial resources to meet plan expenditure. Increased central financial assistance is unable to offset this weakness. A vicious cycle is set up. A low level of economic development and production means less financial resources and limited expenditure on infrastructure, development planning and social services. And this low level of expenditure in turn leads to low levels of production and therefore of financial resources. Political and administrative failure also bolsters backwardness. Bihar and U.P. are classic cases of states, bedevilled by high levels of corruption, sheer bad administration, and deteriorating law and order. As a result whatever central assistance is available is poorly utilized and often diverted to non-development heads of expenditure. Further, development of infrastructure, including roads and electricity, is neglected and the existing infrastructure is riddled with inefficiency and corruption. All this turns away the private sector, which is a major source of development in the advanced states. The role of greater administrative efficiency is also proved by the better rates of economic growth in the relatively better administered states of south and western India as compared to Bihar and U.P.

In passing, it maybe mentioned that disparities in development also exist within each state. In many cases, this inequality has become a source of tension and given birth to sub-regional movements for separate states within the Indian union, or greater autonomy for the sub-regions within the existing states, or at least special treatment and safeguards in matters of employment, education and allocation of financial resources. Examples of such sub-regional feelings are the movements in Telengana in Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Saurashtra in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Bundelkhand in U.P., Darjeeling district or Gorkhaland in West Bengal, Bodoland in Assam, to a certain extent South Bihar or Jharkhand in Bihar, and the areas consisting of the old princely states of Orissa.

Undoubtedly, regional economic inequality is a potent time-bomb directed against national unity and political stability. So far, fortunately, it has been 'digested', absorbed and mitigated because it is not the result of domination and exploitation of backward states by the more advanced states or of discrimination against the former by the national government. It is noteworthy that the politically important Hindi-speaking states of the Indian heartland—U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, with nearly 37 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha—are economically backward. On the other hand, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Maharashtra, with only about 17 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, are the high-income states. It is, therefore, impossible for anyone who talks of the Hindi-belt states' domination of the others to be taken seriously.

On the other hand, the backward Hindi-belt states wield so much political clout that it is impossible for them to accuse the central government or non- Hindi states of dominating or discriminating against them. It is interesting that so far accusations of central domination have come from the relatively developed states of Punjab and West Bengal—obviously for political and not economic reasons. In the all-India services too, like the IAS, the Hindi areas are not advantaged. It is Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal which have a higher representation than their population warrants. Another reason for the lack of regionalism and feeling of discrimination among the poorer states has been the consciousness of their intelligentsia that their poverty and backwardness are basically the result of the actions of their own political and administrative classes. After all, feelings of deprivation and lack of progress are essentially articulated by the intelligentsia. At the same time, the vast majority of the people in the poorer states are blissfully unaware of their backwardness and poverty in comparison with other states. This leads both to absence of discontent with their position as also to a lack of effort to reach equality with the more advanced states. However, with the spread of education and the reach of the visual and print media, such as television and newspapers, this state of affairs is likely to change. Nevertheless, as was fully realized by the founders of the Republic, it is necessary to first contain regional inequality within politically and economically reasonable and acceptable limits and then to gradually move toward its elimination, by raising the rates of growth of the poorer states by all available means including greater central assistance as also greater self effort by them. This also, of course, means that, as Ajit Mazumdar has argued, the national government needs to wield 'greater

authority than in industrialised countries, to be able to devise and implement strategies of economic and social development, and to deal with the problems of regional disparities, which are more acute.' It also must have the authority 'to mediate and resolve conflicts between states over the appropriation of natural resources' and 'to effect significant resource transfers from richer to poorer states.

SONS OF THE SOIL DOCTRINE

Since the fifties, an ugly form of regionalism has been widely prevalent in the form of 'the sons of the soil' doctrine. Underlying it is the view that a state specifically belongs to the main linguistic group inhabiting it or that the state constitutes the exclusive 'homeland' of its main language speakers who are the 'sons of the soil' or the 'local' residents. All others, who live there, or are settled there and whose mother tongue is not the state's main language, are declared to be 'outsiders'. These 'outsiders' might have lived in the state for a long time, or have migrated there more recently, but they are not to be regarded as 'the sons of the soil'. This doctrine is particularly popular in cities, especially in some of them. Unequal development of economic opportunities in different parts of the country, especially the cities, occurred in the surge of economic progress after 1952. Demand or preference for the 'local' people or 'sons of the soil' over the 'outsiders' in the newly-created employment and educational opportunities was the outcome. In the struggle for the appropriation of economic resources and economic opportunities, often recourse was taken to communalism, casteism and nepotism. Likewise, language loyalty and regionalism was used to systematically exclude the 'outsiders' from the economic life of a state or city. The problem was aggravated in a number of cities or regions because the speakers of the state language were in a minority or had a bare majority. For example, in Bombay, in 1961, the Marathi-speakers constituted 42.8 per cent of the population. In Bangalore, the Kannada-speakers were less than 25 per cent. In Calcutta, the Bengalis formed a bare majority. In the urban areas of Assam, barely 33 per cent were Assamese. After 1951 the rate of migration into the cities accelerated.

The important questions that arise are, why did 'the sons of the soil' movements develop in some states and cities and not in others, why were they directed against some migrants and linguistic minority groups and not others, why were some types of jobs targeted and not others, why, technical and professional education as against the so-called arts education? Conflict between migrants and non-migrants (and linguistic minorities and majorities) was not inherent and inevitable. In general, the two have lived harmoniously in most of the states. Clearly, there were specific conditions that precipitated the conflict.

'The sons of the soil' movements have mainly arisen, and have been more virulent, when there is actual or potential competition for industrial and middle-class jobs, between the migrants and the local, educated, middle-class youth. The friction has been more intense in states and cities where 'outsiders' had greater access to higher education and occupied more middle-class positions in government service, professions and industry and were engaged in small businesses, such as small-scale industry and shopkeeping. Active in these movements have also been members of the lower-middle class or workers, as well as rich and middle peasants whose position is unthreatened, but who increasingly aspire to middle-class status and position for their children. All these social groups also aspire to give their children higher education, especially technical education, such as engineering, medicine and commerce.

The economy's failure to create enough employment opportunities for the recently educated created an acute scarcity of jobs, and led to intense competition for the available jobs during the sixties and seventies. The major middle-class job opportunities that opened up after 1952 were in government service and the public sector enterprises. Popular mobilization and the democratic political process could therefore be used by the majority linguistic group to put pressure on the government to appropriate employment and educational avenues and opportunities. Some groups could then take advantage of 'the sons of the soil' sentiment for gaining political power. This was not of course inevitable. The Communist party refused to use anti-migrant sentiments in Calcutta because of its ideological commitment, one reason why the city has not witnessed any major 'sons of the soil' movement. Similarly, though Congress may have taken an opportunist and compromising stand when faced with major 'sons of the soil' movements, it has not initiated or actively supported them. 'Outsiders' have been often far more numerous in rural areas as agricultural

labourers or as workers in low-paid traditional industries, such as jute or cotton textiles, than in the cities. Here, however, 'the sons of the soil' sentiment was absent, nor hostility towards the 'outsiders' manifested because no middle-class jobs were involved. The 'locals' also did not compete with the 'outsiders' for these jobs. Consequently, there has been little conflict with the 'locals' when there has been large-scale migration of labourers from Bihar and U.P. to Punjab and Haryana or Bombay city, or of workers from Bihar to the jute and other mills of Calcutta, or of workers from Bihar and Orissa to the tea plantations in Assam and Bengal, or of Oriya building workers to Gujarat, and domestic workers all over India. Such migrations have not posed a threat to the local middle classes; and in the last case—that of the domestic workers—the middle classes have been the chief beneficiaries as also promotees of the migration. However, more recently, because of the higher salaries and education and skill involved, competition between migrants and the 'locals' has tended to develop for employment in the technologically advanced industries.

Another factor that has influenced the emergence or non-emergence of anti-migrant movements in an area or region has been the existence or nonexistence of a tradition of migration. When people of a state, especially the middle classes, have themselves migrated, there has been little opposition to immigration. This has been the case with West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab, Bihar and U.P. On the other hand, 'sons of the soil' movements have flourished in Maharashtra, Assam and the Telengana area of Andhra Pradesh, the people of which have not had a tradition of migration. The Indian Constitution is to some extent ambiguous on the question of the rights of the migrants. Article 15 prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 16 prohibits discrimination in the employment or appointments to any office under the state on grounds of 'descent, place of birth or residence'. However, the parliament, though not any state legislature, can pass a law laying down the requirement of residence within a state for appointments under that state. Under political pressure and taking advantage of the ambiguity in the Constitution, many states, in fact reserve jobs, or give preference for employment in state and local governments and for admission into educational institutions to local residents. The period of residence is fixed or prescribed in such cases. Also, while the Constitution permits reservation or preference in state jobs only on grounds of residence and not language, some state governments have gone further and limited the preference to those local residents whose mother tongue is the state language. They have thus discriminated against long-term migrants, their descendants, and even the residents who can speak the state language but whose mother tongue is a minority language in the state. This has, of course, been in clear violation of the Constitution. Many state governments have also given directions to private employers to give preference to local persons for employment in their enterprises.

The main argument put forward for reservation in employment and education for the local persons has been that in the states concerned they are socially, economically and educationally backward and are not able to compete with the more advanced migrant communities. Also, in technical colleges and universities, the more backward local students would be overwhelmed by the more advanced students from other states. It is because of this, in the post-Nehru era, even the central government has tended to support preference for residents of a state in employment in central public sector enterprises below the level of a certain technical expertise and in colleges and universities. Reservations on grounds of residence have also been approved by the courts. However, as brought out earlier, reservations for the tribal people are in a separate category.

While reservation of jobs in state administrations and seats in institutions of higher education for the backward local residents was undesirable from the point of view of national integration, some justification could be found for it. However, there was none for the anti-migrant movements of the sixties which tried to restrict the flow of migrants from other states and which openly proclaimed antagonism and generated hostility against them. These militant anti-migrant and 'sons of the soil' movements were mainly centered in the urban areas of Assam, Telengana in Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Orissa.

The worst case was that of the movement led by the Shiv Sena which appealed to extreme regional chauvinism and assumed fascist proportions. Founded in 1966, under the leadership of Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena demanded that preference in jobs and small businesses should be given to Maharashtrians, who were defined as those whose mother tongue was Marathi. Raising the slogan of 'Maharashtra for the Maharash-

trians', the Shiv Sena organized a militant,, and often violent movement against the South Indians, especially the Tamils, who were declared to have a disproportionate share of office jobs such as clerks and typists in private firms and small businesses such as tea shops and eating places. In 1969, the Sena gave the Bombay city a taste of violence when it organized arson against South Indians, looted and destroyed their tea-stalls and eating places, overturned cars of Tamils and tore off Tamil signs from shops. The Shiv Sena could not, however, sustain its hate-South Indian campaign or become a major political force outside Bombay city or get the support of any all-India political party. Gaining a wider political constituency, it was then able to ally itself with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The 'sons of the soil' movements in Assam and Telengana, which also assumed serious proportions and were quite complex, had some additional and distinctive features. While protective and preferential regulations have been widespread since the late sixties, antagonism, hostility and violence against migrants have abated in recent years. The problem posed by 'the sons of the soil' doctrine is still somewhat a minor one and there is no ground for pessimism on that score. Even at its height, only a few cities and states were affected in a virulent form, and at no stage did it threaten the unity of the country or the process of nation-in-the-making. Besides, its effects on the Indian economy have been negligible: migration within the country has not been checked; inter-state mobility is in fact growing. But the problem is likely to linger till economic development is able to deal effectively with unemployment, especially among the middle classes, and regional inequality.

Looking back at the divisive issues of the post-independence period, the linguistic reorganization of the states, the integration of the tribals, and regional inequality and regionalism, it is to be observed that the prophets of 'gloom and doom' have been disproved. Linguistic states have strengthened not weakened Indian unity, even while permitting full cultural autonomy to different linguistic areas. Hindi and English are growing as all-India languages. Regional movements like the DMK have been doused after 1967 and are content to rename Madras state, Tamil Nadu and Madras as Chennai. Tribals feel secure in the Indian union regarding their cultural and economic autonomy; have also gained greater strength themselves, as also political support in the country over time. The process of nation-in-the-making is being pushed forward. A national identity, that of being Indian has come to be accepted by all on the subcontinent, and the fact of Indian unity, is irreversible.

This should not suggest that all problems related to these issues have been resolved for all time. Further social and economic development, spread of education, deepening of democracy and politicization, as has been seen elsewhere, could create new sources of tension and conflict leading to disrupture tendencies. Optimism is to be tempered with a continuing concern for threats to Indian unity. Yet, India's past experience in overcoming disruptive forces may be instructive for the future. The role and legacy of the freedom struggle, the quality and wisdom of the leaders, the leadership's correct understanding of India's diversity, the leadership's rejection of secessionist demands, while respecting those within the constitutional framework, the democratic political structure, and the acceptance of the need for a strong national government within a federal structure have all contributed to promote Indian unity. Here, it must be added that a strong state should not be mistaken for an authoritarian one. A strong national government does not entail weak state governments or a national government that rides roughshod over the federal provisions of the Constitution. Federalism does not mean a weak national government, rather a non-dominating national government which observes the federal features of the polity. A strong but democratic nation state is a necessity for a developing country with strong federal features. What it does with its strength depends on the political nature of the government and the ruling party of the day.

UNIT-III

THE YEARS OF HOPE AND PROMISE

ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

The years from 1951 to 1964, were those of maturity and achievement. They were also years marked by high hopes and aspirations, optimism and confidence. Jawaharlal Nehru could declare in April 1953:

I shall not rest content unless every man, woman and child in the country has a fair deal and has a minimum standard of living ... Five or six years is too short a time for judging a nation. Wait for another ten years and you will see that our Plans will change the entire picture of the country so completely that the world will be amazed.

And reflecting the mood of the country, he wrote in June 1955:

Even though we have a multitude of problems, and difficulties surround us and often appear to overwhelm, mere is the air of hope in this country, a faith in our future and a certain reliance on the basic principles that have guided us thus far. There is the breath of the dawn, the feeling of the beginning of a new era in the long and chequered history of India.

These were also the years when India was more or less stable, when its political system took on its distinct form, the country began to progress in all directions, and above all there was the beginning of the massive reconstruction of the polity and the economy. People experienced an advance towards the basic objectives of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, a scientific and international outlook, economic development and planning, with socialism at the end of the road. There was, of course, some discontent among the intelligentsia regarding the slow pace of development, especially with regard to the problems of poverty and employment, and the slow and unsatisfactory progress of land reforms. Among the several areas of progress and achievement, though marked by certain weaknesses and limitations, were, (a) the consolidation of the nation and the solution of the language and tribal problems, (b) the initiation of the process of independent and planned economic development, (c) the evolution of an independent and innovative foreign policy, (d) the initiation of the electoral process, (e) the rooting of democracy, (f) the setting in place of an administrative structure, (g) the development of science and technology, and (h) the beginnings of the welfare state.

Building on the traditions of the national movement, the Indian leaders further strengthened the foundations of democracy in the country by the manner of their political functioning. They gave due importance to the institutional aspects of the democratic system so that gradually attachment of people to parliamentary institutions grew. They adhered not only to the spirit but also to the forms of democratic institutions and procedures. Nehru, in particular, despite holding complete sway saw to it that political power was widely dispersed and diffused.

Civil liberties were put on a firm footing with the Press having a free play, even when it criticized the government severely. The independence of the courts was carefully nurtured, even when they turned down an important piece of popular legislation, namely agrarian reform.

The early national leaders like Nehru treated the parliament with respect and made every effort to sustain its dignity, prestige and power, even though his party enjoyed an overwhelming majority in it. He tried to make it a major forum for expression of public opinion, and made it a point to sit through the Question Hour and to attend parliamentary debates. The Opposition too played its part by respecting the parliament and its procedures, functioning without fear in its portals, and keeping the standard of parliamentary debates at a high level. Moreover, parliamentary committees such as the Estimates Committee began to play an important role as critics of, and watchdogs over, the government administration.

Under Nehru's leadership the cabinet system evolved in a healthy manner and functioned effectively. The effort was to make the cabinet the chief agent of collective policy-making. Nehru treated his cabinet colleagues with courtesy and respect. C. D. Deshmukh, India's Finance Minister from 1950 to 1956, remarked later in his autobiography: 'Nehru as head of the Cabinet was gentle, considerate and democratic, never forcing a decision on his colleagues … decisions were taken by a consensus and never, as far as I can remember in my time, by vote.'

Despite the dominance of the Congress party the role of the Opposition was strengthened during the period. Nehru gave full play and respect to the opposition parties and was quite responsive to their criticism. He once defined democracy as follows: 'In the ultimate analysis, it is a manner of thinking, a manner of action, a manner of behaviour to your neighbour and to your adversary and opponent.' The opposition parties, though small numerically, were able to take advantage of the fact that the Congress was not a monolithic party and encompassed within itself several political and ideological trends. They were able to influence the government policies by influencing the different ideological strands in the Congress. Nehru also respected and promoted internal democracy and debate within the Congress party and encouraged it to accommodate new social forces and trends.

Federalism, provided for in the Constitution, also was established as a firm feature of Indian polity during the Nehru years, with a genuine devolution of power to the states. Respecting the states' autonomy, Nehru would not impose decisions on the state governments or interfere with their policies, though he took care to inform them of his own thinking and occasionally advise or even insist on their acceptance of a particular policy. He also permitted the state Congress parties to choose their party and government leaders. He relied upon the state leaders and governments to understand better their own intricate problems. In the process, he was willing to put up with a great deal. In fact, one reason why Nehru would not go too far in forcing the states to effect land reforms the way he conceived them was because land reforms were a State subject and he would not ride roughshod over the states' rights and powers even for a favourite cause of his. Nehru would guide and advise and urge but would not step out of constitutional boundaries; he would observe constitutional niceties in spirit and form. In fact, a major reason for the weaknesses of the agricultural, educational, health and other social welfare programs lay in the Centre's dependence on the states for their implementation, for these were State subjects. At the same time, Nehru did not permit any weakening of the prestige or authority of the central government. He always maintained a sharp distinction between centralization of power or Centre's domination of the states and a strong Centre needed for nation building and maintenance of the unity and independence of the country as also to keep under check disruptive and divisive forces.

A major reason that led to the development of harmonious relations between the Centre and the states and which kept in check centrifugal forces was the fact that the same party ruled in both places. The leading role of the Centre was also facilitated by the fact that some of the tallest men and women in Indian politics held office in the Cabinet as well as the Congress Working Committee. The tradition of the supremacy of the civil government over the armed forces was fully established during these years. The Indian armed forces had been traditionally non-political and had accepted civilian control and leadership. But the continuation of this role by them was not guaranteed. Nehru, in particular, was worried about the possibility of the armed forces intervening in politics and the government in case of exceptional circumstances, as happened in nineteenth century France and Germany and recently in many Third World countries. To avoid such a possibility in India he took several steps in this regard. He kept the size of the armed forces relatively small; refusing to permit their expansion even after large-scale US military aid to Pakistan began in 1954. The expenditure on the defence forces was also kept extremely low, less than two per cent of the national income.

Abandoning the British colonial practice of recruiting men in the army on the criteria of 'martial' classes, the armed forces were given a heterogeneous character, with almost every region and section of society being represented in them. India was thus protected from the danger of militarism in its formative years. The small size of the armed forces and of expenditure on them were also prompted by two other considerations: avoidance of diversion of scarce resources from economic development; and given the absence of

domestic defence industries, to avoid dependence on foreign powers and the possibility of their intervention in India's internal and foreign affairs. One blemish, though not a simple one, on the democratic record of the Nehru years occurred when the Communist government in Kerala was dismissed in 1959 and President's Rule was imposed in the state.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Immediately after independence, it was to be decided whether the government of independent India should carry on with the administrative structure and machinery inherited from the colonial regime and 'designed to serve the relatively simple interests of an occupying power.' The kingpin of this structure was the Indian Civil Service (ICS). If the structure was to be replaced or overhauled, the beginning had to be made with the ICS. Initially, there were differences in approach to the question between Nehru and Patel, who, as Home Minister, dealt directly with the administrative services. Nehru was a staunch critic of the ICS and bureaucracy as a whole not only because of their colonial ancestry but also because of their basic conservatism. In 1946, he had described the existing administrative structure as 'the ship of State' which was 'old and battered and slow-moving and unsuited to this age of swift change.' He declared that 'it will have to be scrapped and give place to another.' Patel, on the other hand felt that retention of the existing administrative machinery was necessary in the then troubled times when it seemed that internal stability was in danger and chaos imminent. He was not in favour of a sudden discontinuity and vacuum in administration, particularly as the ICS and other all-India services provided the only trained personnel available. Defending the all-India services in the Constituent Assembly in 1949, Patel said:

'I have worked with them during this difficult period ... Remove them and I see nothing but a picture of chaos all over the country'. Further: 'If during the last two or three years most of the members of the Services had not behaved patriotically and with loyalty, the Union would have collapsed.'

Nehru accepted Patel's position, though grudgingly, for he too realized that there was no alternative to reliance on the existing all-India services if a breakdown of administration was to be avoided. Over time he too began to rely heavily on these services, admiring their administrative efficiency, especially as he realized that the other available human resources were rather poor. Many, following Lenin in the State and Revolution, have argued that the existing state administrative apparatus should have been 'smashed' or dismantled and that it was perhaps quite easy to do so in the very beginning of a new state. We think that in light of India's and other countries' historical experience there is little doubt that having well-trained, versatile and experienced civil services at the outset when the country was in turmoil was a distinct asset and advantage to India; and that they did give a good account of themselves in the troubled post-Partition years. However, while retention of the existing bureaucracy and the administrative structure was inevitable and perhaps even sound under the circumstances, the failure to 'rebuild and transform their character' was clearly a liability. The administrative structure had been built during the colonial period largely to maintain law and order and to collect land revenue. It had to be overhauled, however gradually, to suit the needs of a democratic and developing society and made capable of executing the new economic and social welfarist policies.

Nehru in particular was fully aware of the inadequacy of the existing bureaucracy to understand the problems of the people and to implement the new tasks. As early as 1951 he complained: 'We rely more and more on official agencies which are generally fairly good, but which are completely different in outlook and execution from anything that draws popular enthusiasm to it.' He was convinced that the situation could be remedied in two ways: 'One, by educating the whole machine. Secondly, by putting a new type of person where it is needed.' But neither of two steps was actually taken. Rather, the new IAS was formed very much in the old ICS mould and this pattern was followed all down the bureaucratic structure. For example, the few who joined the Community Development projects out of idealism and social commitment were soon frustrated when they discovered that they were being dominated, looked down upon and treated as low-paid underlings by the traditional, higher bureaucrats.

The administration not only did not improve over the years, it deteriorated further becoming more inefficient and inaccessible. The attitude of the bureaucracy, especially the police, towards the people and their problems also became increasingly unhelpful. Above all, there was the evil of corruption. There were major signals in the Nehru era that political and administrative corruption was beginning to burgeon. In the fifties, however, the tentacles of corruption were not yet far-reaching and checks existed in the form of a political leadership and cadres having roots in the freedom struggle and Gandhian ethos, a large, honest bureaucracy, especially in its middle and higher rungs, and a judiciary having a high level of integrity It was, therefore, still possible to squash the evil with a certain ease. Nehru and other leaders were aware of the problems relating to public administration. In May 1948, Nehru drew the attention of the chief ministers to complaints from the public 'about our inefficiency, inaccessibility, delays and, above all, of corruption,' and added: 'I fear that many of these complaints are justified.' Similarly, in his last letter to the chief ministers in May 1963, he pointed to the need to 'strengthen our Government apparatus and to fight a ceaseless war against corruption and inefficiency.' And he added:

There is far too much talk of corruption. I think it is exaggerated a good deal but we must realize that it is there and must face that with all our will and strength. Our governmental apparatus is still slow moving and full of brakes which come in the way of all the brave schemes that we have in mind … I am writing about this to you because I feel strongly that we must clean up our public life …

Nehru also took concrete action whenever a case of corruption involving his ministers was made out. But he was chary of carrying out a campaign against corruption lest it create a general atmosphere of suspicion and accusations, to which he felt Indians were already too susceptible, and thus prevent officials and ministers from taking timely decisions and assuming responsibility.

DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

A major achievement of the Nehru era was in the fields of scientific research and technological education. Nehru was convinced that science and technology were crucial to the solution of India's problems. As early as January 1938, he had said in a message to the Indian Science Congress: 'It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.' This view was reiterated in the Scientific Policy Resolution passed by the Lok Sabha in March 1958 acknowledging the role of science and technology in the economic social and cultural advancement of the country. After 1947, Nehru also became aware of the critical role that scientific research and technology would play in India's defence. As part of the effort to promote self-sustaining scientific and technological growth, the foundation stone of India's first national laboratory, the National Physical Laboratory, was laid on 4 January 1947. This was followed by the setting up during the Nehru years of a network of seventeen national laboratories, specializing in different areas of research. To emphasize the importance of science and scientific research, Nehru himself assumed the chairmanship of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, which guided and financed the national laboratories and other scientific institutions.

Urgent steps were also taken to organize the training of technical personnel sorely needed by the country. In 1952, the first of the five institutes of technology, patterned after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was set up at Kharagpur—the other four being set up subsequently at Madras, Bombay, Kanpur and Delhi. The extent of the effort put in developing science and its success is revealed by the expenditure on scientific research and science-based activities which increased from Rs 1.10 crores in 1948-49 to Rs 85.06 crores in 1965-66, and the number of scientific and technical personnel which rose from 188,000 in 1950 to 731,500 in 1965. The enrolment at the undergraduate stage in engineering and technology went up from 13,000 in 1950 to 78,000 in 1965. Similarly, the number of undergraduate students studying agriculture increased from about 2,600 in 1950 to 14,900 in 1965.

Over the years scientific research began, however, to suffer because the organization and management structure of the scientific institutes was highly bureaucratic and hierarchical, breeding factionalism and in-

trigue as also frustration among their personnel. This became a major factor in the brain drain of scientists that began in the late fifties. India was one of the first nations to recognize the importance of nuclear energy. Nehru was convinced that nuclear energy would bring about a global revolution in the social, economic and political spheres, besides affecting nations' defence capabilities. In August 1948, the Government of India set up the Atomic Energy Commission with Homi J. Bhabha, India's leading nuclear scientist, as chairman, in the Department of Scientific Research, which was under Nehru's direct charge, to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In 1954, the government created a separate Department of Atomic Energy under the prime minister with Homi Bhabha as Secretary. India's first nuclear reactor in Trombay, Bombay, also the first in Asia, became critical in August 1956. Her on-going and fairly well advanced nuclear programme included the setting up of several nuclear plants to produce electricity in a few years time. Though India was committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear power, its nuclear capacity could easily have been used to produce the atomic bomb and other atomic weapons.

India also took up space research. It set up the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) in 1962 and established a Rocket Launching Facility at Thumba (TERLS). Krishna Menon, as Defence Minister, took steps to initiate defence research and development. Steps were also taken to increase India's capacity in production of defence equipment so that India gradually became self-sufficient in its defence needs. India also changed over to decimal coinage and a metric system of weights and measures, despite dire warnings that an illiterate population could not handle the change.

SOCIAL CHANGE

The vision of the founding fathers of the Republic went beyond national integration and political stability. Indian society had to move towards social change. Article 36 of the Constitution in the section on the Directive Principles of State Policy stated: 'The state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as may be a social order in which justice, economic and political, shall inform all institutions of the national life.' This conception of the new social order was encompassed in 1955 by the phrase 'socialistic pattern of society' officially accepted by the Congress at its Avadi Session and later incorporated as its objective in the Second and Third Five Year Plans. Consequently, several important measures of social reforms, which some have described as the beginning of a welfare state, were taken during the Nehru years. Very important measures in this respect were those of land reforms, the initiation of planned economic development and rapid expansion of the public sector. In addition far-reaching labour legislation was undertaken, including recognition of collective bargaining, the right to form trade unions and to go on strike, security of employment and provision of health and accident insurance. There were also moves towards a more equitable distribution of wealth through progressive and steep income-tax and excise tax policies. Expansion of education and health and other social services, was also sought.

Nehru and other leaders were also keen to ensure that Indian social organization underwent change, leading to the social liberation of the hitherto socially backward and suppressed sections of society. As Nehru put it in 1956: 'We have not only striven for and achieved a political revolution, not only are we striving hard for an economic revolution but … we are equally intent on social revolution; only by way of advance on these three separate lines and their integration into one great whole, will the people of India progress.'

The Constitution had already incorporated a provision abolishing untouchability. The government supplemented this provision by passing the Anti-Untouchability Law in 1955 making the practice of untouchability punishable and a cognizable offence. The government also tried to implement the clauses of the Constitution regarding reservations in educational institutions and government employment in favour of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections of society. Other necessary measures were taken to raise their social status, such as the provision of special facilities in the form of scholarships, hostels accommodation, grants, loans, housing, health care and legal-aid services. A Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was appointed to monitor the effective implementation of all such measures and constitutional provisions. However, in spite of all these steps, the SCs and STs continued to be backward and caste oppression was still widely prevalent, especially in rural areas, where

the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also formed a large part of the landless agricultural labour, and therefore also suffered from class oppression. There was also hardly any effort to eradicate the ideology of the caste system or to remove caste inequality and caste oppression so that casteism began to spread from the upper castes to the backward castes and from the rural to the urban areas.

Participating actively in the national movement for years, women's groups and organizations were demanding revision of laws regarding women's rights in the family, and in Nehru they had a firm supporter. Already, before independence, Nehru had made his position on this issue clear and quoted Charles Fourier, the French philosopher: 'One could judge the degree of civilization of a country by the social and political position of its women.' A major step forward in this direction was taken when the Hindu Code Bill was moved in the parliament in 1951. The bill faced sharp opposition from conservative sectors of society, especially from Jan Sangh and other Hindu communal organizations. Even though actively supported by the vocal members of Congress party and women MPs and other women activists, Nehru decided to postpone enactment of the bill in order to mobilize greater support for it. He was, however, firm in his determination to pass the bill and made it an issue in the elections of 1951-52.

After coming back to power, the government passed the bill in the form of four separate acts which introduced monogamy and the right of divorce to both men and women, raised the age of consent and marriage, and gave women the right to maintenance and to inherit family property. A revolutionary step was thus taken for women's liberation, though its practice would take decades to take full effect. An important lacuna in this respect was that a uniform civil code covering the followers of all religions was not enacted. This would have involved changes in Muslim personal law regarding monogamy and inheritance. There was strong opposition to this from the Muslim orthodoxy. The process of social reform among Muslims had in the modern period lagged far behind that among Hindus and consequently social change had been quite slow even among middle-class Muslim women. Nehru was not willing to alarm the Muslim minority which was, he believed, even otherwise under pressure. He would make changes in Muslim personal law and enact a uniform civil code but only when Muslims were ready for it.

The founding fathers were fully aware of the need for better and wider education as an instrument of social and economic progress, equalization of opportunity and the building up of a democratic society. This was all the more urgent because in 1951 only 16.6 per cent of the total population was literate and the percentage was much lower, being only 6 per cent, in the case of rural families. To remedy this situation, the Constitution directed that by 1961 the state should provide free and compulsory education to every child up to the age of fourteen. Later, this target was shifted to 1966. The government provided large sums for developing primary, secondary, higher and technical education: while the expenditure on education was Rs 198 million in 1952-52, by 1964-65 it had increased to Rs 1462.7 million, i.e. by more than seven times. Since education was primarily a state subject, Nehru urged the state governments not to reduce expenditure on primary education, whatever the nature of financial stringency. If necessary, he suggested, even expenditure on industrial development could be reduced. He told the National Development Council in May 1961: 'I have come to feel that it (education) is the bases of all and, on no account unless actually our heads are cut off and we cannot function, must we allow education to suffer.'

The Nehru years witnessed rapid expansion of education, especially in the case of girls. Between 1951 and 1961 school enrolment doubled for boys and tripled for girls. From 1950-51 to 1965-66 the number of boys enrolled in classes I to V increased from 13.77 million to 32.18 million. The relevant figures for girls were 5.38 million and 18.29 million. The progress was equally rapid in case of secondary education. Between 1950-51 and 1965-66 enrolment increased from 1.02 million to 4.08 million (by nearly 4 times) in case of boys and from 0.19 million to 1.2 million (by nearly 6 1/2 times) in case of girls. The number of secondary schools increased from 7,288 to 24,477 during these years.

At the time of independence there were eighteen universities with a total student enrolment of nearly 300,000. By 1964, the number of universities had increased to fifty-four, the number of colleges to about 2,500 and the number of undergraduate and post-graduate students, excluding intermediate students, to 613,000. The number of girls students increased six-fold and constituted 22 per cent of the total. However,

the progress in primary education, though recognizable, did not match the needs or the intentions especially as the number of eligible students was growing fast because of the high rate of population growth. The constitutional target of free and compulsory education to all children was first shifted from 1961 to 1966 and then to a distant future. By the end of the Third Plan in 1965-66 only 61 per cent of the children between six and fourteen were in school, the figure for girls being only 43 per cent. Consequently, widespread illiteracy continued; as late as 1991 only 52 per cent of the Indians were literate.

But these figures do not tell the full story. In 1965, five per cent of the rural population was not served by any school at all. Moreover, the facilities provided in the existing schools were very poor, with majority of schools having no pucca building, blackboards or drinking water. Nearly 40 per cent of primary schools had only one teacher to take three or four classes. A particular malady of primary schooling was the high rate of dropouts. Nearly half of those enrolled in class I would have left school by the time they reached class IV and been rapidly reduced to virtual illiteracy again. Moreover, the dropout rate was higher in case of girls than the boys. Clearly, there was no equal opportunity in education and therefore also hardly any equalization of opportunity in work and employment for the poor and those in the rural areas who constituted the vast majority of the Indian people. A major weakness that crept in was the decline in educational standards. Despite recognition of the problem, except for the technology sector, the educational system was left untouched and unreformed and the quality of education continued to deteriorate, first in schools and then in colleges and universities. The ideological content of education also continued to be the same as in the colonial period.

Nehru was aware of the unsatisfactory progress in education and near the end of his prime ministership began to put greater emphasis on its development, especially of primary education, which, he now stressed, should, be developed at any cost. 'In the final analysis', he wrote to the chief ministers in 1963, 'right education open to all is perhaps the basic remedy for most of our ills.' Also, 'In spite of my strong desire for the growth of our industry, I am convinced that it is better to do without some industrial growth then to do without adequate education at the base.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Two major programmes for rural uplift, namely, the Community Development programme and Panchayati Raj, were introduced in 1952 and 1959. They were to lay the foundations of the welfare state in the villages. Though designed for the sake of agricultural development, they had more of a welfare content; their basic purpose was to change the face of rural India, to improve the quality of life of the people. The Community Development programme was instituted on a limited scale in 1952 covering 55 development blocs, each bloc consisting of about 100 villages with a population of sixty to seventy thousand. By the mid-sixties most of the country was covered by a network of community blocs, employing more than 6,000 Block Development Officers (BDOs) and over 600,000 Village Level Workers (VLWs or Gram Sewaks) to help implement the programme. The programme covered all aspects of rural life from improvement in agricultural methods to improvement in communications, health and education.

The emphasis of the programme was on self-reliance and self-help by the people, popular participation and responsibility. It was to be basically a people's movement for their own welfare. As Nehru stated at the very outset of the programme in 1952, the basic objective was 'to unleash forces from below among our people.' While it was 'necessary to plan, to direct, to organize and to coordinate; but it [was] even more necessary to create conditions in which a spontaneous growth from below [was] possible.' While material achievements were expected, the programme was much more geared 'to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter a builder of his own village centre and of India in the larger sense.' 'The primary matter is the human being involved,' he added. Another major objective was to uplift the backward sections: 'We must aim at progressively producing a measure of equality in opportunity and other things.' In 1952 and in the later years, Nehru repeatedly referred to the Community Development programme and the accompanying National Extension Service as representing 'new dynamism' and a 'great revolution.' and as 'symbols of the resurgent spirit of India.'

The programme achieved considerable results in extension work: better seeds, fertilizers, and so on, resulting in agricultural development in general and greater food production, in particular, construction of roads, tanks and walls, school and primary health centre buildings, and extension of educational and health facilities. Initially, there was also a great deal of popular enthusiasm, which, however, petered out with time. It soon became apparent that the programme had failed in one of its basic objectives—that of involving the people as full participants in developmental activity. Not only did it not stimulate self-help, it increased expectations from and reliance on the government. It gradually acquired an official orientation, became part of the bureaucratic framework and came to be administered from above as a routine activity with the BDOs becoming replicas of the traditional sub-divisional officers and the Village Level Workers becoming administrative underlings. As Nehru put it later in 1963, while the entire programme was designed to get the peasant 'out of the rut in which he has been living since ages past,' the programme itself 'has fallen into a rut.' The weaknesses of the programme had come to be known as early as 1957 when the Balwantrai Mehta Committee, asked to evaluate it, had strongly criticized its bureaucratization and its lack of popular involvement. As a remedy, the Committee recommended the democratic decentralization of the rural and district development administration. On the Committee's recommendation, it was decided to introduce, all over the country, an integral system of democratic self-government with the village panchayat at its base. The new system, which came to be known as Panchayati Raj and was implemented in various states from 1959, was to consist of a three-tier, directly elected village or gram panchayats, and indirectly elected bloc-level panchayat samitis and district-level zila Parishads. The Community Development programme was to be integrated with the Panchayati Raj; considerable functions, resources and authority were to be devolved upon the three-tiered samitis to carry out schemes of development. Thus, the Panchayati Raj was intended to make up a major deficiency of the Community Development programme by providing for popular participation in the decision-making and implementation of the development process with the officials working under the guidance of the three-level samitis. Simultaneously, the countryside was covered by thousands of cooperative institutions such as cooperative banks, land mortgage banks and service and market cooperatives, which were also autonomous from the bureaucracy as they were managed by elected bodies.

Nehru's enthusiasm was once again aroused as Panchayati Raj and cooperative institutions represented another radical step for change in society. They would transfer responsibility for development and rural admininistrations to the people and accelerate rural development. They would thus let as instruments for the empowerment of the people and would not only lead to greater self-reliance, but would also act as an educative tool, for bringing about a change in the outlook of the people. Above all, they would initiate the process of creating better human beings. However, these hopes were belied. Though adopting Panchayati Raj in one form or another, the state governments showed little enthusiasm for it, devolved no real power on the Panchayati samitis, curbed their powers and functions and starved them of funds. The bureaucracy too did not slacken its grip on rural administration at different levels. Panchayats were also politicized and used by politicians to gather factional support in the villages. As a result, though foundations of a system of rural local self-government were laid, democratic decentralization as a whole was stunted and could not perform the role assigned to it by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Moreover, the benefits of community development, new agricultural inputs and the extension services were mostly garnered by the rich peasants and capitalist farmers, who also came to dominate the Panchayati Raj institutions. The basic weakness of the Community Development programme, the Panchayati Raj and the cooperative movement was that they ignored the class division of the rural society where nearly half the population was landless or had marginal holdings and was thus quite powerless. The village was dominated socially and economically by the capitalist farmers and the rich and middle peasantry; and neither the dominant rural classes nor the bureaucrats could become agents of social transformation or popular participation.

THE POST-INDEPENDENCE FOREIGN POLICY

India's effort to pursue an independent foreign policy was a highlight of post-1947 politics. A product of its long history and recent past, this policy was marked by a great deal of consistency and continuity. Despite revolutionary changes in the international situation, the broad parameters which were evolved during the freedom struggle and in the early years of independence still retain their validity. Jawaharlal Nehru stands as the architect of this not mean achievement. He realized that given her great civilization, India could not but aspire to the right to speak in her own voice. Her recent, hard-won freedom from the colonial yoke would also be meaningless unless it found expression in the international arena. Being sub-continental in size, too, ruled out an assumption of client status for India.

An independent voice was not merely a choice, it was an imperative. It was Nehru who gave this voice a shape in the form of the idea of nonalignment and an organizational cohesion through the non-aligned movement. The immediate context for emergence of this movement was the division of the world into two hostile blocs after World War II, one led by the US and the western powers and the other by the Soviet Union. Nehru's understanding was that newly independent, poor countries of Asia and Africa had nothing to gain and everything to lose by falling for the temptation of joining the military blocs of the big powers. They would end up being used as pawns in contests for power of no relevance to them. Their needs were to fight poverty, and illiteracy and disease, and these could not be met by joining military blocs. On the contrary, India and other similarly placed countries needed peace and quiet to get on with the business of development. Their interests lay in expanding the 'area of peace', not of war, or hostility. India, therefore, neither joined nor approved of the Baghdad Pact, the Manila Treaty, SEATO, and CENTO which joined the countries of West and East Asia to the western power bloc.

But India went far beyond just neutrality or staying out of military blocs. Nehru was quick to reject the charge of 'immoral neutrality' hurled at India by **John Foster Dulles**. Non-alignment meant having the freedom to decide each issue on its merits, to weigh what was right or wrong and then take a stand in favour of right. To quote:

So far as all these evil forces of fascism, colonialism and racialism or the nuclear bomb and aggression and suppression are concerned, we stand most emphatically and unequivocally committed against them ... We are unaligned only in relation to the cold war with its military pacts. We object to all this business of forcing the new nations of Asia and Africa into their cold war machine. Otherwise, we are free to condemn any development which we consider wrong or harmful to the world or ourselves and we use that freedom every time the occasion arises.

Non-alignment came to symbolize the struggle of India and other newly independent nations to retain and strengthen their independence from colonialism and imperialism. India being the first to become independent, rightly gave the lead to other ex-colonies in this respect. And collectively these nations counted for a great deal. In the UN for example, whose membership had swollen with their entry, the one country, one vote system enabled the non-aligned bloc, often helped by the Soviets, to check domination by the western bloc. Non-alignment thus advanced the process of democratization of international relations. A basic objective of Indian foreign policy, that of extending support to colonial and ex-colonial countries in their struggle against colonialism, was well served by the policy of non-alignment. Another objective that of promoting world peace was also facilitated by it. Nehru's passionate opposition to war and the threat of nuclear conflict which loomed large after Hiroshima is well known. It grew out of his experience of non-violent struggle and his conviction in Gandhi who had resolved to make it his mission to fight and outlaw the atom bomb. Inspired by Gandhi, and supported by great intellectuals like Einstein and Bertrand Russell, Nehru made it India's role to place the goal of peace, nuclear and general disarmament before the world.

At about this time when Nehru was pointing out the dangers of world extinction through nuclear conflict, Chairman Mao, it is believed, told Nehru in a conversation that a future nuclear war was only another stage in the inevitable march towards socialism, and that if 300 million Chinese died in it, another 300 million would survive! Nehru constantly emphasized that peaceful co-existence of countries with different ideolo-

gies, differing systems, was a necessity and believed that nobody had a monopoly on the truth and pluralism was a fact of life. To this end he outlined the five principles of peaceful coexistence, or Panch Sheel, for conducting relations among countries. These were mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. While Nehru tirelessly articulated his ideas about international conduct of nations in every available forum, there were some landmark moments in his quest. Before independence, in March 1947, at his inspiration, an Asian Relations Conference attended by more than twenty countries was held in Delhi. The tone of the conference was Asian independence and assertion on the world stage. While this conference concerned itself with general issues, the next one was called in response to a very specific problem: the Dutch attempt to re-colonize Indonesia in December 1948. Nehru invited states bordering the Indian Ocean, and most Asian countries as well as Australia came. The conference resolved to deny all facilities to Dutch shipping, and sent its resolutions to the UN. Within a week the Security Council resolved that a ceasefire be declared, and the Indonesian national government be restored. The de-colonization initiative was carried forward further at the Asian leaders' conference in Colombo in 1954 and the Afro-Asian conference called by India and other Colombo powers in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.

The conference was also a precursor to the Belgrade Non-aligned Conference, as it passed resolutions on world peace and the dangers of nuclear weapons. The pinnacle of Nehru's efforts was reached in 1961 when he stood with Nasser of Egypt and Tito of Yugoslavia to call for nuclear disarmament and peace in Belgrade. By now he was convinced that the remanents of colonialism would give way soon and the next challenge the world faced was that of preventing a nuclear war. A major function of Indian foreign policy was to promote and protect Indian economic interests and to facilitate her on the path that she had chosen for herself. Non-alignment, by not tying India to any one bloc, enabled her to develop economic ties with countries on both sides of the divide as and when she needed. She needed and got capital, technology, machines and food from the western countries. She also relied, especially after 1954, on the Soviet Union for building up her public sector industries, something which the US was reluctant to do.

For military equipment, India spread her net far and wide across the ideological divide. In the Nehru years alone she bought, for example, for the Air Force, 104 Toofani aircraft from France, 182 Hunters and 80 Canberras from UK, 110 Mysters from France, 16 AN-12s and 26 Mi-4 helicopters from the Soviet Union and 55 Fairchild Packets from the US. 230 Vampire aircraft were produced under licence from UK in India. For the Navy and Army as well, similar purchases were made. In addition, efforts were made to establish a defence production base and licences were obtained from various foreign countries to produce the following equipment: Gnat interceptor aircraft from UK, HS-748 transport aircraft from UK, Allouette Helicopters from France, MiG interceptors from Soviet Union, L-70 anti-aircraft guns from Sweden, Vijayanta tanks from UK, Shaktiman trucks from Germany, Nissan one-ton truck and Jonga-jeeps from Japan, Brandt mortars from France, 106 mm recoilless guns from US, Sterling carbines from UK, wireless sets from different countries.

The variety of sources from which defence equipment alone was acquired shows that India succeeded in maintaining sufficiently friendly relations with a large number of countries. Spreading her net wide also ensured that excessive dependence on any one country was avoided and better bargains could be driven since potential partners knew that rivals existed. In this way, many of the inherent weaknesses of a newly independent, underdeveloped and poor country were reduced. On the same lines, India maintained an active membership of various UN bodies as well as of the IMF and the World Bank.

It is no small credit to India's economic diplomacy that she has been the biggest recipient of concessional funding in absolute terms (not per capita) from multilateral international agencies. Indian foreign policy sometimes linked apparently irreconciliable goals. For example, the Soviet Union and India initiated in 1963 and signed in August 1964, August 1965 and November 1965 major arms deals by which the Soviet Union became the largest arms supplier to India and Indo-Soviet relations entered a qualitatively new phase. At the same time, India decided to adopt the Green Revolution technology for agricultural development which was backed by the US. The arms deals with the Soviet Union and the Green Revolution which led to India becoming self-sufficient in food in a few years time increased India's capacity to stand on her

own feet and take a more independent stand in world affairs. Similarly, both the US and the Soviet Union at different times agreed to be paid in rupees, thus saving India precious hard currency.

India also maintained an active profile in multilateral bodies and sought continuously to use her presence there to her advantage. Soon after independence Nehru decided to stay within the Commonwealth for this very reason. Despite strong public opinion to the contrary, he felt that once India was independent and there was no question of Britain dominating over her, India could benefit from her presence in a multinational body. Besides, membership of the Commonwealth provided a certain security in a situation when India was yet to find out who her friends (and enemies) were going to be. India also played an active role in the UN peace-keeping forces in various parts of the world, often at heavy cost to Indian lives. A closer look at some of the international situations in which India played an active part would help illustrate the complex tasks dictated by her non-aligned foreign policy.

INTERNATIONAL ROLE

Korean War-The end of World War II left Korea divided between a Communist North controlled by the Socialist camp and a South Korea dominated by the Western powers. K.P.S. Menon, who was elected Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Korea in late 1947, had in his report to the UN appealed 'to the great powers to let Korea be united', warning that else 'Korea may blow up' but it was to no avail. When North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, India-supported the US in the UN Security Council, condemning North Korea as aggressor and calling for a ceasefire. But American pleasure was soon to turn into anger when they found that India abstained from voting on another resolution calling for assistance to South Korea and the setting up of a unified command for this purpose. India's main concern was to prevent the entry of outside powers into the conflict. Nehru appealed to Truman and Stalin and received a warm response from the latter.

But meanwhile General MacArthur, at the head of US forces under UN command, after pushing North Korean forces out of South Korea, without the approval of the UN, crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea and continued towards the Yalu River that separated Korea from China. Chou En-lai, the Chinese prime minister warned the western powers through the Indian ambassador to China, K.M. Panikkar, of retaliation, but to no avail. (India was the only link between the West and East in Peking at that time.) China thereupon sent in waves of armed 'volunteers' and succeeded in pushing back American troops to south of the 38th parallel, which resulted in huge Chinese, Korean and American casualties. Nehru tried again at this point to bring about an end to the war by organizing a conference but the US queered the pitch with an ill-timed UN resolution declaring China the aggressor. India voted against it because it was clearly MacArthur and not China who was the aggressor in North Korea. A military stalemate ensued but despite India's tireless efforts it took till June 1953 to get both sides to agree to a ceasefire and evolve an acceptable formula for the repatriation of prisoners of war. It was Krishna Menon who finally succeeded in fashioning a formula that the General Assembly of the UN and, after Stalin's death, the Soviet bloc accepted. A Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was set up with an Indian, General Thimayya, as its Chairman, and an Indian 'Custodian Force' under his charge was made responsible for the difficult task of repatriation of soldiers.

The Korean war had tested India's faith in non-alignment and commitment to peace to the utmost, and she had not been found wanting. She stoically faced first Chinese and Soviet hostility because she voted to declare North Korea the initial aggressor. She then endured American wrath for refusing to go along with western intervention in the war, and for refusing to declare China the aggressor. In the midst of this, in 1950, China invaded Tibet and annexed it without any effort to keep India in the picture. Though upset, Nehru did not allow this to influence his stand on the Korean War. India continued to press the UN to recognize and give a seat to Communist China in the Security Council, especially now that the USSR had withdrawn from it in protest. India also badly needed food aid from the US to meet the near famine conditions at home but did not allow this to blind it to US stance in Korea. She continued to press ahead even if success was not always apparent. In the end, India's stand was vindicated both sides had to recognize the same boundary they had tried to change. The world now recognized the worth of non-alignment. It was difficult to dismiss

it as mealy-mouthed, cowardly neutrality or as idealist hogwash. The USSR clearly began to see India in a different light. The Soviet Prime Minister, Bulganin, even told the Indian ambassador, K.P.S. Menon, that the USSR 'fully appreciated India's position in the Commonwealth and hoped that India would continue to remain in it.' This was a big change from the time when the membership of the Commonwealth was seen as final proof of India's succumbing to western imperialism!

Indo-China-The end of the Korean war brought only momentary respite to Asia. In early 1954, Indo-China appeared to be on the brink of becoming the next theatre of the holy crusades against Communism, with the US keen to pour in massive aid to shore up the weary and hesitant French colonial power in its on-going (since 1945) war with the Viet Minh. Nehru's initiative to appeal for a ceasefire in February 1954 was followed up by his obtaining the support of several Asian leaders at the Colombo Conference in April 1954 for his six point proposal for a settlement. Krishna Menon was sent to explain the Asian point of view to the Geneva Conference on Indo-China (to which India was not invited as a member). These steps, besides Nehru's meeting with Chou En-Lai in 1954 in Delhi, and other behind-the-scenes parleys and assurances helped prevent the further internationalization of the Indo-Chinese conflict. India obtained guarantees from China for the neutralization of Laos and Cambodia and promises from Great Britain and France to China that they would not allow the US to have bases in Laos and Cambodia. The significance of India's role in the negotiations was evident from the reference by Pierre Mendes-France, the French prime minister, to the Geneva Conference as 'this ten-power conference—nine at the table—and India'. At China's request, India was appointed Chairman of the International Control Commission and its work included supervision of imports of foreign armaments into Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. For the time being, the danger of the Chinese intervening on behalf of the Viet Minh and of the US increasing its support to the French, even to the point of introducing nuclear weapons into the region, was averted. France was tired of the war, Britain apprehensive of bellicose US intentions, and the USSR, particularly after Stalin's death, groping towards 'peaceful coexistence'. While the control commissions were later subverted through US diplomacy, and Indo-China became a major Cold War theatre, all subsequent peace efforts in fact took up solutions prescribed by Nehru.

Suez Canal-In 1956, in an impulsive reaction to US and British pressure to abandon its declared policy of nonalignment, the latest move being the Anglo-American withdrawal of the promised financial aid for building the Aswan Dam on the river Nile, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. This alarmed the users of the canal and Britain and France particularly demanded international control over it. India was a major user herself but she recognized that under the Constantinople Convention (1888) the Suez Canal was an integral part of Egypt. She urged both Cairo and London to observe restraint and tried at the London Conference in August 1956 to get agreement on a formula that included Egyptian control, an advisory role for the users, and settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter. The Indian proposal met with widespread approval, including from Egypt. Later, when France and Britain got Israel to attack Egypt and landed their troops in Suez, they were severely condemned by even the US, and the UN and Nehru called it 'naked aggression' and a 'reversion to the past colonial methods'. The withdrawal took place under UN supervision and Indian troops participated in large numbers in the peace-keeping force. India continued to support Egyptian interests in subsequent negotiations leading to the settlement even while trying to ensure that British and other users' interests were protected. In time, even Britain accepted the fairness of India's approach and the episode did not leave any permanent mark on Indo-British relations.

Hungary-The Soviet Union's intrusion in Hungary in October 1956 to crush a rebellion aimed at taking Hungary out of the Soviet bloc was severely condemned by the UN and it demanded withdrawal. India abstained from joining in this formal condemnation and received a lot of flak in the West. India's stand was that while the Soviets must withdraw, the situation was not as simple as made out in the West. The existence of two zones of influence, West and East, in Europe, was a fact of post-World War II life and any disturbance could set off a domino effect. Nothing was to be gained by humiliating the Soviets through formal condemnation, which in any case India refrained from doing as a matter of policy, as it only hardened positions and made future compromise difficult. Nehru himself criticized the Soviet action and did not send an ambassador to Budapest for two years to show his unhappiness. The Soviets reciprocated by abstaining when Kashmir next came up in the UN Security Council. Thereafter, they reverted to their usual practice of

vetoing resolutions that were against Indian interests! India's situation was not an easy one but she withstood considerable pressure from both sides and did not flip in either direction.

The Congo-A very major achievement of Indian foreign policy was its role in helping maintain the integrity and independence of Congo. Congo had barely gained her independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960 when its copper-rich province of Katanga announced its independence from the Congo! Its head, Tshombe, was clearly being backed by Belgium and Belgian troops were also sent to the Congolese capital ostensibly to protect Belgian citizens. Lumumba, the prime minister of Congo, appealed to the UN, US and USSR for help, and the UN asked its Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjold, to organize all necessary help. The next few months witnessed an unseemly drama in which foreign powers propped up their favourite local players in the mad scramble for power. The US supported the President, Kasavubu, the Soviets backed Patrice Lumumba and the Belgians blessed the army leader, Mobutu. Their tactics were eventually to lead to the murder of Lumumba. Lumumba's murder shocked the world and when Nehru forcefully demanded that the UN play a more decisive part, get rid of the mercenaries and the foreign troops, stop the civil war, convene the parliament and form a new government, and added that India was ready to commit troops for the purpose, the UN agreed. The Security Council adopted a resolution on 21 February 1961 and Indian armed forces successfully brought the civil war to a close, restoring the central government's authority over Katanga and the rest of the country by March 1963.

Dag Hammarskjold is reported to have said, 'Thank God for India,' and the praise was not undeserved. It was indeed one of the finest moments for India's policy of non-alignment, of help to newly-independent countries of Africa and Asia, and strengthening of the role of multilateral bodies such as the UN. It was again evident that, non-alignment could work and there was not just space but also the need for the non-aligned to assert themselves on the side of newly-emerging nations. They were sought after by eager superpowers for enlistment in an enterprise that could only take away their freedom even before they had had time to savour its taste.

RELATIONS WITH SUPER-POWERS

USA-Indian non-alignment did not preclude, but in fact desired, a friendly relationship with the US, the leading power in the post-war world. India needed technology, machines, and aid for its development effort, food for its people, and moral support for its nation-building and democratic efforts—all of which it thought the US could provide. The US stand on Kashmir however shook this hope of friendship. The UN Security Council, dominated by the US and its allies, in the late forties and early fifties evaded a decision on the Indian charge of Pakistani aggression even after the UN Commission reported the presence of Pakistani troops in Kashmir. All findings by UN mediators that were favourable to India were ignored, and the powerful western media was used to spread the myth that India was not fulfilling UN directives.

Indian requests for food aid were kept hanging because, it was said, Nehru never actually asked for it on his visit to the US in 1949, even though he had explained the drought situation at length. Shipments were sent only after China and the USSR stepped in to help! The US did not appreciate India's recognition of Communist China in early 1950, nor did it like India's stand that the People's Republic of China be given representation in the UN. India's initial stand on the Korean War was welcomed, but her later position resented. Pakistan was offered some kind of military aid in 1952 itself, though it was made public only in 1953. It was ostensibly given arms against a Soviet Communist threat, but the kind of weapons it got could never cross the Hindu Kush, but could only be used against India. Indian objections were brushed aside by the US with meaningless assurances that they would not be used against India. Nehru expressed his unhappiness at the Cold War being brought to the subcontinent by the inclusion of Pakistan in CENTO, SEATO, etc. US descriptions of nonalignment as immoral did nothing to help matters either. On Goa, too, the US proved totally insensitive to Indian concerns. They supported Portugal's claim in 1955 that Goa was a province of Portugal and attacked India virulently when it liberated Goa by force in 1961 after waiting patiently for fourteen years after independence.

A major reason for the difficult relationship between the world's two great democracies was of course the very different perceptions of the Cold War. The US was obsessed by Communism and could not accept that others might have an alternative set of priorities. The world looked black and white from Washington, but from Delhi it looked grey. Nehru had known Communists closely as comrades in the Indian freedom struggle, he had been deeply influenced by Marxism, and while he had his own differences with them and had even had to suppress a Communist insurgency soon after coming to power, he did not regard them as evil. Nor was India willing to line up behind the West in the Cold War for getting aid and arms, as Pakistan was, even though it hardly shared the US view of the Communist threat. Besides, India had encouraged other nations of Asia and Africa to also remain non-aligned. It has been suggested, quite persuasively, that US antipathy to India predated India's refusal to side with it in the Cold War and that the US establishment inherited, including via British intelligence officials who helped set up the CIA, the British dislike of the Congress leaders who had brought down the mighty Empire, and a positive attitude towards Muslim League/ Pakistan because it was pro-British and helped in the War effort. They also inherited and then made their own, British fears (or shall one say hopes) that India would not survive as a unit. Its very diversity, the US thought, would lead to the disintegration of India. As a result, it was not considered a solid bulwark against the spread of Communism. Therefore, even if India had wanted to, it could not have become a frontline state, backed by the western alliance, because there was a deep-rooted suspicion about her reliability and stability. It is also felt that while the 'mainspring of American policy is power —and a healthy respect for it', 'India did not have the "power" and the Indian leadership deliberately tried to denigrate it (and) accelerate the process of diminishing the utility and usability of power in international politics. The American leadership and establishment could never understand this.' There was also a strong pro-colonial trend in the American establishment which had supported the French and British to return to their colonies after the War, and even supported Portuguese colonialism in Africa and the internal colonialisms of Vorster and Ian Smith in South Africa and Rhodesia. It was unlikely that India's strong anti-imperialist stance was much admired in these quarters.

This should not suggest that Indo-US relations were marked by unremitting hostility. On the contrary, people to people relations remained friendly. Economic ties grew as the US was the source of technology and machines. Large sections of influential opinion in India were pro-US and an important section of informed liberal opinion in the US, which included Chester Bowles, John Sherman Cooper, and Senator Fulbright, was pro-India. Towards the late fifties there was a considerable improvement in relations, at least partly because the US was acquiring a better understanding of Indian policy and perhaps because greater Soviet friendship increased India's value. The Kennedy administration made a clear effort to improve ties by sending one of its key figures, a man who loved India and got along famously with Nehru, John K. Galbraith, as ambassador in 1961. The Chinese attack on India in 1962, however drastically altered the situation. Shocked beyond belief, Nehru turned to Kennedy for help. He was lucky that the awkward situation was partially eased for him because of the presence of Galbraith as the mediator. But that is a story that is better told as part of the sad tale of China's betrayal of its great friend and well-wisher.

Soviet Union-India's relations with the Soviet Union began on a cool note but ended up acquiring great warmth. The Soviet coolness grew out of their perception of India still being under imperialist influence. Communist ambivalence towards the Indian freedom struggle and the leaders of the Congress party was transferred to Nehru's government. The Communist Party of India was engaged in an insurgency against the Indian state in Telangana. India's decision to stay in the Commonwealth was seen by the Soviets as proof of Indian surrender to imperialism, the Soviet Ambassador, Novikov, calling it 'a sad day for India and the world.' Nehru had, however, from the time of his speech as Vice-President of the interim government in 1946, struck and maintained a friendly approach towards the USSR. He admired the Soviet Union and had visited it in 1927. He refused to interpret Communist insurgency in India as proof of Soviet unfriendliness, and as a special gesture offered diplomatic relations even before independence, as well as sent his sister, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, as ambassador. Characteristically, Stalin never gave her an audience.

However, possibly because of the way India conducted herself in the Korean War crisis, and her evident independence from imperialist influence, signs of a thaw begun to appear by 1951-2. The Soviets, along with

China, sent food shipments to tide over the drought, at a time when the US was dragging its feet. Stalin met the new ambassador, S. Radhakrishnan, future President of India, a few times, and even offered a treaty of friendship. Signs of support on the Kashmir issue at the UN began to emerge, and the CPI was told to cool off its attack on Nehru's government. The process was speeded up after Stalin's death in 1954. The USSR offered to give military equipment to India in 1954 after Pakistan joined CENTO and SEATO, but consistent with its policy of not accepting free military aid, India refused. In 1955, Nehru paid a highly successful visit to the Soviet Union, followed in the same year by an equally popular visit by Khrushchev and Bulganin. In 1956, the 20th Congress of the Comintern, the Soviet-controlled body which laid down the ideological line for all Communist parties, put its seal on the process of de-Stalinization begun after Stalin's death, and tried to soften the Cold War stance by talking of peaceful coexistence between countries belonging to different social systems. It also introduced the totally new concept in Marxism of a peaceful road to Socialism. It is another matter that the US was so taken up with its own rhetoric that it failed completely to respond to these possibilities. For Indo-USSR ties, this was a great help, for all ideological impediments to co-operation were removed. From 1955, USSR gave full support to the Indian position on Kashmir, and from 1956 used or threatened to use, its veto in the UN Security Council to stall resolutions unfavourable to India on Kashmir. The significance of this cannot be underestimated, as India was in a very awkward situation in the Security Council till the USSR started protecting her. The consistent support on Kashmir went far in binding Indo-Soviet friendship. Both countries also took a common stand against colonialism. In the UN, the USSR supported India on the integration of Goa in opposition to the US.

The path of economic development that India chose based on planning and a leading role for the public sector in industrialization, especially in heavy industry, brought her closer to the USSR. While the western powers, especially the US, hesitated to help, the Soviets readily came forward with assistance in the building of the Bhilai steel plant in 1956. Then followed the British in Durgapur and the Germans in Rourkela. The US was again approached for the Bokaro plant, but when it continued to remain coy, the Soviets stepped in again. In later years they played a critical role in oil exploration as well. In 1973-74, it was estimated that '30 per cent of India's steel, 35 per cent of our oil, 20 per cent of our electrical power, 65 per cent of heavy electrical equipment and 85 per cent of our heavy machine-making machines are produced in projects set up with Soviet aid'.

When relations between India and China began to deteriorate from 1959 with the Dalai Lama seeking refuge in India and military clashes on the Sino-Indian border, the USSR did not automatically side with its Communist brother, but remained neutral, which itself was a great achievement at that time. Nehru was well aware of the significance of the Soviet stance, and he moved closer to USSR. The Chinese also date the beginning of their differences with the Soviet Union to the same episode. In the same year, India and the Soviet Union signed their first agreement for military supplies and in 1960 India received 'supply dropping aircraft, helicopters and engineering equipment for the Border Roads Development Board which was to construct roads in the areas disputed by China.' In mid-1962, an agreement permitting India to manufacture MiG aircraft was concluded, this being the first time the Soviets had let a non-Communist country manufacture sophisticated military equipment which even the Chinese had not been licensed to do. The Chinese attack on India in October 1962 found the USSR again maintaining neutrality, at least partly because it occurred when the Cuban missile crisis was at its peak. Later, in December 1962, Suslov, the important Soviet leader, at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet, unambiguously declared that China was responsible for the war.

Unlike the western powers who failed to deliver on promises of military supplies in the wake of the Indo-China war, the Soviets in 1963 signed more agreements for sale of arms and supplied interceptors and helicopters, tanks, mobile radar sets, surface-to-air missiles, submarines, missile boats and patrol ships. They helped India develop manufacturing facilities for MiG aeroplanes and to build a naval dockyard. It was this independent manufacturing base that helped India to win the 1971 war. Importantly, unlike the US, they neither stationed personnel to supervise use of equipment, nor laid down difficult conditions for deployment of equipment. The Soviet Union too gained from this link. India was an important entry-point to the Afro-Asian world of newly-independent countries who did not want to become US satellites and were

open to Soviet friendship. This helped the USSR in the Cold War as well. The Soviets had, like India, a long border with China and many unresolved boundary disputes. Friendship with India kept China in check and this suited the Soviets. Indian non-alignment tilted the balance away from the West and this too was a help. Surrounded by US inspired pacts and military bases, the USSR could do with a few friends, and therefore the relationship was one of equality. Besides, for all its faults, Marxism is anti-racist, anti-imperialist and pro-poor, and this precluded any adoption of a patronizing attitude by the Soviets, something which the Americans often tended to slip into; much to Indian annoyance. Indo-Soviet friendship thus emerged as one of the most critical elements of Indian foreign policy.

RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURS

India's relations with her neighbours were of central concern to her and fortunately, till 1962, apart from Pakistan, she was on good terms with all her neighbours. With Nepal, she signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950, which gave Nepal unrestricted access for commercial transit through India, and secured Nepal's total sovereignty while making both countries responsible for each other's security. With Burma, too, the problem of Indian settlers and a long uncharted border were settled amicably. The issue of Tamil settlers in Sri Lanka was not as easy of solution, and tensions remained, but it did not flare up in this period, and otherwise amicable ties were maintained. With Pakistan, however, and in later years with China, serious problems were faced, and the relations with them are discussed at length below.

INDO-PAK WAR

Congress leaders had agreed reluctantly to the Partition of India as the solution to an intractable problem and also in the hope that this would end the hostility. But, in fact, the acrimony was only transferred to the international sphere. Communal riots and transfers of population on an unprecedented scale had in any case led to strained relations but the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir in October 1947, just two months after independence, unleashed a chain of cause and effect whose latest act was played out only recently in Kargil. Kashmir's accession to India was a troubled one. When the British left, most of the Indian states ruled indirectly by the British but nominally by Indian princes joined up with either India or Pakistan and the very real danger of Balkanization, almost encouraged by the British, was averted. However, a few states, some of whose rulers, encouraged by British officers and Pakistan, entertained grandiose but unreal ambitions of independence, held out for some time. Among these were Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Kashmir. Hyderabad and Junagadh had little real choice as they were surrounded by Indian territory. But Kashmir had a border with Pakistan, a majority Muslim population, a Hindu ruler, and a radical popular movement for democracy led by Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference which was very friendly with Nehru and the Congress—enough potent ingredients for whipping up a recipe for trouble. The Maharaja asked for a standstill agreement for one year to make up his mind. Pakistan formally accepted his request and though India was yet to reply its stand had always been that the people's wishes should be ascertained by an election and therefore it was quite willing to wait and accept the verdict of the elections. However, clearly worried that the popular verdict in Kashmir was not likely to go in its favour, Pakistan decided to jump the gun and sent in so-called tribesmen from the Frontier province, aided by regular armed forces, to invade Kashmir. The Maharaja appealed to India for help but India could only send in her armies if Kashmir acceded to India. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession, the only legal requirement, as had hundreds of other rulers, and Kashmir became a part of India. Indian troops reached Srinagar just in time to save the capital city from failing into the hands of the invaders.

India pushed back the Pakistani 'volunteers', and also put in a complaint with the UN against Pakistani aggression. There, instead of getting justice, India learnt her first lesson in Cold War politics. Encouraged by the British who continued to nurture a resentment of the Congress and India and a fondness for the Muslim League and Pakistan, and also for strategic reasons of wanting Pakistan as a frontline state against the USSR, the US also lined up behind Pakistan. The Soviet Union had not yet made up its mind whether India was any longer 'a running dog of British imperialism' and so it gave no support. Nevertheless, India dutifully accepted the UN resolution asking for a ceasefire, even though the military situation was to her advantage. Nehru was much criticized later for going to the UN and for offering to hold a plebiscite.

But neither criticism holds, as Pakistan could have gone to the UN if India had not, and the UN could have asked for the holding of a plebiscite. India has also been often misunderstood on its later refusal to hold a plebiscite, because it is not widely known that the UN resolution of August 1948 laid down two preconditions for holding a plebiscite. One, that Pakistan should withdraw its forces from the state of Jammu and Kashmir and two, that the authority of the Srinagar administration should be restored over the whole state. These conditions were never met and in the meantime Kashmir went on to hold elections for its Constituent Assembly, which voted for accession to India. The Indian government now took the stand that the Constituent Assembly's vote was a sufficient substitute for plebiscite. Kashmir later participated in the Indian general elections as well as held its own state elections, thus rendering irrelevant the debate over plebiscite. In any case, India had never accepted the two-nation theory that all Muslims naturally owed allegiance to the Muslim League and all Muslim majority areas belonged to Pakistan and on that basis Kashmir should go to Pakistan—a Pakistani argument that often appealed to western observers unfamiliar with the history of the Indian national movement.

There was a brief period in 1953-54 when it seemed the Kashmir issue may be resolved. On Mohammed Ali Bogra becoming prime minister in 1953, following cordial visits between him and Nehru, a joint communique was issued on 20 August 1953, stating that Nehru had agreed to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. But the brief flame of hope was snuffed out by the exigencies of Cold War politics. The US had decided after Korea that Indian non-alignment was immoral and it should give military aid to Pakistan. In the UN Security Council, while India wanted as Plebiscite Administrator someone from a small neighbouring country, the name that was proposed was of a senior US Service Officer, Admiral Nimitz. The last chance of a compromise disappeared.

The Kashmir issue continued to be used to needle India in the UN, especially as Pakistan became more and more integrated into the US-fed western alliance system via membership of CENTO, SEATO, the Baghdad Pact and a military pact with the US in 1954. India had clearly refused to play the US game and Pakistan was more than willing. (Before independence too the Muslim League had happily played the British game; its child, Pakistan, now did US bidding. The Congress continued its anti-imperialist tradition.) In this situation, to get a solution on Kashmir would need a miracle. Only when the Soviet Union began to understand the value of Indian non-alignment and openly supported India on Kashmir could India heave a sigh of relief. From 1956 onwards, the Soviet Union used its veto powers in the UN Security Council to thwart all resolutions on Kashmir unacceptable to India.

India could, with Soviet support, ward off the international pressure on the Kashmir issue through the mid- and late fifties and early sixties. But the Chinese attack in 1962 which forced her to turn to the West for help, made it very difficult for her to withstand US and British pressure. From 1962 Pakistan also began to line up with the Chinese, thus threatening to engulf India in a pincer movement, which almost came true in 1971 but didn't, to the great disappointment of the US. In the mid-sixties, for a short while, the USSR also explored the possibility of moving a little closer to Pakistan (the Tashkent initiative by Kosygin to end the Indo-Pak war of 1965 was part of that) but fortunately for India, and not without Indian encouragement, the USSR realized that Pakistan was too deeply integrated into the western system to be of use to it.

The rancour that characterized Indo-Pak relations was a source of great sadness to Nehru and Indians in general. A common history, geography, culture, and goal of improving the condition of their poverty-stricken people should have brought about cooperation between the two countries. Nehru tried his best to remove all other irritants in the relationship, and showed great generosity on the division of pre-Partition assets, compensation to refugees and division of Indus basin waters. He even visited Pakistan in 1953. There is a little known story about a large sum of money that India was to give Pakistan as part of the Partition settlement. When Pakistan invaded Kashmir, the Indian government held up the transfer. Gandhiji came to know of it and immediately had it sent to Pakistan, brushing aside the objections of Nehru and Patel that they were only withholding it for the time being so that it was not used for the purposes of war. At the same time, Gandhiji fully supported the Indian armed defence of Kashmir. It is sometimes said that Pakistani foreign policy is better than ours. It may help to remember the comment of K.P.S. Menon:

The net result of Pakistan's diplomacy, however, was that Ayub Khan lost his job, Yahya Khan lost his freedom and Pakistan lost half its territory.

THE 1962 CHINESE ATTACK ON INDIA

India adopted a policy of friendship towards China from the very beginning. The Congress had been sympathetic to China's struggle against imperialism and had sent a medical mission to China in the thirties as well as given a call for boycott of Japanese goods in protest against Japanese occupation of China. India was the first to recognize the new People's Republic of China on 1 January 1950. Nehru had great hopes that the two countries with their common experience of suffering at the hands of colonial powers and common problems of poverty and underdevelopment would join hands to give Asia its due place in the world. Nehru pressed for representation for Communist China in the UN Security Council, did not support the US position in the Korean War, and tried his best to bring about a settlement in Korea. In 1950, when China occupied Tibet, India was unhappy that it had not been taken into confidence, but did not question China's rights over Tibet since at many times in Chinese history Tibet had been subjugated by China. In 1954, India and China signed a treaty in which India recognized China's rights over Tibet and the two countries agreed to be governed in their mutual relations by the principles of Panch Sheel. Differences over border delineation were discussed at this time but China maintained that it had not yet studied the old Kuomintang maps and these could be sorted out later.

Relations continued to be close and Nehru went to great lengths to project China and Chou En-lai at the Bandung Conference. In 1959, however, there was a big revolt in Tibet and the Dalai Lama fled Tibet along with thousands of refugees. He was given asylum in India but not allowed to set up a government-in-exile and dissuaded from carrying on political activities. Nevertheless, the Chinese were unhappy. Soon after, in October 1959, Chinese opened fire on an Indian patrol near the Kongka Pass in Ladakh, killing five Indian policemen and capturing a dozen others. Letters were exchanged between the two governments, but a common ground did not emerge. Then, Chou En-lai was invited for talks to Delhi in April 1960, but not much headway could be made and it was decided to let officials sort out the details first.

The 1962 Chinese Attack-On 8 September 1962, Chinese forces attacked the Thagla ridge and dislodged Indian troops, but this was taken as a minor incident. Nehru went off to London for a conference and after returning home once again left for Colombo on 12 October. A week later, the Chinese army launched a massive attack and overran Indian posts in the eastern sector in NEFA or what was later Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian army commander in NEFA fled without any effort at resistance leaving the door wide open for China to walk in. In the western sector, on 20 October, thirteen forward posts were captured by the Chinese in the Galwan valley, and the Chushul airstrip threatened. There was a great outcry in the country and a feeling of panic about Chinese intentions. It was thought that the Chinese would come rushing in to the plains and occupy Assam and perhaps other parts as well. Nehru wrote two letters to President Kennedy on 9 November, describing the situation as 'really desperate' and asking for wide-ranging military help. He also sought Britain's assistance. Twenty-four hours later, the Chinese declared a unilateral withdrawal and, as unpredictably as it had appeared, the Chinese dragon disappeared from sight, leaving behind a heart-broken friend and a confused and disoriented people.

The Aftermath-India took a long time to recover from the blow to its self-respect, and perhaps it was only the victory over Pakistan in the Bangladesh war, in which China and USA were also supporting Pakistan, that restored the sense of self-worth. Nehru never really recovered from the blow, and his death in May 1964 was most likely hastened by it. Worse, at the pinnacle of his outstanding career, he had to face attacks from political opponents who would never have dared otherwise. He was forced to sacrifice Krishna Menon, his long-time associate and then defence minister. The policy of non-alignment, which he had nurtured with such care, seemed for a while unlikely to be able to withstand the body-blow delivered by a friend. The irony was that it was derailed by a socialist country and not by a capitalist power. Right-wing forces and pro-West elements loudly criticised Nehru. They used the opportunity to block a constitutional amendment aimed at strengthening land ceiling legislation. The Third Plan was badly affected and resources had to be diverted for defence. The Congress lost three parliamentary by-elections in a row and Nehru faced in August 1963 the first no-confidence motion of his life.

India's relations with other countries were powerfully affected by the Chinese attack, as the 'China factor' loomed large in foreign policy. The US and the UK had responded positively with help in the crisis, so they could not be shrugged off once it receded. True to form, however, with Pakistani prompting, they tried their best to use India's weakness to get her to surrender on Kashmir, hinting broadly at a quid pro quo by way of military aid, but Nehru managed somehow to withstand the pressure. Nor were these countries willing to really underwrite massive aid in return for abandoning nonalignment. The figures mentioned were in the range of $60-120 million, hardly princely sums! But there was considerable increase in US influence, especially on military affairs. US intelligence agencies developed links in the name of countering the Chinese threat, and even planting a nuclear-powered device in the Himalayas to monitor Chinese military activities. Nehru tried to counter this subtly, and pushed ahead with military agreements with the Soviets, who actually turned out to be far more willing to give India what she needed in the long-term than the US, which put impossible conditions for niggardly amounts of aid. Pakistan sidled up to China, and thinking India was truly weakened launched the 1965 war.

Whose Fault Was It?

At the time of the attack, and afterwards, in the Press and in academic writing, attempts have been made to hold Nehru responsible for Chinese perfidy. One kind of argument sees him as a naive fool who was blinded by sentiment and failed to guard Indian interests in the face of an inevitable Communist betrayal. Another view, expounded most notably by Neville Maxwell in *India's China War,* makes Nehru out to be a stubborn nationalist who, pushed by jingoist public pressure, refused to settle the borders with China on the very reasonable terms offered by the Chinese and instead followed from 1959 a 'forward policy' which provoked the Chinese to attack in self-defence. Neither view does justice to the sophistication of Nehru's understanding of China and the subtlety of his policy.

Nehru's understanding of Chinese history, of the history of revolutions, especially the Russian revolution, had convinced him that China should not be isolated and pushed into a corner, but should be brought into the community of nations and its revolution humanized. 'We know enough history to realize that a strong China is normally an expansionist China,' he said, but did not want to precipitate any conflict with China as it would be as disastrous for both countries as was the French-German conflict. Before the 1962 attack, on 7 December 1961, in the Lok Sabha he said, 'a huge elephant of a country sitting on our border is itself a fact that we could not ignore.' He added that soon after the Chinese revolution he had come 'to the conclusion that our borders were going to be, well, threatened in some way.' Nehru's long statement on 3 September 1963 in the Rajya Sabha explained at length about not wanting to spend too much on the military, about the emphasis on building one's own strength as that is the only security. 'No country that is not industrialized is militarily strong today,' and 'the real thing before us was to strengthen India industrially and not superficially, by getting an odd gun or an odd aircraft.' With Pakistan already hostile, India did not need another neighbour as an enemy. Preparing for war on two fronts would have meant an end to development. Therefore, the conflict, even if inevitable, should be delayed as much as possible by adopting a friendly approach and asking others to do the same, for example by trying to get China into the UN. He understood that the Chinese occupation of Tibet meant a common border with attendant conflicts. But he also saw that China could not think of expansionism as yet, as it had big problems to solve. After the revolt in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama's arrival, and the border clashes, he was well aware of the dangers, but what good would it have done to threaten China? In an effort to checkmate the Chinese he did make diplomatic preparations, by moving closer to the Soviets. He had never bought the line that Communist China and Communist USSR, would team up, and perhaps along with Indian Communists, threaten the Indian state. He did not believe that China was a tool in the hands of the Soviets, nor did he make the mistake of thinking that the Soviet Union would back Communist brothers against Indian friends, as many in India argued.

Nehru was shocked at the scale of the attack, as he had thought at there may be occasional border skirmishes here and there, but not an invasion of this nature. He erred in not anticipating the precise nature of the attack, rather than in the foreign policy he pursued. A further mistake was the panic in appealing to USA and UK for help, as next day the Chinese withdrew. Irresponsible attacks on Nehru by sections of the Press, the opposition parties, and even members of his own party had led to this knee-jerk response. The failure of

nerve on the battlefield was compounded by that in the country at large with Nehru rather than the Chinese becoming the butt of attack! Sadly, the country showed an inability to face adversity stoically, with faith in its proven leaders, and instead fell into despair and mutual recrimination. To his credit, Nehru tried his best to retrieve the situation and get the country back to its bearings.

Most commentators are now agreed that India's defeat at China's hands in 1962 was not the result of Nehru's naive faith in Chinese friendship and Utopian pacifism and consequent neglect of India's defence preparedness. On the contrary, between 1949-50 and 1962, the strength of the Indian Armed Forces doubled from 280,000 to 550,000 and that of the Indian Air Force from seven combat squadrons in 1947 to nineteen by 1962. The war with Pakistan in 1965 was fought with the same equipment and no debacle occurred. Nehru was well aware and had been warning of the possibilities of border clashes with the Chinese since 1959. But neither the political nor the military leadership anticipated the precise nature of the Chinese attack, and were therefore taken by surprise. Apparently, the military leadership thought in terms of either border clashes or a full-scale war in the plains of Assam, but not about the possibility of a limited deep thrust and withdrawal. The Chief of Staff, General Thimayya, believed that a total war with China was unthinkable because she would have full Soviet support. He and other senior officers do not appear to have been aware of Sino-Soviet differences. Nor does he seem to have conceived of a role for the Air Force 'at a time when the Indian Air Force could have swept the skies over Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet without any opposition from the Chinese.' (Nehru asked the US for an air cover without consulting his own Air Force.)

The failure was also, it is felt, due to the lack of a proper system of higher defence command and management, and because there was no system of defence planning and the structure of civil-military relations was flawed. The chiefs of staff were not integrated into the civilian policymaking structure, but remained theatre commanders preparing for the near-term future but not for the long-term future security environment. Despite Nehru's warnings since 1959, of trouble with China, much professional thought had not gone into the planning for a war in the Himalayas. It was a failure of logistics, of intelligence, or rather of analysis of intelligence, of coordination of different wings such as the Army with the Air Force, etc. It was a failure of nerve on the part of the military commander, who had an excellent record and had been decorated earlier, but withdrew without a fight, though it is believed he could have held out for at least seven days. The Chinese, on their part, withdrew as quickly as they came, having achieved their objective of humiliating India by a quick but limited thrust deep into Indian territory. Again, the Indian side had failed to anticipate the Chinese withdrawal and had now begun planning to face a full-scale war in the plains of Assam.

Maxwell's theory of Indian aggressiveness is not treated seriously by most experts, as it is too obvious that India had no inkling, leave alone intentions, of provoking a conflict. Her prime minister and defence minister were out of the country, the chief of staff on leave, a senior commander on a cruise. What was India to gain from provoking a war anyway? On the contrary, it can be shown that it was Chinese imperatives, of which Maxwell shows no awareness that brought them to war, not Indian provocation. And the factors that propelled China in the direction of conflict were beyond Nehru's control.

Take Tibet. Every strong Chinese government had tried to integrate Tibet. But Tibet wanted independence. Nevertheless, Nehru accepted the Chinese position on Tibet in the 1954 Panch Sheel agreement without even getting a quid pro quo on the border, which was possibly a mistake. Only in 1959 did Chou En-lai claim territory in Ladakh and NEFA, this is in the wake of the Khampa revolt and the flight of Dalai Lama to India with many refugees. China accused India of instigating the Dalai Lama and objected to the asylum. No Indian government could have refused asylum and India did not instigate the rebellion. Nehru did not allow a Tibetan government-in-exile, or any political activities. But he could not have prevented the Tibetan revolt! Nor could Nehru succeed, despite his best efforts, in influencing US policy. The US refusal to accommodate China, her insistence that Formosa (later Taiwan) was the only legitimate China, which also meant that Communist China was denied a seat in the Security Council of the UN, the attempt to checkmate her in Korea, and Indo-China, frustrated her and pushed her on the path to aggressive assertion. In fact, the US played no small role in making China paranoid about her security and helping the extremist left elements to come to the fore in China.

Nor was Nehru the architect of Sino-Soviet differences which had their own role to play in increasing Chinese insecurity and pushing her in an adventurist direction. These differences existed for some time but came into the open in 1959. When clashes took place between India and China on the border, the Soviets remained neutral. In April-May 1962, a number of incidents occurred on the Sino-Soviet border in Sinkiang. The Soviets charged the Chinese with more than 5,000 violations of the border, and the Chinese charged the Soviets with enticing tens of thousands of their citizens across the border. In 1959, the Soviets had repudiated the treaty that they had signed with China on development of nuclear weapons. In the first week of August, 1962, the Soviets signed an agreement with India on the manufacture of MiG-21 aircraft. They had not done so with China. In the last week of August, the Soviets told the Chinese that they were going ahead with negotiations for a Partial Test Ban Treaty. The Chinese took this as being aimed at checking their efforts to develop nuclear weapons. This was all the more galling to the Chinese because they felt that Soviet Union was now in a position to use its weight to secure Chinese interests in the international arena. To quote V. P. Dutt, Sinologist and foreign policy expert:

China had arrived at a new theoretical understanding of its own national interests. It had despaired of a peaceful solution to the outstanding problems with the United States and the fulfillment of its primary objectives, namely the return of Taiwan ... acceptance of China as a great power, seat in the Security Council ... It had now come to believe that the international balance of forces was shifting in favour of the socialist camp in view of Soviet advances in rocketry and ICBMs and that the time had come for the adoption of an uncompromising and militant line in order to compel the United States ... to make concessions to China.

The Chinese were also upset that Afro-Asian countries were following India's line of seeking friendship and assistance from both USSR and USA, rather than the Chinese line of keeping a distance from both. By reducing India's stature, they could hope to have their line accepted.

Therefore, it is not at all unlikely that the Chinese attack on India had little to do with issues between India and China, but was a reaction to a feeling of isolation, abandonment and frustration. By attacking India, they may have wanted to topple Nehru or at least push India into the western camp so that the USSR could have no illusions about Indian non-alignment and would have to rethink its policy of peaceful coexistence, which, the Chinese figured, was leading to their isolation. They failed on both counts. In fact, V. P. Dutt testifies that Deng Xiaoping said later to an Indian delegation of which he was a member that it was Khrushchev who was responsible for the 1962 war.

Thus, the causes of the 1962 attack were related more to China's own compulsions that to anything that Nehru or India did or could have done. Not being able to get the recognition of the US, a UN seat, leadership of Afro-Asia, Soviet support on the nuclear issue or the border dispute with India, a leftward turn took place in Chinese politics. By humiliating India, it wanted to show that her policy of peace and non-alignment was not feasible. Nor was the Soviet policy of peaceful co-existence. India would leave the policy of non-alignment under pressure and other countries of Asia and Africa would follow the Chinese lead. Thus, the cause of the Indian military humiliation could not be reduced to Indian foreign policy failure. It could 'only be characterized as one of those unforseeable random events of history.'

If India's policy towards China was a failure, which other country's was a success? The US did a complete volte-face in 1971, and the USSR began changing, at least after 1959. The debacle of the India-China war in no way raises doubts on the correctness of Nehru's basic thrust in foreign policy. For example, nonalignment ensured that even in the India-China war, the US and the Soviet blocs were not ranged on opposite sides and India succeeded in getting greater or lesser sympathy from both. This was an unusual occurrence in the days of the Cold War. Secondly, Nehru had been right in pursuing a policy of friendship with China, even if it ended the way it did. Especially given the hostile relationship with Pakistan (which surfaced soon after independence with the conflict over Kashmir and grew into a serious threat when it was exacerbated by the US decision in 1954 to give military help to Pakistan), it was in India's interest to try its best to avoid having another hostile neighbour and thus be caught in a pincer movement. India's espousal of China's right

to have a seat in the UN was not given up by Nehru even after the Indo-China war since he rightly believed that the western powers' isolation of China only pushed her into becoming more irresponsible. Besides, as Nehru was most fond of pointing out, defence was not just a matter of weapons, it was also a function of economic development, of self-reliance; otherwise defence was only skin-deep. A newly independent poor country like India could have ill afforded to divert her scarce resources into building up a massive military machine. On the contrary, by building up India's economic strength, Nehru enabled his successors to win impressive military victories.

The political foresight and pragmatism that informed Nehru's practice of nonalignment is testified to by the quick course correction that has had to be undertaken every time attempts have been made to move away from it. When Indira Gandhi became prime minister in 1966, she felt that relations with the US and the West could be and needed to be dramatically improved. This was because, on the one hand, US had a better idea of Chinese militancy and had promised help if China attacked again, and on the other, the grave food shortages caused by the drought and the critical economic situation caused by the cumulative effect of the two wars in 1962 and 1965 necessitated such help. It was in pursuance of this line that Mrs. Gandhi agreed to devalue the rupee on US advice though it is another matter that it might have been in Indian interest to do so. She also visited the US in the hope of receiving economic assistance, expediting food shipments and of evolving a new relationship. She came back sadder and wiser and found that President Lyndon Johnson, despite public posturing to the contrary, deliberately delayed responding to urgent Indian requests for food and other economic help. Indira Gandhi later said that one reason for this was to pressurize India to stop criticism of US bombing of Vietnam. Indira Gandhi was, however, quick to learn her lesson. She set India firmly on the path of agricultural independence via implementation of the Green Revolution strategy and set about strengthening the nonalignment movement and Indian autonomy in international affairs—the latter being intimately tied to the former. She also gradually strengthened ties with the Soviet Union, persuading it through a vigorous diplomatic effort in 1966-67 to resist from a position of treating India and Pakistan on the basis of parity and giving military assistance to Pakistan. The Janata government when it came to power in 1977 talked loudly about practising genuine non-alignment, but found soon that the earlier article had been genuine enough and essentially, fell back on following the Nehruvian policies. They entered into negotiations for huge arms deals with the Soviet Union which were concluded by Mrs. Gandhi on her return to power in 1980. They also had to renege on their promise of cutting down defence expenditure.

Rajiv Gandhi too found very soon that his attempts to come closer to the US were not very fruitful and reverted back to the emphasis on nonalignment, nuclear disarmament, support to South Africa, and so on. Non-alignment was not a blueprint for policy; it was an approach, a framework, a method, not a straitjacket but a lodestar by which the young nation could steer its course in the dark night. Instead of imposing any rigidity in Indian foreign policy, non-alignment let it evolve to meet the changing needs of Indian society. It did not come in the way of the close relationship that developed with the USSR from 1954 onwards. Nor did it come in the way of India joining the Commonwealth. In fact, Nehru's internationalist and humanitarian world-view did not lead to any sacrifice of Indian interests or neglect of her defence needs, as is sometimes alleged. Nor was Nehru a pacifist who refused to use force to defend Indian interests when necessary. In 1947-48, he ordered the use of force in Kashmir (with Gandhiji's approval), Junagadh and Hyderabad, and in 1961 in Goa. The visionary nature of Nehru's understanding of international relations is shown by the fact that the rest of the world has slowly come to adopt much of what was dismissed as naive and impractical when first articulated. Nuclear disarmament has become an accepted and much-desired goal globally. Both the US and the ex-Soviet Union agreed that a nuclear war could not be won and therefore must not be fought. In February 1972, the Americans and the Chinese signed the Shanghai Communique which declared their mutual relations to be based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence—Nehru's Panch Sheel!

It is no small consolation to India that the Chinese were forced to adopt the very same principles, expounded by the very same man, that they had betrayed so heartlessly in 1962 when they attacked India. These principles were first embodied at Nehru's instance in the Agreement on Tibet between India and China in 1954. In further vindication of Nehru, and Gandhi, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed with Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi the New Delhi Declaration of November 1996, laying down the principle of non-violence in international relations, and in community life within nations. It is being increasingly realized that even conventional wars are too destructive. Besides, they have singularly failed either to change borders very much (as in the Iraq-Iran war) or to keep populations under occupation (as in Vietnam, Afghanistan, the West Bank, etc.) The only workable ideal is that of a nuclear-weapon free and nonviolent world. One may conclude with a quote from a letter written to Nehru by Churchill, an old foe:

I always admired your ardent wish for peace and the absence of bitterness in your consideration of the antagonisms that had in the past divided us. Yours is indeed a heavy burden and responsibility, shaping the destiny of your many millions of countrymen, and playing your outstanding part in world affairs. I wish you well in your task. Remember 'The Light of Asia'.

UNIT-IV

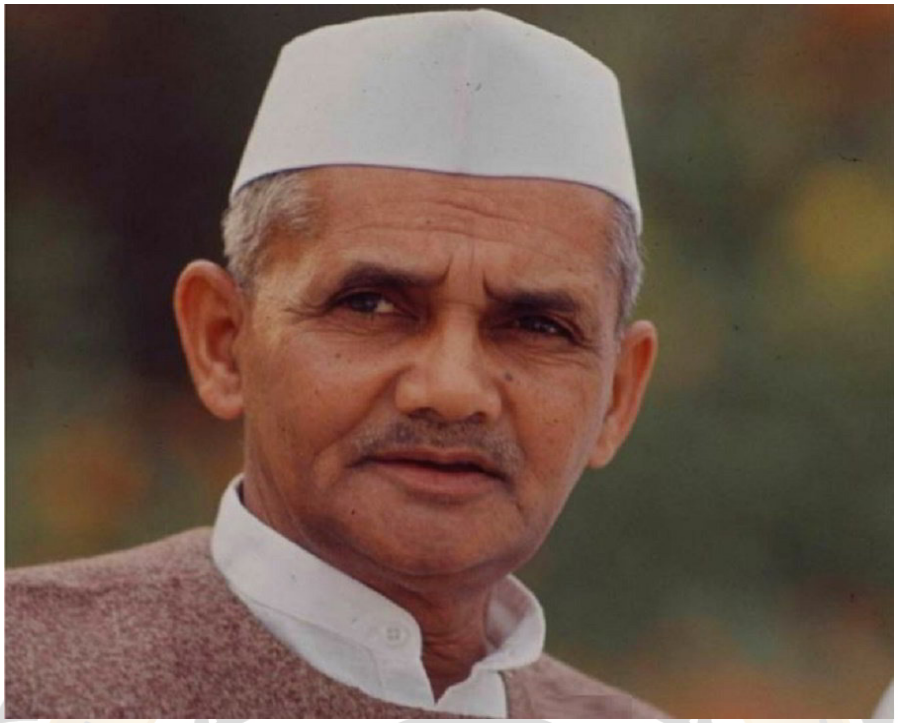
LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI & INDIRA GANDHI YEARS

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI AS PRIME MINISTER

Lal Bahadur Shastri was a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, a key figure in the Indian Independence movement, and India's second Prime Minister. He succeeded Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, after the latter's sudden demise. He is remembered for leading India though the Indo-Pakistan War in 1965, being relatively new to the high office. He realised the need for self-sustenance and self-reliance in India, and raised the slogan **'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan'** which he is remembered for even today.

Lal Bahadur was born in Mughalsarai, United Provinces (Modern day Uttar Pradesh). His interest in the freedom movement had its inception in high school, under the tutelage of his intense and highly patriotic teacher Nishkameshwar Prasad Mishra. During this period, he began to extensively read the works of Swami Vivekananda, Gandhi and Annie Besant. It was around the same time, in January 1921, when he attended a public meeting in Banaras (Varanasi) organised by Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Shastri withdrew from Harish Chandra High School and joined the local branch of the Congress party as a volunteer, after Gandhi's call for withdrawal from government schools as part of the 'Non-Cooperation Movement'. Shastri was one of the first students of Kashi Vidhyapith, a 'nationalist education' school started by J.B. Kripalani (A close follower of Gandhi) and V.N. Sharma. Shastri graduated with a first-class degree in philosophy and ethics from the Vidhyapith in 1925, where he was given the 'Shastri' (Scholar) title. He adopted this title has the suffix to his name, long after he dropped his caste-derived surname of 'Srivastava', thus becoming Lal Bahadur Shastri. Under the instructions of Gandhi, Shastri worked for the upliftment of Harijans in Muzaffarpur, after enrolling himself into the Servants of the People Society (Lok Sevak Mandal) started by Lala Lajpat Rai. He later served as the President of the society.

By 1928, Lal Bahadur Shastri was one of the most important figures of the Congress at the behest of Gandhi. He participated in the 'Salt Satyagraha' movement or the 'Dandi March' in 1930, for which he was arrested and imprisoned for two and a half years in 1940, he was arrested again for offering individual 'Satyagraha' support to the freedom movement. Following his release, Shastri traveled to Allahabad where he began sending instructions to freedom activists from Anand Bhavan (Nehru's home, at the time) which were part of Gandhi's 'Quit India Movement'. He was subsequently arrested, and imprisoned until 1946. Following India's independence, Lal Bahadur Shastri was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary of Uttar Pradesh. Under Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant's leadership, he was appointed as Minister of Police and Transport on 15th August 1947. He was the first minister to appoint female conductors as Transport Minister. As Minister in charge for the police department, he instructed authorities to use water-jets instead of 'lathis' to disburse unruly crowds. He was successful in mitigating the communal riots of 1947, as a result of mass immigration and also oversaw the re-settlement of refugees from the newly formed Pakistan.



Lal Bahadur Shastri

In 1951, Prime Minister Nehru appointed Shastri as General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee. In May 1952, Shastri was appointed as the Railways Minister as part of the First Cabinet of the Republic of India. Following Jawaharlal Nehru's death on May 26th 1964, Shastri was appointed as his successor on June 9th in the same year. His Prime Ministership came as a result of the efforts of the then Congress party chief Minister K. Kamaraj. Though mild-mannered and soft-spoken, Shastri was a 'Nehruvian-socialist' who is remembered for his calm demeanour even in the most dire of situations.

Shastri tackled many elementary problems like food shortage, unemployment and poverty. To overcome the acute food shortage, Shastri asked the experts to devise a long-term strategy. This was the beginning of famous "Green Revolution". Apart from the Green Revolution, he was also instrumental in promoting the White Revolution. The National Dairy Development Board was formed in 1965 during Shastri's stint as Prime Minister. After the Chinese aggression of 1962, India faced another aggression from Pakistan in 1965 during Shastri's tenure. Shastri showing his mettle, made it very clear that India would not sit and watch. While granting liberty to the Security Forces to retaliate, he said, "Force will be met with force".

The Indo-Pak war ended on 23 September 1965 after the United Nations passed a resolution demanding a ceasefire. The Russian Prime Minister, Kosygin, offered to mediate and on 10 January 1966, Lal Bahadur Shastri and his Pakistan counterpart Ayub Khan signed the Tashkent Declaration. **Some of the major achievements of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri are:**

I. Honouring the sentiments of Non-Hindi speaking States

During the Indian Freedom Struggle, there was mass mobilisation under the leadership of Gandhiji for the replacement of the English language to Hindi and regional languages. The intention behind this was to bridge the gap between the elite class and the common folk, in a bid to associate them towards constructive works in nation building. The Nehru report supported the making of 'Hindustani'as the official language of India, in a bid to give encouragement to provincial languages. However, as English was used in all official correspondences by the leaders, it couldn't be gotten rid of. Moreover, little attention was paid to the details of the vernacular language notion, in terms of how the choice of the national language would affect North-South states' relations.

Though voices and protests against Hindi were observed in different parts of the country, it was Madras that vehemently voiced its opposition to the notion. An Anti-Hindi Conference was held on January 17th 1965, and was attended by D.M.K. leaders and C. Rajagopalachari. The conference deeply criticised the 'language policy of the Union government' and expressed a firm determination of the people to resist the imposition of Hindi. Students organised widespread Anti-Hindi agitations in Madras and Madurai, where the agitations took a violent turn and went on for two months. Students in Madras were able to compete better in the All Indian Administrative Service with their proficiency in English, and feared losing their lead in the service as a result of the imposition.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, though initially reluctant to translate Nehru's assurances to Non-Hindi states that 'no switch over to Hindi would take place until they were ready for it', following the agitations in Madras; gave assurances to these states that English would remain as the official language. Following this, the agitations died down.

II. White Revolution

Significant sections of India's population are largely agrarian, with dependencies on agricultural produce and cattle milk production for their livelihoods. The milk industry, according to Dr. **Verghese Kurien**, is the only industry that allows a marginalised family to earn a small amount of cash everyday; requiring a small amount of investment in purchasing a milch cow, and providing nutritional supplement to the children of the house. According to Kurien, the absence of an efficient collection and distribution system for milk, were reasons for the marginalisation of cattle owners.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, Dr. Kurien set up the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) or the Amul Dairy Co-operation, in 1965.

The White Revolution eventually gave rise to 'Operation Flood', a project by NDDB, which became the world's largest dairy development program. It transformed India from a milk-deficient nation to the world's largest producer of milk, surpassing USA in 1998. In 30 years, the milk production per person doubled making dairy farming India's largest self-sustainable rural employment generator. As of 2010-2011, India accounted for 17% of the global output in milk production.

III. Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan – Green Revolution

The British Raj in India saw the nation being reduced from a net exporter of food to a net importer in 1919. Moreover, the food shortages in the Bengal Famine of 1943 caused the estimated deaths of between 1.5 to 3 million people due to starvation. Following the partition of India by the British, Punjab was split between both the nations. Punjab is the wheat growing centre of India, but following partition; most of the irrigated croplands went to Pakistan along with a majority of India's agricultural research and education facilities, including the 'Agriculture College and Research Institute at Lyallpur'.

Food shortage was one of the biggest problems for India, following the exit of colonial rulers. Lal Bahadur Shastri's tenure as PM was characterised by acute food shortages, with imports of food touching 10 million tonnes which helped avoid a famine. He appealed for a one-day fast every week to reduce the demand for food. At the time that Shastri ascended to the role of Prime Minister, India was attacked by Pakistan. This period, as mentioned earlier, saw a scarcity in food grain production in the country. He raised the slogan 'Jai Kisan, Jai Jawan' (Hail the Soldier, Hail the Farmer) slogan in a big to boost the morale of the Indian Army, and to encourage the farmers to do their best to increase food production of grains for reducing imports.

At the time of his Prime Ministership, C. Subramaniam was the elected Minister of Food and Agriculture. Subramaniam and Shastri worked together to increase food production via increased government support. Taking recommendation of the Foodgrains Prices Committee offer incentive prices for grains that are higher than procurement and market costs. Subramaniam also favoured increasing government reserves

of grains buy purchasing them in the open market on incentive prices. Subramaniam published the 'Agricultural Production in the Fourth Five-Year Plan: Strategy and Plan' in 1965, which marked the government's commitment towards the ensuing Green Revolution.

IV. Sirima-Shastra Pact

The Sirima-Shastri Pact was bilateral agreement signed between India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) which focused on the citizenship of Indian workers in Ceylon. The pact was signed by Ceylon's Prime Minister **Sirimavo Bandaranaike** and Prime Minister **Lal Bahadur Shastri** on October 30th, 1964. The issue at hand went back to the pre-independence colonial rule where, in 1833, the Colebrook Reforms brought several changes to the island's socio-economic structure. These reforms abolished the trade monopolies of the government, by paving the way for a capitalistic system characterised by private enterprise. The introduction of the Waste Land Ordinance in 1840 saw the occupation of large quantities of unused land, and selling them to newly arriving classes of private planters and entrepreneurs. The British then authorised the large-scale establishment of commercial plantation leading to the arrival of South-Indian workers.

They were brought because they were willing to provide labour services for cheap payments, and they were familiar with the cultivation of Tea. Moreover, the local Sinhalese refused to be employed in plantations. The Island-nation gained its independence in 1948, where the citizenships of these Indian workers were questioned. The Citizenship Act of 1949 stripped the legal citizen statuses of the Indian workers. A series of unsuccessful negotiations led Mrs. Bandarnaike to visit in India in 1964, and the pact was drafted after six days of negotiations. The objectives of this pact were to recognise all people of Indian-origin in Ceylon who weren't citizens of either India or Ceylon; should become citizens of either India or Ceylon. The Indian government would accept repatriations of persons within a period of 15 days. Ceylon agreed to allow those people who were employed during the signing of this pact, to continue with their jobs until the date of their repatriation.

V. Repatriation of Indians from Burma

Between 1948 and 1962, Burma (Myanmar) had a democratic, Parliamentary government. It was, however, plagued with widespread conflict and internal struggle. The political and ethnic tensions weakened the Burmese government, following constitutional disputes as well. By 1958, the Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu was forced to accept military rule, under the interim rule of General Ne Win, to restore political order. The military eventually stepped down after 18 months, but there were gaping holes in U Nu's government which left it vulnerable for rivals to exploit weaknesses.

On March 2nd, 1962, a military coup d'état was staged by General Ne Win, thereby negating the constitutional and democratic government, and establishing military rule. Under the military rule, many Indians who had been assimilated into the Burmese culture for centuries becomes targets for oppression and discrimination by the people and the government. General Ne Win ordered the large-scale expulsion of Indians from Burma. The Central government monitored all the processes of repatriation and arranged for the identification and transport of Indians from Burma. Local governments were asked to provide adequate facilities to repatriates upon disembarking on Indian soil. In December 1965, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri made an official visit to Rangoon in Burma, along with his family, and re-established cordial relations with the military government of General Ne Win in Burma.

VII. Indo-Pakistan War and Tashkent Agreement

The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 highlighted one of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's greatest moments as leader of the nation. The war was initiated when Pakistan laid claim to half of the Kutch Peninsula in a skirmish against the Indian Army. Shastri said that, while India had no intentions of causing trouble with its bordering neighbours, and that the country's focus of utilising its limited resources was for the economic progress; under the possibility of an incursion, the government would be quite clear in its objective of protecting the nation, and its duty in this regard would be wilfully and uncompromisingly discharged.

"We would prefer to live in poverty for as long as necessary but we shall not allow our freedom to be subverted." Shastri said, in his report to the Lok Sabha.

The war with Pakistan went on for 5 months, between April and September of 1965, and resulted in around casualties of about 3000 to 4000 people on both sides. On September 23rd, 1965, the United Nations mandated a ceasefire resulting with the war ending between India and Pakistan. After the declaration of the ceasefire with Pakistan in 1965, Prime Minister Shastri and the then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, entered an agreement in Tashkent (formerly of USSR, now part of Uzbekistan), mediated by Premier Alexei Kosygin. The Tashkent Declaration was signed between India and Pakistan on January 10th 1966- to give away the conquered regions of each other by both parties, and return to the 1949 ceasefire line in Kashmir.

Lal Bahadur Shastri has an extensive history of being a freedom fighter, nationalist, and leader of the nation. He was primarily concerned with the basic economic problems of the country at that point of time- food shortage, poverty and unemployment. Incidentally, he shares his birthday with Mahatma Gandhi on October 2nd. Shastri's death remains a mystery, though officially reported as a heart attack, after signing the Tashkent Agreement on January 11th, 1966. He was the first person to posthumously be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's most prestigious civilian award.

THE INDO-PAK WAR OF 1965 AND THE TASHKENT AGREEMENT

The relationship between cold war international politics and the 1965 Indo-Pak War is significant in two ways. First, international politics of the cold war affected the nature of conflict and the agreement that followed it. In fact, the attitude of foreign powers influenced the conflict and the changing scenes in the conflict influenced their approach towards the parties involved. It would not be wrong to say that India was fighting war at two fronts- one at the battlefield and other at the diplomatic front and both were closely interlinked. Second, the 1965 war engaged the US and Soviet Union in ways that determined the course for subsequent super power involvement in the region.

Situation at the time of outbreak of war of 1965

The cold war rivalry between US and former Soviet Union affected the South Asia like other parts in the world. Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO with a view to get arms and other kind of support to deal with India. Pakistan proved useful to the US in its policy of Containment of Communism in the region. The US gave Pakistan the first high performance jet aircraft, including F-86 Sabres and 12 F-104 interceptors and hundreds of World War I and Korean War vintage tanks. India on the other hand had chosen to remain neutral and supported the Non-Aligned Movement. The US remained suspicious of India due to its involvement in this movement. After India's prominent role in the Bandung Conference of 1955, USA's concept of balance of power in the region changed. Its main objective became not allowing India to influence the political development of other states in South Asia.

Initially Soviet Union looked at India as a tool of imperialist power UK. Soviet Union after Stalin began to look favourably towards India as it realised that it was not an ally of US. Soviet Union after the Bandung Conference endorsed India's policy based on Panchsheel. During this time Sino- Soviet split had also become visible, which was a key development during the cold war period. After 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev denounced the legacy of Stalin, China and the USSR had progressively diverged about Marxist ideology. By 1960, their criticism moved out in the open, when Premier Khrushchev called Mao Zedong as "a nationalist, an adventurist, and a deviationist" and Mao called Khrushchev as a Marxist revisionist, criticizing him as "patriarchal, arbitrary and tyrannical". By 1961, when the doctrinal differences proved intractable, the Communist Party of China formally denounced the Soviet variety of communism as a product of "Revisionist Traitors". Soviet Union also gave moral support to Tibetans. This brought India and Soviet Union further closer.

In 1960 the U-2 spy plane incident established one thing clear to the Soviet Union that Pakistan's territory was being used for US operations against it. This further raised the importance of India for Soviet Union. India decided to purchase supply aircraft and helicopters from Soviet Union as the latter was prepared to accept Indian currency. Soviet Union maintained a neutral stance during the 1962 Sino-Indian War, though its media Pravda remained critical of India. This war brought change in the US approach towards India. It began to supply arms to India. The US had sent twelve C-130 Hercules transport planes with the crews to help India in transporting its men and materials on the mountainous borders. During the 1962 War, the plans to move USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier the Pacific Ocean to Indian Ocean to its support India were also made. Soviet Union after the war began to support India. However after Kennedy, the level of support from US came down as Lyndon B. Johnson tried to focus building relations with Pakistan and hoped to improve relations with China.

Pakistan finding a good opportunity made a good use of the situation. The Sino- India war in 1962 also played a vital role in the improvement of relation between Pakistan and China as Pakistan's sympathies were with China. In 1963 the Boundary Commission started negotiations which proved to be successful and resulted in the Border Agreement. Pakistan also projected to China that its alliances with US like SEATO and CENTO were not against China. During the Chinese PM Chou En-lai's Pak visit in July 1964, significantly Sino-US relations were discussed. Prior to attack in the Rann of Kutch, Ayub Khan visited China in March 1965. During his visit a joint communiqué was issued on 7th March in which the matters of common interests were highlighted with full assurance of friendly mutual co-operation. The President Ayub Khan visit to China in 1965 is of great importance because it was the first visit by any of the Pakistani President which demonstrated the change in Pakistan's foreign policy in 60's and afterwards almost all the Presidents visited China. Significantly, in the joint communique it was stated that Kashmir Issue should be resolved in accordance with wishes of the people. China began to support Pakistan to counter India.

This was the period when Soviet Union desired that Pakistan should not join Chinese camp and therefore was willing to continue to play with Pakistan despite its close relations with US. Z A Bhutto the foreign Minister of Pakistan paid a visit to Soviet Union which was followed by Ayub's visit in April 1965. Several trade and economic cooperation were signed and in June 1965 cultural agreement was signed. Finding the strategic environment in Pakistan's favour, Ayub made up its mind to find military solution to Kashmir issue. Ayub was further encouraged by the fact during the invasion into the Rann of Kutch, China supported Pakistan and UK sponsored Rann of Kutch Agreement gave Pakistan the hope that international pressure would prevail on India.

In Pakistan a 'Kashmir Cell' was formed under the orders of Ayub in its Foreign Ministry to prepare two plans-Operations Gibraltar and Operation Grand Slam- to encourage/support sabotage/guerrilla operations. These operations were prepared by Pak Army under the supervision of General Akhtar Malik GOC 12 Division. Ayub went to Murree on the 13th May 1965 to attend a briefing on the operations. It was learnt that Ayub at this meeting suggested that Akhnoor should be captured that will cut off supplies from India to forces in the J&K.

Foreign powers during the 1965 War

Pakistan sent trained infiltrators around 30,000 on 5th August 1965. These infiltrators were divided into nine groups and were given different code names, mostly after historically significant Muslim rulers like Salahudin, Ghaznavi, Tariq, Babur, Qasim, Khalid, Nursat, Sikandar and Khilji. The plan was multi-dimensional. Infiltrators would mingle with the local populace and incite them to rebellion. Simultaneously guerrilla warfare would commence, destroying bridges, tunnels and highways, harassing enemy communications, logistic installations and headquarters as well as attacking airfields, to give an impression of armed rebellion and leading to separation of Kashmir from India. This was followed by Operation Grand Slam- attack by Pak Army regulars on J&K on 1st September 1965. Indian forces responded by launching operations against the Pak Army and occupied Haji Pir, Tithwal and Kargil heights. The War continued till September 22 when the ceasefire resolution brought a cease fire.

The UN Secretary General U Thant made hectic efforts to bring an end to the conflict. In his report to UNSC on 3rd September he pointed out that on the advice of General Nimmo he summoned the representatives of both the countries and conveyed to Pakistan UN's very serious concern about the situation that had developed by the crossing of CFL by number of armed men and their attacks on the military positions on the Indian side and appealed for observance of CFL. To India he appealed for restraint as regards retaliatory attacks. He subsequently stated that he failed to get any assurance from Pakistan but received assurance from Indian side. This reflected that U Thant was convinced that the trouble began because of the Pakistani action. On 4 September 1965, the Security Council, by resolution 209 (1965), called for a ceasefire and asked the two Governments to cooperate fully with UNMOGIP in its task of supervising the observance of the ceasefire. Two days later, the Council adopted resolution 210 (1965), by which it requested the Secretary-General "to exert every possible effort to give effect to the present resolution and to resolution 209 (1965), to take all measures possible to strengthen the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, and to keep the Council promptly and currently informed on the implementation of the resolutions and on the situation in the area".

From 7 to 16 September, the Secretary-General visited the subcontinent in pursuit of the mandate given to him by the Security Council. In his report of 16 September to the Security Council, he noted that both sides had expressed their desire for a cessation of hostilities, but that each side had posed conditions which made the acceptance of a ceasefire very difficult for the other. On 20 September, after the hostilities had spread to the international border between India and West Pakistan, the Council adopted resolution 211 (1965), by which it demanded that a ceasefire take effect at 0700 hours GMT on 22 September 1965 and called for a subsequent withdrawal of all armed personnel to the positions held before 5 August. The 1965 War noticed changes in the attitude of powers. The U S maintained neutrality despite its alliances with Pakistan and worked with Soviet Union to bring a ceasefire. The US placed arms embargo on both Indian and Pakistan on the 8th September. However the impact on Pakistan was severe. This also infuriated Pakistan as it had expected that US would continue to support it as it was a member of SEATO and CENTO. It had hoped that US would use its influence to restrain India from launching a counter attack. Chinese threats to India also pushed US to be neutral. US had also sent a message to China to stay out of Indo-Pak conflict.

The Soviet Union however was willing to play a bigger role in bringing an end to the conflict. Moscow had accepted that the disturbances in Kashmir were created by Pakistan. Soviet Union had also supported India in the UNSC on technical points and objections raised by the former. Moscow supported India that UNSC should only deal with settlement of the armed conflict and not drag the Kashmir issue. India also received assurance of the Soviet support in the event of the Chinese attack. Chinese got the message as was revealed later by Mao Zedong to Ayub that in case of nuclear war, the target would be Peking and not Rawalpindi. UK reflected bias in favour of Pakistan. UK PM Harold Wilson sent an identical note soon after India began its move towards Lahore to Ayub and Shastri, "Both Governments bear responsibility for the steady escalation which has subsequently occurred and today's attack in Lahore area presents us with a completely new situation." His reference to Lahore indicated UK's preference.

China tried to utilise this war to settle scores with India. China in order to put pressure on India blamed India for violating 'Sikkim –China border' on the 8th September –the day UK sent its note India and Pakistan. On 17th September accused India for maintaining 56 military installations on Tibet side and demanded their immediate dismantling. China also claimed that its 13 representations had ignored on about 300 incursions by India and further accused India for abducting 59 Chinese Yak. These made both Soviet Union and US to ensure that China stayed out of the Indo –Pak conflict. However international pressure besides General J.N.Choudhury's wrong statement that India had exhausted considerable amount of ammunition may have influenced Indian leadership to decide not to move forward towards Lahore. It is possible that if the Indian leadership would have known that only 14% ammunition had been used, Indian forces would have occupied more strategic area. Fortunately General Harbaksh Singh took the right decision and Indian Army occupied some strategic areas.

The Tashkent Declaration

During the 1965 War, the Soviet Union had offered its good offices for a peaceful settlement between the two warring states. The Prime Ministers of India and President of Pakistan met at Tashkent from January 4-10, 1966 and discussed the issues involved. Initially both sides stuck to their demands. While Shastri desired assurance that all infiltrators sent by Pakistan Army be withdrawn and there should be an assurance that such operations would not be repeated and also pressed for a 'no war pact', Ayub harped on the Kashmir issue to be discussed and demanded plebiscite in the Kashmir. Kosygin stepped in and used all his diplomatic skills under his command to convince them to come to an agreement. Both sides agreed to withdraw forces to August 5 positions. Other items included that both sides would exert all efforts to create good neighbourly relations in accordance with UN charter and reaffirmation not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means. They also agreed not to encourage propaganda against each other.

It is common to have an agreement after a conflict to bring an armistice and if possible to resolve the issues connected with the war. It was called a peace agreement 'to restore normal and peaceful relations between their countries and to promote understanding and friendly relations between their peoples'. The main item was the withdrawal to the August 5 positions and with that India had to return the Haji pir and other areas.

The items included in the Tashkent Agreement were very valuable and if they were implemented in letter and spirit, they could usher a new era of peace and friendship. The question remains why Shastri agreed to return strategic areas which had been occupied by the Indian Army. While the actual answer cannot be obtained as Shastri died within hours of signing the agreement, only some guess can be made. Shastri may have been persuaded to accept it with the assurance that Pakistan would not use force in future (which was accepted in the agreement). He may have been motivated to accept this to have enduring peace and goodwill with the neighbour particularly when Soviet Union had given the assurance that Pakistan would not use force. Ayub is reported to have stated that Pakistan would not be use force in future. How India was misled was clear soon. Bhutto stated that 'the UN charter does not prevent a state to use force in self-defence. Ayub also stated that the Tashkent Agreement did not change Pak attitude towards Kashmir. This reflects that the Indian leadership failed to read the real intentions of Pak leadership and missed an opportunity to keep Pakistan under pressure till the resolution of the all the issues.

The agreement only brought armistice and nothing more than this. But the war proved important in many respects. First, this was the first successful operation that not only thwarted Pak attempt to grab Kashmir but also occupied strategically significant area that put considerable pressure on Pakistan. Pakistan failed in its gamble to change the situation in J&K. Second, war improved India's prestige internationally particularly after the Sino-Indian War of 1962. The Times in its editorial reported that India was going to be Asia's power. Third, it significantly improved relations with Soviet Union and paid dividend during 1971 War. Fourth India began to focus on nuclear programme to deal with Chinese threat. Fifth, India accelerated its defence acquisition programme to build its capabilities. Sixth, India removed its weaknesses in intelligence collection and assessment making capabilities that were noticed during the war. India created a dedicated external intelligence agency and brought Joint Intelligence Committee under Cabinet Secretariat to provide overall assessment taking into account all dimensions. These changes paid rich dividend later.

Who won the war?

Of late the question who won the war has received a great attention and this aspect must be dealt with. Victory and defeat are assessed in terms of objectives. Pakistan miserably failed in its attempt to create problems in Kashmir and ensure its separation from India. It also lost strategic areas making it clear that it was a loser. Internally its position deteriorated and that resulted in its break up. Indian objectives were reactive -to defeat the Pak attempt to seize Kashmir and to teach a lesson to Pakistan of the consequences of its sinister designs. India achieved these aims and therefore it was India that achieved victory.

INDIRA GANDHI-THE EARLY YEARS

The Tashkent Conference had a tragic consequence. Shastri, who had a history of heart trouble, died in Tashkent of a sudden heart attack on 10 January, having served as prime minister for barely nineteen months. Shastri's death once again brought the issue of succession to the fore. This, the second succession in two years, was again smoothly accomplished, and affirmed the resilience of India's political system. Morarji Desai was once again in the field. Kamaraj's and the Syndicate's dislike for Desai had not lessened, and they looked around for a candidate who could defeat Desai but remain under their shadow. Their choice fell on Indira Gandhi: she was Nehru's daughter, had an all-India appeal and a progressive image, and was not identified with any state, region, caste or religion. They also thought that Indira Gandhi, being inexperienced and a young woman and lacking substantial roots in the party, would be more pliable and malleable. It was Kamaraj who stage-managed her election. The contest was virtually decided when 12 out of 14 chief ministers threw their weight behind her, hoping to acquire greater power to run their states and also to cash in on her mass appeal and the Nehru name to attract the voters in the forthcoming elections.

There was no process of consensus this time as Desai insisted on a contest. He felt confident of winning because of his seniority and position in the party and especially when his opponent was, as he put it, 'this mere chokri (a young brat of a girl).' A secret ballot in the Congress parliamentary party was held on 19 January 1966, and Indira Gandhi defeated Desai by 355 votes to 169. Her being a woman had been no handicap, for women had participated actively in the freedom struggle with thousands of them going to jail and several of them had held high positions in Congress, including its presidentship. After independence, too, they had occupied high offices, of governors and cabinet ministers at the Centre and in the states, including that of the chief minister of U.P., India's largest state. Indira Gandhi's government was faced with several grave problems which were long in the making but which required immediate attention and solutions. Punjab was on the boil and the Naga and Mizo areas were in rebellion. She dealt effectively with these problems by accepting the demand for Punjabi Suba and being firm with the Naga and Mizo rebels, showing willingness to negotiate with them and accepting the Naga rebels' demand for autonomy.

It was, however, the economic situation which was intractable. The economy was in recession and fast deteriorating. Industrial production and exports were declining. The rains failed for the second successive year in 1966, and the drought was more severe than in 1965, and led to galloping inflation and grave food shortages. Famine conditions prevailed in large parts of the country, especially in Bihar and eastern U.P. The wars of 1962 and 1965 and the Pakistan-China axis had led to a sharp rise in military expenditure and diversion of resources from planning and economic development. Budget deficits were growing, endangering the Fourth Five Year Plan. The situation required hard decisions and their firm enforcement, but the government vacillated, was slow in taking decisions and, what was even worse, tardy and ineffective in implementing them. In particular, it could not reduce its own bloated administrative expenditure which the financial situation required.

The government however, succeeded remarkably in dealing with the drought and famine situation. The problems of procurement and distribution of foodgrains and prevention of famine deaths were handled on a war-footing. There were very few famine deaths as compared to the record of millions dying in the colonial period from comparative or even lesser intensity droughts and famines. This was a major achievement for Indian democracy. The one decisive step taken by the government to deal with the deteriorating economic situation and to bolster food imports boomeranged and proved to be the most controversial of Mrs. Gandhi's early decisions. As already mentioned, Indian exports were not growing and even the existing ones were being heavily subsidized by the central exchequer. Indira Gandhi's advisers argued that this was due to the rupee being grossly over-valued. If it were devalued, there would be a greater inflow of the much-needed foreign capital. India was heavily dependent for its food security on imports of wheat from the US under the PL-480 aid programme. Also there was an urgent need for economic aid by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stopped during the Indo-Pak war, to be resumed. The US, the World Bank and the IMF however, insisted on devaluation of the rupee.

Consequently, the Government of India devalued the rupee by 35.5 per cent on 6 June, barely four months after Mrs. Gandhi assumed power. There were angry country-wide outbursts against the decision. All sections of political opinion opposed the step, the most voluble critics being the left groups and parties, the majority of intellectuals and Kamaraj, who also resented the fact that he was not consulted before the decision was taken. The critics within the Congress party also felt that such a controversial and unpopular decision should not have been taken in an election year. There was also the widespread resentment against the government for acting under foreign pressure. The devaluation, ironically, failed in its stated objectives of increasing exports and attracting foreign capital. Nor was there a significant increase in the flow of food and other foreign aid. Many years later, in 1980, Mrs. Gandhi was to confess that the devaluation 'was the wrong thing to do and it harmed us greatly.' A few months after coming to power, Mrs. Gandhi took major initiatives in the field of foreign affairs. Urgently needing American wheat, financial aid and capital investment, she initially tried to build bridges with the United States, especially during her visit to Washington in March 1966. President Johnson promised to send 3.5 million tons of foodgrains to India under PL-480 and give 900 million dollars in aid. But actual despatches to India were irregular and came in small installments. Moreover, the President took charge of the dispatches in order to control their amount and timing on a 'ton by ton' basis and thus to ensure that 'India changed its farm policy' as also its position on Vietnam. Indira Gandhi felt humiliated by this 'ship-to-mouth' approach by the United States, and refused to bow before such ham-handed and open pressure. She also decided to get out of this vulnerable position as soon as possible. In fact, India was never again to try to come close to the US on onerous terms. Indira Gandhi's disappointment with the US found expression in the sphere of foreign policy. She started distancing herself from that country. During her visit to Washington, in March-April 1966 she had remained silent on Vietnam. Now, in July 1966, she issued a statement deploring US bombing of North Vietnam and its capital Hanoi. In the latter part of July, in Moscow, she signed a joint statement with the Soviet Union demanding an immediate and unconditional end to the US bombing and branding US action in Vietnam as 'imperialist aggression'.

In Washington, Mrs. Gandhi had agreed to the US proposal for an Indo-American Educational Foundation to be funded by PL-480 rupee funds to the extent of 300 million dollars. She now abandoned the proposal, partially because it had been vehemently criticized by a large number of Indian intellectuals and those of leftist opinion, both inside and outside Congress, as an American effort to penetrate and control higher education and research in India. Mrs. Gandhi developed close links with Nasser of Egypt and Tito of Yugoslavia and began to stress the need for non-aligned countries to cooperate politically and economically in order to counter the danger of neocolonialism emanating from the US and West European countries. Worried by the Soviet efforts to build bridges with Pakistan and to occupy a position of equidistance from both India and Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi assured the Soviet leaders of India's continuing friendship. She also expressed a desire to open a dialogue with China but there was no thaw in Sino-Indian relations at the time. In general, after the Washington fiasco, she followed a policy of sturdy independence in foreign affairs.

The 1966 was one of continuous popular turmoil, of mass economic discontent and political agitations provoked by spiralling prices, food scarcity, growing unemployment, and, in general, deteriorating economic conditions. Adding to this unrest were the rising and often unfulfilled aspirations of different sections of society, especially the lower middle classes. Many were able to satisfy them but many more were not. Moreover, the capitalist pattern of development was increasing economic disparity between different social classes, strata and groups. A wave of popular agitations—demonstrations, student strikes and riots, agitations by government servants—commenced at about the same time Mrs. Gandhi was being sworn in as prime minister. These agitations often turned violent. A new feature was the bandhs which meant closure of a town, city, or entire state. Law and order often broke down as the agitating crowds clashed with lathi-wielding police. Sometimes the army had to be called in. Lathicharges and police firings brought the administration into further disrepute. Teachers and other middle class professionals such as doctors and engineers also now began to join the ranks of strikers and agitators demanding higher pay and dearness allowances to offset the sharp rise in prices. There was growing loss of public confidence in the administration and the ruling political leadership. Opposition political parties, especially, CPM, Socialists and Jan Sangh, took full advantage of the popular mood to continually embarrass the government and took the lead

in organizing bandhs and other agitations. Some of them believed that administrative breakdown would create conditions for them to come to power through elections or through non-parliamentary, extra-constitutional means. Consequently, they often did not observe democratic boundaries or constitutional proprieties.

The year 1966 also witnessed the beginning of the downslide of the parliament as an institution. There were constant disturbances and indiscipline in the parliament with some members of the opposition showing complete disregard for parliamentary decorum and niceties. Many a time the young prime minister was not extended the courtesy in keeping with her office. She was often subjected to heckling and harassment, vicious and vulgar personal attacks, male chauvinist and sexist references and unfounded allegations. Dr Rammanohar Lohia, in particular, missed no opportunity of ridiculing her, and described her as *'goongi gudiya'* (dumb doll). Even in the party, Indira Gandhi had to face a rather troublesome situation. For one, there was the erosion of popular support for Congress. The party had been declining, becoming dysfunctional and losing political initiative since Nehru's time. It was increasingly ridden with groupism and factional rivalries at every level, leading to the formation of dissident groups in almost every state. Mrs. Gandhi's own position in the party had remained weak and insecure. On becoming the prime minister, she had not been able to form a cabinet of her own choice, having had to leave all important portfolios—Home, Defence, Finance, External Affairs, and Food—undisturbed. Kamaraj, the party president, and the Syndicate consistently tried to reassert the party organization's position *vis-a-vis* the prime minister, and to restrict her freedom of action in framing and implementing policies. They also did not let her have much of a say in the party's internal affairs or in the selection of candidates for the parliamentary elections. Indira Gandhi had to tolerate all this because of 1967 being an election year. Also, as a political leader, she suffered at this time from two major weaknesses: she was ineffective as a leader—her opponents quite often succeeded in isolating her in the parliamentary party and even in the cabinet—and she lacked 'ideological moorings'.

Almost immediately after the 1971 general elections, a major political-military crisis broke out in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). India was inevitably drawn into the fray, leading to a bloody war between India and Pakistan.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

The new agricultural strategy was adopted in India during the Third Plan, i.e., during 1960s. As suggested by the team of experts of the Ford Foundation in its report "India's Crisis of Food and Steps to Meet it" in 1959 the Government decided to shift the strategy followed in agricultural sector of the country. Thus, the traditional agricultural practices followed in India were gradually being replaced by modern technology and agricultural practices.

The Green Revolution started in 1965 with the first introduction of High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds in Indian agriculture. This was coupled with better and efficient irrigation and the correct use of fertilizers to boost the crop. The end result of the Green Revolution was to make India self-sufficient when it came to food grains. After 1947 India had to rebuild its economy. Over three-quarters of the population depended on agriculture in some way. But agriculture in India was faced with several problems. Firstly, the productivity of grains was very low. And India was still monsoon dependent because of lack of irrigation and other infrastructure. There was also an absence of modern technology. And India had previously faced severe famines during the British Raj, who had only promoted cash crops instead of food crops. The idea was to never depend on any other country for food sufficiency. So in 1965, the government with the help of Indian geneticists M.S. Swaminathan, known as the father of Green Revolution, launched the Green Revolution. The movement lasted from 1967 to 1978 and was a great success.

Features of the Green Revolution

- The introduction of the HYV seeds for the first time in Indian agriculture. These seeds had more success with the wheat crop and were highly effective in regions that had proper irrigation. So the first stage of the Green Revolution was focused on states with better infra – like Punjab and Tamil Nadu.

- During the second phase, the HYV seeds were given to several other states. And other crops than wheat were also included into the plan
- One basic requirement for the HYV seeds is proper irrigation. Crops from HYV seeds need alternating amounts of water supply during its growth. So the farms cannot depend on monsoons. The Green Revolution vastly improved the inland irrigation systems around farms in India.
- The emphasis of the plan was mostly on food grains such as wheat and rice. Cash crops and commercial crops like cotton, jute, oilseeds etc were not a part of the plan
- Increased availability and use of fertilizers to enhance the productivity of the farms
- Use of pesticides and weedicides to reduce any loss or damage to the crops
- And finally the introduction of technology and machinery like tractors, harvesters, drills etc. This helped immensely to promote commercial farming in the country.

Market Surplus-The Green Revolution by and far was a success. But now there was another aspect to it. The government had to ensure that the benefit of the higher productivity was passed on to the general public. If the farmers kept the grains for themselves then the benefit of the higher productivity would be lost. But thankfully this did not happen. Due to the high yield and productivity of the farms, the farmers started selling their produce in the markets. The portion of the produce which is sold by them is known as market surplus. And so the higher output caused due to the Green Revolution started benefiting the economy. There was a decline in the prices of grains and such food products. The common man was able to easily afford to buy them. The government was even able to stock grains and build a food bank in case of future food shortages.

Impact of the Green Revolution

- **Increase in Agricultural Production**: Foodgrains in India saw a great rise in output. It was a remarkable increase. The biggest beneficiary of the plan was the Wheat Grain. The production of wheat increased to 55 million tonnes in 1990 from just 11 million tonnes in 1960.
- **Increase in per Acre Yield:** Not only did the Green Revolution increase the total agricultural output, it also increased the per hectare yield. In case of wheat, the per hectare yield increased from 850 kg/hectare to an incredible 2281 kg/hectare by 1990.
- **Less Dependence on Imports:** After the green revolution, India was finally on its way to self-sufficiency. There was now enough production for the population and to build a stock in case of emergencies. We did not need to import grains or depend on other countries for our food supply. In fact, India was able to start exporting its agricultural produce.
- **Employment:** It was feared that commercial farming would leave a lot of the labour force jobless. But on the other hand, we saw a rise in rural employment. This is because the supporting industries created employment opportunities. Irrigation, transportation, food processing, marketing all created new jobs for the workforce.
- **A Benefit to the Farmers:** The Green Revolution majorly benefited the farmers. Their income saw a significant raise. Not only were they surviving, they were prospering. It enabled them to shift to commercial farming from only sustenance farming.

The Green Revolution has transformed India to a food grain surplus country from a deficit one. No other activity has such immense impact on the socio-economic development of the people as the Green Revolution. However intensification of agriculture over the years has led to overall degradation of the fragile agro-ecosystem. High cost of production and diminishing economic returns from agricultural practices are affecting

the socio-economic condition of farmers. Loss of soil fertility, erosion of soil, soil toxicity, diminishing water resources, pollution of underground water, salinity of underground water, increased incidence of human and livestock diseases and global warming are some of the negative impacts of over adoption of agricultural technologies by the farmers to make the Green Revolution successful. Indiscriminate and disproportionate use of chemicals pollutes the soil, air and water and feed and fodders offered to animals. This may be one of the important etiologies of increased productive and reproductive health problems of livestock. Various scientific studies and surveys conducted on fertilizer and pesticide residues during last 45 years indicate the presence of residues of fertilizers and pesticides like nitrates, organochlorines, organophosphates, synthetic pyrethroids and carbamates at higher level than permissible limit in milk, dairy products, water, fodder, livestock feeds and other food products. As urea, a nitrogen-rich fertilizer is used much more than the recommended 4-to-1 ratio to potassium; it is contributing to the global warming. The extent of systematic damages caused in the process of Green Revolution to the soil, groundwater, and ecosystem needs to be quantified. It could lead to irreversible consequences for the people who once benefited, if timely, adequate and sustainable measures are not taken up to mitigate the harm done by the Green Revolution.

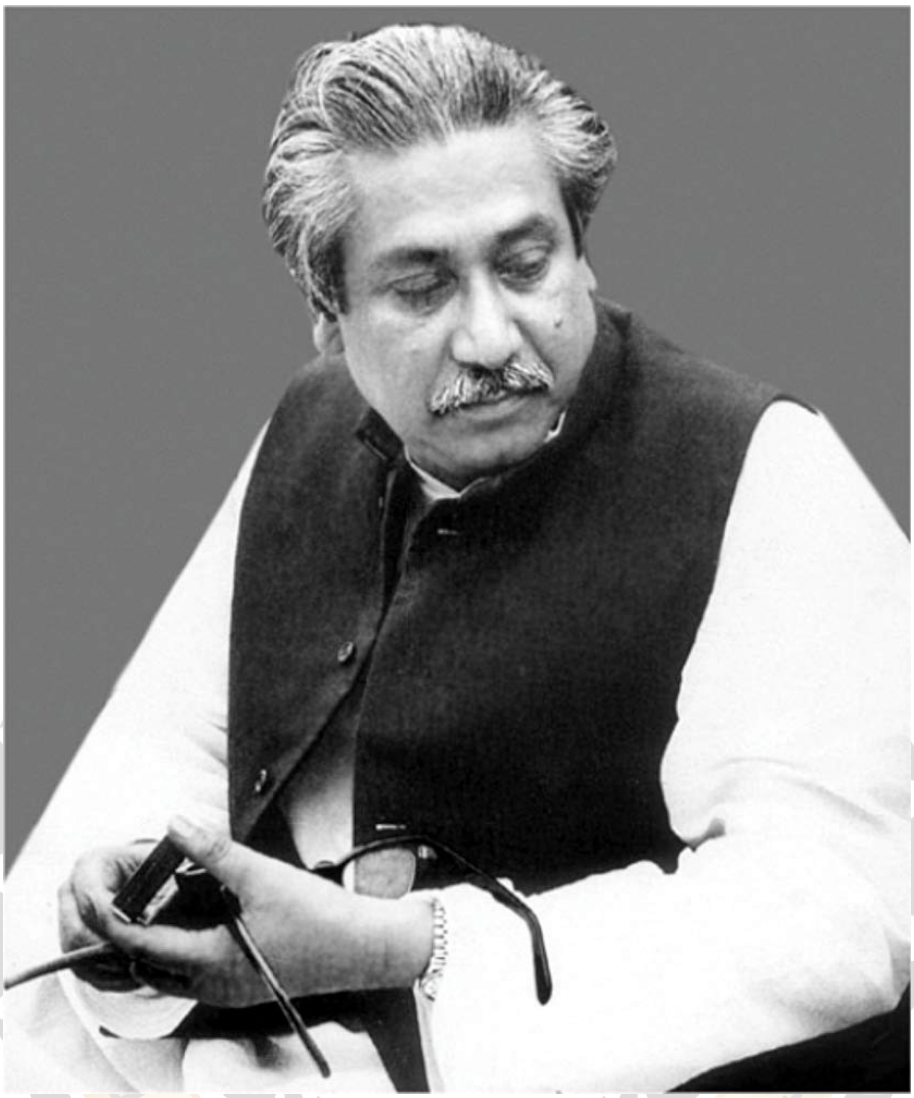
THE EMERGENCE OF BANGLADESH AS A NEW NATION

March 1971 was when the Pakistani Army began to commit the barbaric genocide on innocent civilians in East Pakistan. Though this was the biggest genocide in the world after the Second World War, it did not receive global sympathy or even the recognition.

It is significant to note though, the prevalent geopolitical climate during this genocide and prior to the war. There were clearly two blocs. 1971 Indo-Pak war happened after the Cuban missile crisis, thus the West was extremely paranoid about Russia, in particular Nixon and Kissinger. The paranoia was about Russian military strength. Pakistan happened to be in the military bloc opposing Russia, and they joined the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). Then there was the organisation of Islamic countries which were all Pro-Pakistan.

Since its inception, the Pakistani rulers had denied the democratic aspirations of the Bengalis and their national rights. The country declared itself as an Islamic Republic in 1956 and military rule was imposed from 1958. The Pakistani ruling elite together with the military rulers tried to subjugate the Bengalis politically, culturally and economically and naturally the disillusionment of the Bengalis with the new nation was not surprising. The struggle for a separate homeland manifested itself right from 1948 through a continuous, united and popular struggle for democracy, autonomy and for the continuation of its secular cultural identity. Successive Pakistani governments exploited the Bengalis and although most of the country's export revenues were generated in East Pakistan, less than 20% of the country's budget allocation was given to the Bengalis.

In the first-ever national Parliamentary elections held in 1970 based on a one man-one vote basis, the Bengali nationalist forces led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won landslide victory and his party, the Awami League became the majority party of Pakistan as a whole. However, the Pakistani military-machine refused to accept this electoral verdict; which led to a non-violent non-cooperation movement in East Pakistan.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

In an attempt to crush the nationalistic movement in East Pakistan, the Pakistani Military Junta unleashed a systematic genocide against Bengali population on the fateful night of March 25, 1971. The junta received support from a handful religion-based local parties and religious fundamentalists. The Pakistani carnage resulted in the worst genocide since the Second World War, and an estimated 3 million people were killed, some 278,000 women were raped and 10 million had to take refuge in neighboring India. Besides, 45 million people suffered from internal displacement, throughout the 9 months.

In this background, the independence of Bangladesh was declared and the elected East Pakistani representatives of 1970's election formed the Bangladesh Government in Exile on the 10th of April, 1971. The Cabinet took oath of office on April 17, 1971 at Baiddyanathtala in Meherpur, later renamed as Mujibnagar. The Declaration of Independence was given by the father of the nation (Sheikh Mujib) at the early hours of the 26th March, 1971 saying,"...from this day Bangladesh is independent". Even on 7th of March, he urged the Bengali population to prepare for liberation war. This however did not establish the sovereignty of Bangladesh at that moment. Bangladesh was declared sovereign by the Proclamation of Independence itself. The declaration of independence by Bangabandhu was instrumental to the resistance and in the formation of a provisional government as it served as a direction at a crucial moment for the nation. Young people from the villages and students took military training and the Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters) fought back the occupation forces under 11 Sectors, adopting guerilla tactics and thus kept the Pakistani army in a harassed state and constantly on the defense. International condemnation of Pakistan's atrocities came from governments, public leaders, cultural personalities and the media.

Pakistani Military Atrocities in East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh)

Unfortunately, the Nixon administration of United States and China supported Pakistan government, more for pursuing their common global strategic goals, while India and The Soviet Union supported the Bangladesh cause. India provided humanitarian aid to the refugees as well as trained the freedom fighters and also led an intensive diplomatic campaign for the rights of the Bengalis. By September these half-trained young men had infiltrated deep inside Bangladesh and a large part of the land was virtually self-ruled.

Refugees from East-Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) moving towards India

On December 3, after Pakistan attacked and bombed airfields in the western part of India, The Joint Command of the Indian Army and the Muktibahini (Bangladesh Freedom Fighters) was formed and they started the formal armed assault. The first men of the Joint Command marching from the northern border reached the outskirts of Dhaka on Dec 15. The Pakistan Armed Forces ignominiously surrendered to this Allied Command on December 16, 1971 and independent Bangladesh was born as democratic and secular state.

The war started when Pakistan launched air strikes on 11 Indian airbases. It was perhaps the first time in which India's all three forces fought in unison. India quickly responded to Pakistan Army's movements in the west and captured around 15,010 kilometres of Pakistan territory. The war ended after the chief of the Pakistani forces, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niyazi, along with 93,000 troops, surrendered to the joint forces of Indian Army and Bangladesh's Mukti Bahini. General A A K Niyazi signed the Instrument of Surrender on 16 December 1971 in Dhaka, marking the formation of East Pakistan as the new nation of Bangladesh. Pakistan also lost half of its territory with the birth of Bangladesh. Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw, PV, PB, MC, widely known as Sam Manekshaw and Sam Bahadur, was the Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, and the first Indian Army officer to be promoted to the rank of field marshal. He displayed brilliant military tactics prior and during the War.

Lieutenant General Niazi signing the Instrument of Surrender under the gaze of Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Eastern Command during Indo-Pak war, 1971)

The war lasted for just 13 days, and is one of the shortest wars in history. The military confrontation between India and Pakistan occurred from 3 December 1971 to the fall of Dacca (Dhaka) on 16 December 1971. The Indian Army brought Pakistani army to its knees, took 93,000 Pakistani prisoners and gave 75 million people of Bangladesh their independence. Over 3,800 soldiers of India and Pakistan lost their lives in this war to end the genocide Pakistan had been conducting against the Bengali population of East Pakistan. The conflict was a result of the Bangladesh Liberation war, when Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) was fighting to seek freedom from (West) Pakistan. In 1971, Pakistani Army began to commit the barbaric genocide on innocent Bengali population, particularly the minority Hindu population in East Pakistan.

As Pakistan's atrocities increased, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi decided to take action against Pakistan at the same time give refuge to civilians from other side of the border. She ordered Army Chief General Sam Manekshaw to launch offensive against Pakistan following which India launched a full-scale war against its neighbour. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 3,000,000 civilians were killed in Bangladesh. Rape, torture, killings and conflicts followed due to which eight to ten million people fled the country to seek refuge in India. Indira Gandhi was reluctant to launch a full-scale war against Pakistan as the country was already facing the burden due to the continuous flow of refugees from East Pakistan and entering a war meant inviting more burden.

She also appealed to world leaders to intervene and pressurise Pakistan to stop its brutalities but India did not have much time and a quick response became necessary. On December 6, she announced in Parliament that India had accorded recognition to the Bangladesh Government. On August 2, 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Shimla Agreement under which the former agreed to release all the 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war.

Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw (Chief of Indian Army in 1971)

Prime minister Indira Gandhi displayed great leadership skills during the 1971 War

THE SIMLA AGREEMENT, 1972

The Simla Agreement was signed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on 2 July 1972, following a full-blown war between India and Pakistan in 1971. As 'East Pakistan' gained independence to become Bangladesh, India was left to deal with approximately 93,000 Pakistani soldiers captured during the war.

The Simla Agreement contains a set of guiding principles, mutually agreed to by India and Pakistan, which both sides would adhere to while managing relations with each other. These emphasize: respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; respect for each others unity, political independence; sovereign equality; and abjuring hostile propaganda. The following principles of the Agreement are, however, particularly noteworthy:

- A mutual commitment to the peaceful resolution of all issues through direct bilateral approaches.
- To build the foundations of a cooperative relationship with special focus on people to people contacts.
- To uphold the inviolability of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, which is a most important CBM between India and Pakistan, and a key to durable peace.

India has faithfully observed the Simla Agreement in the conduct of its relations with Pakistan.

Simla agreement – Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto

THE SIMLA AGREEMENT (Agreement on Bilateral Relations between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan)

The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing talk of advancing the welfare of their peoples. In order to achieve this objective, the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan have agreed as follows:-

- That the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations between the two countries;
- That the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them. Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organization, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations;
- That the pre-requisite for reconciliation, good neighbourliness and durable peace between them is a commitment by both the countries to peaceful co-existence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit;
- That the basic issues and causes of conflict which have bedevilled the relations between the two countries for the last 25 years shall be resolved by peaceful means;
- That they shall always respect each other's national unity, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality;
- That in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations they will refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of each other.
- Both Governments will take all steps within their power to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other. Both countries will encourage the dissemination of such information as would promote the development of friendly relations between them.
- In order progressively to restore and normalize relations between the two countries step by step, it was agreed that;
- Steps shall be taken to resume communications, postal, telegraphic, sea, land including border posts, and air links including over flights.
- Appropriate steps shall be taken to promote travel facilities for the nationals of the other country.
- Trade and co-operation in economic and other agreed fields will be resumed as far as possible.
- Exchange in the fields of science and culture will be promoted.
- In this connection delegations from the two countries will meet from time to time to work out the necessary details.

In order to initiate the process of the establishment of durable peace, both the Governments agree that:

- Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border.
- In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line.
- The withdrawals shall commence upon entry into force of this Agreement and shall be completed within a period of 30 days thereof.

This Agreement will be subject to ratification by both countries in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures, and will come into force with effect from the date on which the Instruments of Ratification are exchanged.

Both Governments agree that their respective Heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future and that, in the meanwhile, the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalization of relations, including the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.

The Simla Agreement was much more than a peace treaty seeking to reverse the consequences of the 1971 war (i.e. to bring about withdrawals of troops and an exchange of PoWs). It was a comprehensive blue print for good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. Under the Simla Agreement both countries undertook to abjure conflict and confrontation which had marred relations in the past, and to work towards the establishment of durable peace, friendship and cooperation.

The two countries not only agreed to put an end to "conflict and confrontation" but also work for the "promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing talk of advancing the welfare of their peoples." In order to achieve this objective, both the governments agreed that that the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations would govern bilateral relations and differences would be resolved by "peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them."

Regarding Jammu and Kashmir, the two sides had agreed that the line of control "resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line." Both governments had also agreed that their respective Heads would meet again at a "mutually convenient time in the future the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalization of relations, including the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.

SMILING BUDDHA

While touring the Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) on 7 September 1972 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gave verbal authorization to the scientists there to manufacture the nuclear device they had designed and prepare it for a test. Following this okay, the practical work of engineering to implement the paper design began. Work also began on locating, surveying, and preparing a suitable test site. Throughout the development of this device, more formally dubbed the "Peaceful Nuclear Explosive" or PNE, but commonly called Smiling Buddha, very few records of any kind were kept either on the development process or the decision making involved in its development and testing. This was intentional to help preserve secrecy, but it has resulted in the events being documented almost entirely by oral reports many years later.

The leader of the team developing the device was Raja Ramanna, director of BARC. Ramanna worked closely with Dr. Basanti Dulal Nag Chaudhuri of director of the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and science advisor to the minister of defense to coordinate the work of explosive system development. P.K. Iyengar, as Ramanna's second in command, played a lead role in directing the development effort; and R. Chidambaram led the nuclear system design effort. Dr. Nagapattinam Sambasiva Venkatesan directed the DRDO Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) in Chandigarh which developed and manufactured the high explosive implosion system.

In keeping with the great secrecy involved in India's efforts to develop and test its first nuclear explosive device, the project employed no more than 75 scientists and engineers working on it in the period from 1967 to 1974. Of course this does not count the thousands of individuals required to build and operate the infrastructure supporting BARC and to produce the plutonium for the device. Outside of those actually

working on the project, only about three other people in India knew of it - Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, her trusted adviser and former principal secretary P.N. Haksar, and her current principal secretary D.P. Dhar. No government ministers, including the Defense Minister, were informed.

Indira Gandhi with Nuclear scientists at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan

The use of PNE technology was in vogue during the 1950s and 1960s with the superpowers using nuclear explosive technology for developmental and industrial applications like civil engineering projects, deep sea mining and so on. However, during the negotiations for a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) at the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) in the mid-1960s, the Americans refused to accept PNE as an integral part of the civilian nuclear energy applications or as a peaceful nuclear energy resource, arguing that the dividing line between a PNE device and a nuclear weapon is thin. The Americans, instead, offered to give PNE technology on a commercial basis, which India rejected terming the offer as an 'atomic apartheid'

Along with differences over issues like security guarantees and the imbalanced nature of the NPT text, the apparent discrimination over PNE rights was also among the key reasons for India's decision to reject the NPT in 1968. Four years after the NPT entered into force in 1970, India went on to undertake the nuclear test which was described by the Indian Government as a PNE, though many Western nations saw it as a demonstration of India's capability to develop nuclear weapons. Another apparent reason for the PNE classification is that the plutonium used in the device was extracted from the spent fuel of CIRUS reactor, which was built with Canadian assistance through an agreement that stipulated that the reactor should be used for only peaceful purposes. The Canadians refused to accept this contention and went on to withdraw support for India's nuclear energy programme.

The nuclear tests codenamed 'Operation Smiling Buddha' tested a thermonuclear device in the Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan. Though the yield of the device is debated since then, it is believed that the actual yield was around 8-12 Kilotons of TNT. The intelligence assessment dated January 24, 1996 also revealed that it was the Indian scientific community who was pushing the then Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, for another nuclear test.

TOTAL REVOLUTION OF JAYPRAKASH NARAYAN

In 1975, India experienced its greatest political crisis since independence when Internal Emergency was declared on 26 June. How did the Emergency come about? Was there no other choice, as Indira Gandhi maintained, or was it the ultimate expression of her authoritarian tendencies, as the Opposition alleged? Or did both sides indulge in obfuscation. The issue infact, is quite complex.

By the beginning of 1973 Indira Gandhi's popularity began to decline. People's expectations were unfulfilled. Little dent was being made in rural or urban poverty or economic inequality, nor was there any lessening of caste and class oppression in the countryside. The immediate provocation for the rising discontent was the marked deterioration in the economic situation. A combination of recession, growing unemployment, rampant inflation and scarcity of foodstuffs created a serious crisis. The burden of feeding and sheltering nearly 10 million refugees from Bangladesh during 1971 had depleted the grain reserves and, combined with the cost of the Bangladesh war, had led to a large budgetary deficit. The war had also drained foreign exchange reserves. Monsoon rains failed for two years in succession during 1972 and 1973, leading to a terrible drought in most parts of the country and a massive shortage of foodgrains, and fuelling their prices. The drought also led to a drop in power generation and combined with the fall in agricultural production, and therefore in the demand for manufactured goods, led to industrial recession and rise in unemployment 1973 also witnessed the notorious oil-shock when world prices of crude oil increased four-fold, leading to massive increase in the prices of petroleum products and fertilisers. This drained foreign reserves, further increased the budgetary deficit and deepened economic recession. With all this, prices rose continuously, by 22 per cent in 1972-73 alone. The price rise, which affected both the poor and the middle classes, was accompanied by scarcity of essential articles of consumption. There were food riots in several parts of the country.

Economic recession, unemployment, price rise and scarcity of goods led to large-scale industrial unrest and a wave of strikes in different parts of the country during 1972 and 1973, culminating in an all-India railway strike in May 1974. The railway strike lasted twenty-two days but was broken in the end. Mrs. Gandhi's popularity among the workers was eroded further. Law and order deteriorated, particularly during 1974-75. Strikes, student protests and popular demonstrations often turned violent. Many colleges and universities were closed for prolonged periods. In May 1973, there was a mutiny in U.P. by the Provincial Armed Constabulary, which clashed with the army sent to discipline it, leading to the death of over thirty-five constables and soldiers.

To tackle the deteriorating economic, political and law and order situation firm and clear leadership was needed, as exhibited during the Bangladesh crisis and in the handling of foreign affairs. But that was not forthcoming. The political situation was worsened by the play of other factors. Congress had been declining as an organization and proved incapable of dealing with the political crisis at the state and grassroots levels. The government's capacity to redress the situation was seriously impaired by the growing corruption in most areas of life and the widespread belief that the higher levels of the ruling party and administrators were involved in it. The whiff of corruption touched even Indira Gandhi when her inexperienced younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, was given a licence to manufacture 50,000 Maruti cars a year. A major new development was the growing detachment of three major social groups from Congress. While the poor continued to support it, though more passively, the middle classes, because of price rise and the stink of corruption, the rich peasantry, because of the threat of land reform, and the capitalists, because of the talk of socialism, nationalization of banks and coal mining and anti-monopoly measures, turned against Congress and Indira Gandhi. Desperation of the opposition parties also contributed to the undermining of the political system. Utterly disparate ideologically and programmatically, the only thing uniting these parties was anti-Congressism.

But they were in no position, either separately or in combination, to pose a political challenge to Congress, having been thoroughly defeated and downsized only recently in the general elections of 1971 and state assembly elections of 1972. Unwilling to wait till the next elections to test their popularity they decided,

irrespective of the consequences, to blindly support any group or movement in any form against the government at the Centre or in a state.

What turned the various economic and political crises into one of the political system were two popular movements in Gujarat and Bihar against the faction ridden Congress governments, and the leadership provided to the Bihar movement by Jayaprakash Narayan.

A major upheaval occurred in Gujarat in January 1974 when popular anger over the rise in the prices of foodgrains, cooking oil and other essential commodities exploded in the cities and towns of the state in the form of a student movement which was soon joined by the opposition parties. For more than ten weeks the state faced virtual anarchy with strikes, looting, rioting and arson, and efforts to force MLAs to resign. The police replied with excessive force, indiscriminate arrests and frequent recourse to lathi-charges and firing. By February, the central government was forced to ask the state government to resign, suspend the assembly and impose President's Rule in the state. The last act of the Gujarat drama was played in March 1975 when, faced with continuing agitation and a fast unto death by Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi dissolved the assembly and announced fresh elections to it in June.

On the heels of the Gujarat agitation and inspired by its success, a similar agitation was started by students in Bihar in March 1974. The students, starting with the gherao of the assembly on 18 March, repeatedly clashed with the overactive police, leading to the death of 27 people in one week. Moreover, as in Gujarat, opposition parties quickly joined forces with the student agitators.

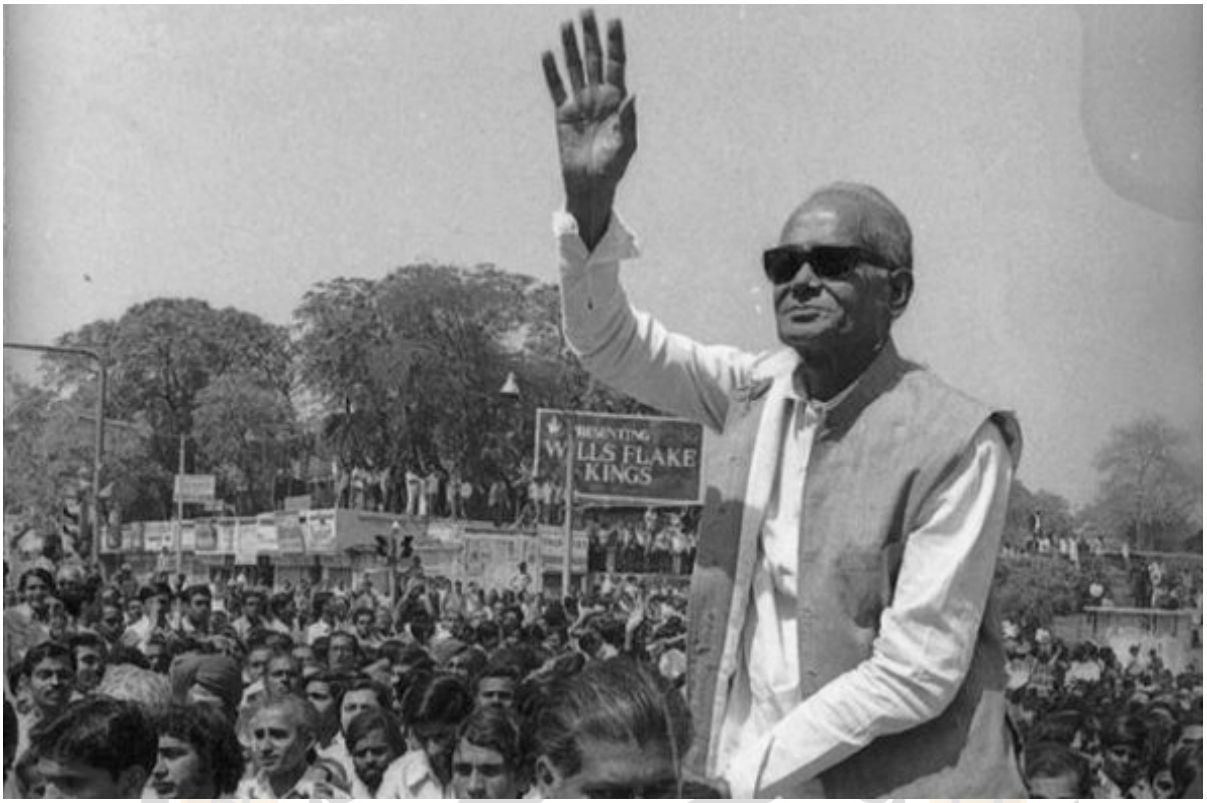
Jayaprakash Narayan's Concept of Total Revolution!

Jaya Prakash once stated that Total Revolution is a combination of seven revolutions, viz., political, social, economic, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual; and the main motive being to bring in a change in the existing society that is in tune with the ideals of the Sarvodaya. JP had a very idealistic notion of society and it is in this endeavor, he shifted from Marxism to Socialism and later towards Sarvodaya.

By the early 1970s, JP completely withdrew from party and power politics, and concentrated more on social regeneration through peaceful means. This did not mean that JP kept quiet while there was social and political degeneration taking root in political freedom. In order to better the situation, despite his old age, he embarked on the task of working towards bringing in a complete change in the political and economic life of India.

Initially, he tried to organize people and make them conscious or aware of the situations and then appealed to the leaders. But with no response, he began to organize youth to save the democracy from degeneration and called this revolution as Total Revolution. The momentum to the movement came when there were agitations in Gujarat and followed in Bihar as well.

In 1974, the Bihar agitations spiralled into massive protests by the people to bring about a change in the political, social and educational system. At this juncture, JP announced a fourfold plan of action that aimed to paralyze the administration, introduction of Gram Swarajya and establishing people's government. Explaining the term 'peoples government', JP stated that it would be a small unit of democracy at the village, panchayat, or the block level, at all the three levels, if possible.



Jayaprakash Narayan or JP: Man behind the Total Revolution

These units were regarded as the sources of the power of the people in times of peace, as well injustice or tyranny, and mainly for the reconstruction of the society on the basis of equality and the elimination of poverty, oppression and exploitation. JP further called upon the people of Bihar as well as the entire India to unite by cutting across their individual and party interests. His motive behind charging up the Bihar students was to bring about a complete change in the entire governmental structure and the system of Indian polity. It is for this reason he called it a Total Revolution. JP presented the concept of total revolution in a very comprehensive manner. His commitment to socialist and humanistic ideas was very evident in the idea of total revolution.

He was aiming at uprooting of corruption from political and social life in India. Besides this, JP wanted to create conditions wherein the people living below the poverty line could get the minimum necessities of life. Thus, total revolution was a device for bringing about a Gandhian humanist version of an ideal society. In his prison dairy, JP once stated that Total Revolution is a combination of seven revolutions, viz., political, social, economic, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual; and the main motive being to bring in a change in the existing society that is in tune with the ideals of the Sarvodaya. JP had a very idealistic notion of society and it is in this endeavor, he shifted from Marxism to Socialism and later towards Sarvodaya.

Like Gandhi, he also experimented with his own beliefs, tested his notions and modified his ideas. The inherent contradictions within the Parliamentary democracy made JP lose any faith he had in it. He opined that democracy gives no assurance for a better life to the people in the future when they are socially and economically neglected. He opined that only a peaceful revolution could bring about some change in the society. One of the main reasons for lack of development in India, according to JP, was the widespread corruption in all walks of life. He believed that the multiparty system and general elections every five years had reared corruption. Further, the failure of economic planning and public investments is also due to this corruption. Through this revolution, JP aimed at changing the society and also the individuals' outlook towards the society. He also asked the workers in Bihar to prepare for the long struggle for achieving the objectives of total revolution.

He laid out a plan for the movement; on how the revolution should move on the propaganda for public education, and constructive programmes consisting of creating consciousness about various social evils such as dowry system, caste conflicts, communalism and untouchability. Thus, JP had a very clear perspective of the social ideals and objectives when he took upon the task of guiding the Indian masses for a concrete action. JP strongly believed that for democracy to be a lively and effective instrument there is an urgent need for a strong opposition, powerful public opinion, free and fearless press, ideological and moral pressure from the academicians, and trade unions. He, in fact, advised the people to revise their thinking and attitude towards democratic functioning in India.

The Bihar movement was, however, characterised by two new features. Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as JP, came out from political retirement, took over its leadership, and gave a call for 'Total Revolution' or 'a struggle against the very system which has compelled almost everybody to go corrupt.' Demanding resignation of the Congress government in Bihar and dissolution of the assembly, he asked the students and the people to put pressure on the existing legislators to resign, paralyze the government, gherao the state assembly and government offices, set up parallel people's governments all over the state, and pay no taxes. The second feature was the firm refusal of Indira Gandhi to concede the demand for the dissolution of the assembly, lest it spread to cover other parts of the country and the central government.

JP also decided to go beyond Bihar and organize a country-wide movement against widespread corruption and for the removal of Congress and Indira Gandhi, who was now seen as a threat to democracy and portrayed as the fountainhead of corruption. JP now repeatedly toured the entire country and drew large crowds especially in Delhi and other parts of North India which were Jan Sangh or Socialist strongholds. The JP Movement attracted wide support especially from students, middle classes, traders and a section of the intelligentsia. It also got the backing of nearly all the non-left political parties who had been trounced in 1971 and who saw in JP a popular leader who would enable them to acquire credibility as an alternative to Congress. JP in turn realized that without the organizational structures of these parties he could not hope to face Indira Gandhi either in the streets or at the polls.

The fervor of the JP Movement, however, did not last long and it began to decline by the end of 1974. Most of his student followers went back to their classes. Moreover, the movement had failed to attract the rural and urban poor even in Gujarat and Bihar. Denouncing the JP Movement for its extra-parliamentary approach, Indira Gandhi challenged JP to test their respective popularity in Bihar as also the country as a whole in the coming general elections, due in February-March 1976. JP accepted the challenge and his supporting parties decided to form a National Coordination Committee for the purpose.

Towards the end of his life, JP revealed his thoughts about India and the ideals for which he struggled all these years. **He explained saying, India of my dreams is a community in which every individual, every resource is dedicated to the service of the weak community, dedicated to 'Antyodaya' to the well-being of the poorest and the weakest. India of my dreams is a community in which every citizen participates in the affairs of the community. It is a community in which the weak are organized and awakened to implement reforms and to keep an eye on the rulers ... it is a community in which the people have a right to opportunity to bring them to book if they go astray in which office is not looked upon as a privilege, but as a trust given by the people ... in short, my vision is of a free progressive and Gandhian India. However, his dream remained unfulfilled despite his long struggle throughout his life.**

However when Janata Party came to power, JP was hopeful that there would be a change in socio-political and economic situation in India. But unfortunately, the party leaders pursued their political ambitions and were attracted towards the corrupting influence of power, despite their pledge that they would aim at bringing about a just society. Naturally, the country slipped into old order of political rivalry and infighting.

THE IMPOSITION OF INTERNAL EMERGENCY: AN ATTACK ON THE CONSTITUTION

The JP Movement engendered hopes that the issue as to who actually represented the Indian people would be resolved through the democratic electoral process. However, this was not to be. A sudden twist to Indian politics was given by a judgement on 12 June 1975 by Justice Sinha of the Allahabad High Court, on an election petition by Raj Narain, convicting Mrs. Gandhi for having indulged in corrupt campaign practices and declaring her election invalid. The conviction also meant that she could not seek election to parliament or hold office for six years and therefore continue as prime minister.

Most observers at the time noted that Justice Sinha had dismissed the more serious charges against her but had convicted her of technical and trivial, even frivolous, offences against the election law. Mrs. Gandhi refused to resign and appealed to the Supreme Court. While the Supreme Court would hear her appeal on 14 July, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, the vacation Judge of the Supreme Court, created further confusion when he decided on 24 June that, till the final disposal of her appeal by the full bench of the Supreme Court, Mrs. Gandhi could stay in office and speak in parliament but could not vote in it.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. Gandhi suffered another political blow when the Gujarat assembly election results came on 13 June. The opposition Janata front won 87 seats and the Congress 75 seats in a house of 182. Surprisingly, the Janata front succeeded in forming a government in alliance with the same Chimanbhai Patel against whose corruption and maladministration the popular movement had been initiated. The Allahabad judgement and the Gujarat assembly results revived the opposition movement. JP and the coalition of opposition parties were, however, not willing to wait for the result of Indira Gandhi's appeal to the Supreme Court or the general elections to the Lok Sabha due in eight months. They decided to seize the opportunity and, accusing Mrs. Gandhi of 'clinging to an office corruptly gained,' demanded her resignation and called for a country-wide campaign to force the issue. In a rally in Delhi on 25 June they announced that a nation-wide one-week campaign of mass mobilization and civil disobedience to force Mrs. Gandhi to resign would be initiated on 29 June. The campaign would end with the gherao of the prime minister's house by hundreds of thousands of volunteers. In his speech at the rally, JP asked the people to make it impossible for the government to function and once again appealed to the armed forces, the police and the bureaucracy to refuse to obey any orders they regarded as 'illegal' and 'unconstitutional'. Mrs. Gandhi's lightening response was to declare a state of Internal Emergency on 26 June.

On June 26, former President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed proclaimed national emergency across India in 1975, which lasted for 21 months. Thus, elections were suspended and civil liberties curbed. Most of Gandhi's political opponents were imprisoned and the press was censored. The Emergency also saw the violation of a sundry of human rights. The period saw the shambolic forced mass-sterilization campaign spearheaded by Sanjay Gandhi. Therefore, the emergency period is considered one of the most controversial times in independent India's history.

George Fernandes in Chains during Emergency

The Period of Emergency- As soon as the national emergency was proclaimed by the President of India, all the powers were concentrated in the hands of the Union government. The government assumed mammoth power and restricted the fundamental rights of the citizens during the period. The press was kept under duress. All newspapers needed to get prior approval for the articles to be published. The Union government further banned the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Jamait-e-Islami.

Moreover, the Constitution was amended in an autocratic manner, particularly in the 42nd amendment as the government enjoyed a huge majority in parliament. In the background of the Allahabad High Court verdict, an amendment was made declaring that elections of Prime Minister, President and Vice-President could not be challenged in the Court. Apart from this, Sanjay Gandhi, who did not hold any official position at the time gained control over the administration.

In January 1977, the government finally decided to hold an election in March 1977. The opposition united to form a new party — the Janata Party — under the leadership of JP Narayan and for the first time since independence, the Congress was defeated in the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress could win only 154 seats in the Lok Sabha, whereas the Janata Party got 295 seats (330, along with its allies). Indira Gandhi was defeated from Rae Bareli, as was her son Sanjay Gandhi from Amethi.

PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE EMERGENCY

While a section of the intelligentsia reacted to the Emergency with marked hostility, the large majority of the people initially responded to it with passivity, acquiescence, acceptance or even support. It was only from the beginning of 1976 that the Emergency started becoming unpopular. Why was this delayed reaction? For one, the people had no experience in recent memory that is since independence, of an authoritarian rule. There was bewilderment as also personal fear of the unknown. Moreover, apart from the arrest of opposition leaders, the repressive measures were almost entirely directed either against anti-social elements or against the extreme right or the miniscule far left, who had enjoyed little popular support before the Emergency.

The number of persons arrested in the first few days in the entire country was less than 10,000. But many of the detenus were released within a short span of time. Above all, a large number of people were impressed by the positive outcome of some of the well-publicized Emergency measures most of which could, of course, have been taken without an Emergency.

With the restoration of public order and discipline, many felt relieved that the country had been saved from disorder and chaos. There was less crime in the cities; gheraos and uncontrolled, often violent, demonstrations came to an end; there was a perceptible lessening of tension in the air; there was calm and tranquility on the campuses as students and teachers went back to class rooms. Inder Malhotra, a perceptive journalist, was to write later: 'The return of normal and orderly life, after relentless disruption by strikes, protest marches, sit-ins and clashes with the police, was applauded by most people … In its initial months at least, the Emergency restored to India a kind of calm it had not known for years There was also an immediate and general improvement in administration, with government servants coming to office on time and being more considerate to the public. Quick, dramatic and well-publicized action was taken against smugglers, hoarders, blackmarketeers, illegal traders in foreign currency and tax evaders, with several thousand of them put behind bars under the MISA. There was a major, dramatic improvement in the economy, though only some of it was really due to steps taken under the Emergency; some of it being the result of excellent rains and some of the policies initiated much before the Emergency. Most welcome was the dramatic improvement in the price situation. Prices of essential goods, including foodstuffs, came down and their availability in shops improved.

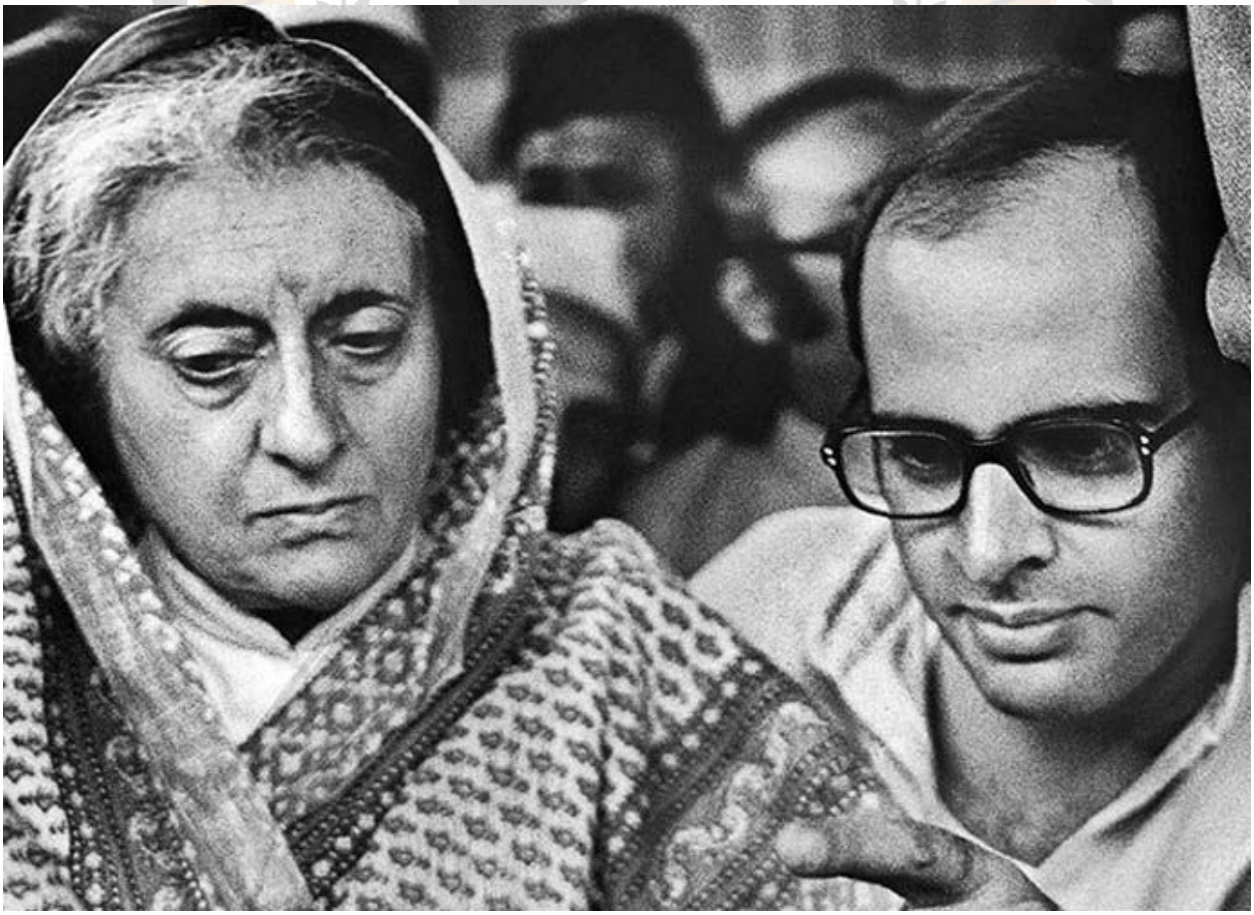
Popular hopes were raised and the Emergency made more palatable by the announcement on 1 July of the omnibus Twenty-Point Programme by Mrs. Gandhi, its edge being the socio-economic uplift of the vast mass of the rural poor. The Programme promised to liquidate the existing debt of landless labourers, small farmers and rural artisans and extend alternate credit to them, abolish bonded labour, implement the existing agricultural land ceiling laws and distribute surplus land to the landless, provide house sites to landless labourers and weaker sections, revise upwards minimum wages of agricultural labour, provide special help to handloom industry, bring down prices, prevent tax evasion and smuggling, increase production, streamline distribution of essential commodities, increase the limit of income-tax exemption to Rs 8,000, and liberalize investment procedures.

Serious efforts were made to implement the Twenty-Point Programme; and some quick results were produced in terms of reduction of prices, free availability of essential commodities, and check on hoarding, smuggling and tax evasion. But the heart of the Twenty-Point Programme was its agenda of the uplift of the rural poor. Some progress was made even there. Three million house sites were provided to the landless and the Dalits. About 1.1 million acres of surplus land was distributed to the landless; this was, however, less than 10 per cent of the surplus land. Bonded labour was made illegal but little dent was made in the practice. Laws were passed in different states placing a moratorium on the recovery of debts from the landless labourers and small farmers and in some cases to scale-down or liquidate their debts. But the scale of the alternate credit provided through nationalized banks and rural cooperative institutions was small and dependence on the usurious moneylenders, who were often also the big landowners, remained. Minimum wages for agricultural labourers were enhanced but their enforcement was again tardy. On the whole, however, the rural segment of the Twenty-Point Programme ran out of steam as its progress was hindered by large landowners and rich peasants and an unsympathetic bureaucracy. Consequently, though the programme brought some relief to the rural poor, there was little improvement in their basic condition. A major factor in the people's acceptance of the Emergency was its constitutional, legal and temporary character. It was proclaimed under Article 352 of the Constitution. It was approved by parliament and legitimized by the courts. To the people, it represented an interim measure, a temporary suspension of the normal rules and institutions of democracy. They did not see it as a substitute for democracy or as an attempt to impose a dictatorship.

Throughout the Emergency, Mrs. Gandhi asserted that she was fully committed to multi-party democracy and a free Press, that the Emergency was an abnormal remedy for an abnormal situation, and that democratic conditions would be restored and elections held as soon as the situation returned to normal. The Indian people tended to take Mrs. Gandhi at her words.

Towards Ending the Emergency-Within a few months, however, the people started getting disillusioned with the Emergency. Popular discontent from mid-1976 reached its zenith six months later. The reasons for this are varied. Relief to the people did not last long. Economic growth of the first year of the Emergency was not sustained. Agricultural output declined; prices rose by 10 per cent by the end of 1976. The corrupt, black-marketeers and smugglers resumed their activities as the shock of the Emergency wore off. The poor were disenchanted with the slow progress in their welfare and workers were unhappy because of limits on wages, bonus and dearness allowance and restrictions on the right to strike. The government servants and teachers became discontented because they were being disciplined in their work places and in many cases were being forced to fulfil sterilization quotas.

In fact, no real progress along the proclaimed lines was possible, for Mrs. Gandhi and Congress failed to create any new agencies of social change or organs for popular mobilization. Reliance for the implementation of the Twenty-Point Programme and other developmental programmes was placed exclusively on the same old corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy and manipulative and discredited politicians. So far as the common people were concerned, matters took a turn for the worse, for there were no avenues of protest or any other mechanism for the voicing and redressal of their grievances. Even common people and not merely intellectuals and political workers lived in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. The bureaucracy and the police now got increased power that was unchecked by criticism and exposure from the Press, courts, MLAs and MPs, political parties and popular movements. The two set out to abuse this power in usual forms. This affected all but eventually the poor were the most affected. This was particularly true in northern India. Simultaneously, the drastic press censorship and the silencing of protest led to the government being kept in complete ignorance of what was happening in the country. Also, because the people knew that what appeared in the Press or on the radio was heavily censored, they no longer trusted them. They now relied much more on rumours and tended to believe the worst regarding the government's actions or intentions.



Indira Gandhi with son Sanjay Gandhi

Denial of civil liberties began to be felt by the common people as it began to impact their daily lives in the form of harassment and corruption by petty officials. Delay in lifting the Emergency began to generate the fear that the authoritarian structure of the rule might be made permanent or continue for a long time, particularly as Mrs. Gandhi had got parliament to postpone elections by one year in November 1976. The intelligentsia—teachers, journalists, professionals, and small town lawyers—and middle classes in particular viewed the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution, passed in September 1976, as an effort to subvert democracy by changing the very basic structure of the Constitution. The Emergency, earlier acceptable, began to lose legitimacy.

A major reason for the growing unpopularity of the Emergency regime was, however, the development of an extra-constitutional centre of power associated with the rise to political power of Mrs. Gandhi's younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, who held no office in the government or Congress. By April 1976, Sanjay Gandhi emerged as a parallel authority, interfering at will in the working of the government and administration. He was courted and obeyed by Cabinet ministers, Congress leaders, chief ministers and senior civil servants. Within Congress, he emerged as the leader of the Youth Congress which soon rivalled the parent party in political weight.

In July 1976, Sanjay put forward his four points which gradually became more important than the official twenty points. The four points were: don't take dowry at the time of marriage; practise family planning and limit families to only two children; plant trees; and promote literacy. Sanjay Gandhi was also determined to beautify the cities by clearing slums and unauthorized structures impeding roads, bazaars, parks, monuments, etc. Pushed by Sanjay Gandhi, the government decided to promote family planning more vigorously and even in an arbitrary, illegitimate and authoritarian manner. Incentives and persuasion were increasingly replaced by compulsion and coercion and above all by compulsory sterilization. Government servants, school teachers and health workers were assigned arbitrarily fixed quotas of number of persons they had to 'motivate' to undergo sterilization. The police and administration added their might to the enforcement of the quotas. The most affected were the rural and urban poor who often protested in all sorts of everyday ways, including recourse to flight, hiding and rioting. Moreover, in view of press censorship, stories, true and false, of forcible vasectomies and violent resistance by the people spread quickly and widely.

Slum clearance and demolition of unauthorized structures followed the pattern of the family planning programme but were enforced with even greater callousness and cruelty, though they affected mainly Delhi and a few other cities. Thus, the already existing climate of fear and repression, corruption and abuse of authority was further worsened by the excesses committed under Sanjay Gandhi's direction.

THE END OF THE EMERGENCY AND 1977 ELECTIONS

On 18 January 1977, Mrs. Gandhi suddenly announced that elections to Lok Sabha would be held in March. She also simultaneously released political prisoners, removed press censorship and other restrictions on political activity such as holding of public meetings. Political parties were allowed to campaign freely. The elections were held on 16 March in a free and fair atmosphere, and when the results came in it was clear that Congress had been thoroughly defeated. Both Mrs. Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi lost their seats. Mrs. Gandhi issued a statement accepting the verdict of the people with 'due humility'. Why did Mrs. Gandhi announce and then hold open and free elections? After all she had got parliament to postpone elections by one year only two months before in November 1976. There is up to now no satisfactory answer to the question, though there has been a great deal of speculation. Three broad explanations are offered.

Firstly, the favourable view is that the decision was an expression of Mrs. Gandhi's underlying commitment to liberal democracy and democratic values. Mary C. Carras, her biographer, has argued that, 'Throughout her life her self-image had been that of a democrat; indeed her self-respect derives in good part from this self-image … She was compelled to prove to the world and, above all, to herself, that she is and always has been a democrat.' In the opinion of some other writers once Mrs. Gandhi became aware of the Emergency excesses and realized that the matters were getting out of her control, she decided to get out of this trap by holding elections even if it meant losing power.

The unfriendly view is that Mrs. Gandhi completely misread the popular temper and, misinformed by sycophants and intelligence agencies, was convinced that she would win. Isolated from public opinion, she was unaware of the extent to which her rule had become unpopular. By winning the election she hoped to vindicate the Emergency and also clear the way for Sanjay Gandhi to succeed her.

The third view is that she realized that the policies of the Emergency had to be legitimized further through elections. The imposition of the Emergency had been legitimized at the outset by the constitutional provision, but that was not enough in view of the deep-seated traditions of Indian people. Moreover, there were clear signs of restiveness and even discontent among the people. The Emergency regime, she must have realized, was increasingly getting discredited and was quite fragile. Either the authoritarian content of the Emergency would have to be deepened, with recourse to increasing ruthlessness and brutality in suppressing dissent, or greater legitimacy and political authority acquired by changing back to a democratic system. The former option would not work in a country of India's size and diversity and also in view of its democratic traditions. The people would not accept the level of repression that it would require.

During 1975-77, many Indians and India's friends abroad had doubts about the future of the democratic system in India, though they hoped that it would survive the political crisis. The less sympathetic said that democracy in India was 'permanently in eclipse' and that India had finally joined the ranks of other post-colonial societies as an authoritarian state. Many others said that the basic changes initiated by the Emergency and the essential features of the new kind of regime would continue even if the Emergency were ended and the parliamentary system restored. Some commentators went further and argued that the shift towards authoritarianism had been going on since 1950 and was inherent in a poor and illiterate society. Others held that the democratic constitutional system established in India in 1950 was not suited to the genius of India or the needs of its people. Still others felt that it was not possible to combine economic development with democracy. Many radicals argued that, in any case, liberal democracy was only a facade hiding the underlying brutal reality of class domination and the suppression of people's struggles. The Emergency had, therefore, only removed the facade; it did not mean any basic political change except that the social and political reality was now visible to all.

There were, of course, many in India and abroad who were convinced that the Emergency was a temporary departure from the basic commitment of Indian people and its political leadership to democracy and that democracy would be sooner or later restored in the country. The democratic system in India not only survived the JP Movement and the Emergency but emerged stronger. Since 1977, all talk of the need for dictatorship to develop economically and to end corruption has died down. Those who hold this view have been reduced to a tiny minority and that too among the middle classes; no intellectual or political leader of any stature has espoused it for several years.

In this sense, the lifting of the Emergency and the free elections that followed, were a defining moment in India's post-independence history. They revealed the Indian people's underlying attachment to democratic values which were in turn the result of the impact of the freedom struggle and the experience of democratic functioning, including free elections, since 1947. As Tariq Ali pointed out, in the elections of March 1977 'the urban and rural poor demonstrated in a very concrete and striking fashion that questions of basic civil rights were not merely the preoccupations of the urban middle classes.' Inder Malhotra, covering the election campaign, reported of the 'truly remarkable' manner in which 'village audiences in the remote countryside react to sophisticated arguments about civil liberties, fundamental rights and independence of the judiciary.'

Whatever the character of the JP Movement or of the Emergency regime, there is no doubt that the decision of Mrs. Gandhi to hold genuinely free elections, and her defeat and the Opposition's victory that followed were a remarkable achievement of Indian democracy. The years 1975-77 have been described as the years of the 'test of democracy'; there is no doubt that the Indian people passed the test with distinction if not full marks.

THE JANTA INTERREGNUM AND INDIRA GANDHI's SECOND HOME COMING

Immediately after coming out of the jails in January 1977, the opposition leaders announced the merger of Congress (O), Jan Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) and Socialist Party into the new Janata Party. The Congress was dealt a blow by the sudden defection from it on 2 February 1977 of Jagjivan Ram, H.N. Bahuguna and Nandini Satpathy who formed the Congress for Democracy (CFD). Along with DMK, Akali Dal and CPM it forged a common front with the Janata Party in order to give a straight fight to Congress and its allies, the CPI and AIADMK in the March elections to the Lok Sabha.

The opposition front made the Emergency and its excesses, especially forced sterilizations and the restriction of civil liberties, the major issues of its election campaign. The people also treated the elections as a referendum on the Emergency. With the popular upsurge in favour of them, the Janata Party and its allies were victorious with 330 out of 542 seats. Congress trailed far behind with only 154 seats, with CPI its ally getting 7 and the AIADMK 21 seats. Congress was virtually wiped out in North India—it won only 2 out of 234 seats in seven northern states. Both Indira Gandhi and Sanjay were defeated. The electoral verdict was, however, mixed in western India.

Surprisingly in the South, where the Emergency had been less vigorous, and the pro-poor measures of the Twenty-Point Programme better implemented, Congress improved its performance, winning 92 seats in place of 70 in 1971. Janata won only 6 seats in the four southern states. The Congress for Democracy merged with Janata Party immediately after the elections. There was a near-crisis over the issue of prime ministership between the three aspirants, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram. The matter was referred to the senior leaders, Jayaprakash Narayan and J.B. Kripalani, who ruled in favour of the 81-year-old Desai, who was sworn in as prime minister on 23 March.

One of the first steps taken by the new government was to try to consolidate its hold over the states. Arguing that in those states where Congress had lost in national elections, it had also lost the mandate to rule even at the state level, the government dismissed nine Congress-ruled state governments, and ordered fresh elections to their state assemblies. In the assembly elections, held in June 1977, Janata and its allies came out victorious in these states except in Tamil Nadu where AIADMK won. In West Bengal, the CPM, a Janata ally, gained an absolute majority. Control over both the parliament and the state assemblies enabled the Janata Party to elect unopposed its own candidate, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, as the President of the Union in July 1977.

The Janata government took immediate steps to dismantle the authoritarian features of the Emergency regime and to restore liberal democracy. It restored fundamental rights and full civil liberties to the Press, political parties and individuals. Through the 44nd Constitutional Amendment, it also modified the 42nd Amendment passed during the Emergency, repealing those of its provisions which had distorted the Constitution. The rights of the Supreme Court and High Courts to decide on the validity of central or state legislation were also restored.

Janata Party in Crisis

The political support to the Janata regime, however, soon began to decline and disillusionment with it set in, given its non-performance in administration, implementing developmental policies, and realizing social justice. The political momentum of the regime was lost by the end of 1977 and the uneasy coalition that was Janata Party began to disintegrate, though the government remained in power till July 1979. By then the lack of confidence in its capacity to govern had begun to turn into anger, for several reasons. First, the Janata Party was not able to deal with the rapidly growing social tensions in rural areas, of which the increasing extent of atrocities on the rural poor and the Scheduled Castes was one manifestation. Janata Party's social base in North India consisted primarily of rich and middle peasants belonging mostly to intermediate castes and large landowners belonging to upper castes and the urban and rural shop-keepers, small businessmen and the petty bourgeoisie. The rural landowners felt that with the Janata governments at the Centre and the states, they had now unalloyed power in the country as a whole and in rural areas in

particular. On the other hand, the rural poor, mostly landless labourers and belonging largely to the Scheduled Castes too had become conscious of their rights and felt emboldened by the prolonged functioning of democracy and adult franchise. They also defended and asserted the rights and benefits they had obtained under the Twenty-Point Programme. In many states the landowners tried to forcibly take back the plots given to them and the moneylenders began to reclaim debts cancelled during the Emergency. The result was the wide prevalence of caste tensions and violent attacks on the Scheduled Castes in North India, an early instance being the killing and torching of Harijans at Belchi in Bihar in July 1977.

There was recrudescence of large-scale communal violence. There were growing agitations, lawlessness and violence which particularly affected colleges and universities, often leading to their closure. The middle of 1979 also witnessed a wave of strikes and mutinies by policemen and paramilitary forces. Next, the Janata regime explicitly repudiated the Nehruvian vision of rapid economic development based on large-scale industry, modern agriculture, and advanced science and technology. But it failed to evolve any alternative strategy or model of economic and political development to deal with the problems of economic underdevelopment.

Janata's economic policy merely counterposed rural development to industry-oriented growth. This policy came to be based on three pillars: labour-intensive small-scale industry, not as complementary to but in place of large-scale industry; decentralization in place of national planning; and rich peasant-led agricultural development based on generous subsidies, reduction in land revenue, and massive shift of resources from industry to the rural sector. This shift in economic policy was a recipe for low or non-economic development.

Interestingly, the Janata Party made no effort to fulfill its earlier radical demands for land reform and payment of higher wages to agricultural labourers. The one positive economic step that the Janata government did undertake was the effort to provide employment to the rural unemployed through the 'Food for Work' programme, which was used to improve village infrastructure such as roads, school buildings, etc., and which was particularly efficiently implemented by the CPM government in West Bengal.

After the first year of Janata rule, the economy started drifting with both agriculture and industry showing stagnation or low rates of growth. Severe drought conditions and devastating floods in several states affected agricultural production in 1978 and 1979. Prices began to rise sharply, especially as foodgrains stocks had been used up in the 'Food for Work' programme. International prices of petroleum and petroleum products again rose steeply. The heavy deficit-financing in the 1979 budget, presented by Charan Singh as finance minister, also had a marked inflationary impact. 1979 also witnessed widespread shortages of kerosene and other goods of daily consumption. By the end of that year, inflation had gone beyond 20 per cent.

The Janata government's tenure was too brief for it to leave much of an impact on India's foreign policy, though while continuing to function within the existing, widely accepted framework; it did try to reorient foreign policy. It talked of 'genuine non-alignment' which meant strengthening ties with US and Britain and moderating its close relations with the Soviet Union. Holding the party together seems to have been a major preoccupation of the Janata leaders. Already disintegrating by the end of 1977, by 1978-79, the government, lacking all direction, was completely paralyzed by the constant bickering and infighting in the party both at the Centre and in the states. Each political component tried to occupy as much political and administrative space as possible. In the ideological sphere, the Jan Sangh tried to promote its communal agenda via textbooks and recruitment to the official media, educational institutions and the police. The Janata Party remained a coalition of different parties and groups and was a victim of factionalism, manipulation and personal ambitions of its leaders. The different constituents were too disparate historically, ideologically and programmatically; bound only by an anti-Indira Gandhi sentiment and the desire for power. Jan Sangh, its best organized and dominant component with ninety MPs, was populist with umbilical ties to RSS which provided it cadres and ideology and which was not willing to let it be incorporated in or integrated with other parties. Congress (O) was conservative and basically Congress in mentality. BLD was secular, but a strictly rich-peasant party with no all-India or developmental vision. The Socialists were largely ideology less and rootless except in Bihar.

The Revival of the Congress

In the meanwhile, the Congress witnessed both a split and a revival. Feeling that Indira Gandhi was not only a spent force but, much worse, a serious political liability, a large number of established Congress leaders, led by Y.B. Chavan and Brahmanand Reddy turned against her. She, in turn, split the party in January 1978, with her wing being known as Congress (I) (for Indira) and the other later, as Congress (U) (for Devraj Urs).

Thereafter, Indira Gandhi's political fortunes began to revive and in the February 1978 elections to state assemblies Congress (I) defeated both Janata and the rival Congress in Karnataka and Andhra. There were two reasons for this revival. One was the Janata government's effort to wreak vengeance on Indira Gandhi and punish her for the happenings of the Emergency. Several Commissions of Enquiry—the most famous being the Shah Commission—were appointed to investigate and pinpoint the malpractices, excesses, abuses and atrocities committed by Indira Gandhi and the officials during the Emergency. In 1979, special courts were set up to try her for alleged criminal acts during the Emergency. The common people, on the other hand, began to increasingly view Indira Gandhi's persecution not as justice but as revenge and vendetta and an effort to disgrace her. They felt she had already been punished enough by being voted out of power. Moreover, deep down, the rural and urban poor, Harijans, minorities and women still considered Indira Gandhi as their saviour, their Indira Amma or Mother Indira.

However, the government remained ignorant of Indira Gandhi's growing popularity, thanks to the bias of the Press against her. A dramatic demonstration of her growing popularity came when she won a parliament seat with a large margin from the Chikamagalur constituency in Karnataka in November 1978. Ironically, soon after, on 19 December, Janata used its majority to expel her from the parliament for breach of privilege and contempt of the House on a minor charge and committed her to jail for a week.

The factional struggle in the Janata government and the party took an acute form in the middle of 1979. Charan Singh, the home minister, had been forced to resign from the Cabinet on 30 June 1978, and, was then, brought back as finance minister in January 1979. He broke up the party and the government in July with the help of the Socialists, who walked out of the party and the government on the refusal of the Jan Sangh members to give up their dual membership of Janata Party and RSS. Having been reduced to a minority, Morarji Desai's government resigned on 15 July. A week later, Charan Singh formed the government in alliance with the Chavan-wing of the Congress (U) and some of the Socialists and with the outside support of Cong (I) and CPI. But he never got to face the parliament as, on 20 August, a day before the confidence vote, Indira Gandhi withdrew her support after Charan Singh rejected her demand for the scrapping of special courts set up to prosecute her. On Charan Singh's advice, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and announced mid-term elections.

The elections, held in January 1980, were fought primarily between Cong (I), Cong (U), Lok Dal, the new party floated by Charan Singh and Socialists, and Janata, now consisting primarily of Jan Sangh and a handful of old Congressmen such as Jagjivan Ram and Chandra Shekhar, CPM and CPI were not in the picture except in West Bengal and Kerala. Having been disenchanted with Janata's non-governance, lack of vision and incessant mutual quarrels, the people once again turned to Congress and Indira Gandhi, perceiving her Congress to be the real Congress. The Janata Party's main appeal consisted of warnings against the threat to democracy and civil liberties if Indira Gandhi came back to power. Charan Singh talked of 'peasant raj'. Indira Gandhi concentrated on Janata's non-governance, asked the people to vote for 'a government that works.' The people, once again cutting across caste, religion and region as in 1971 and 1977, gave a massive mandate to Cong (I), which secured 353 out of 529 seats that is a two-thirds majority. Lok Dal with 41, Janata with 31 and Cong (U) with 13 lagged far behind. CPM and CPI alone withstood the Congress tide and won 36 and 11 seats respectively.

After the elections, Janata Party split once again, with the old Jan Sangh leaders leaving it to form the Bharatiya Janata Party at the end of 1980 and Jagjivan Ram joining Cong (U). Indira Gandhi's Return After having been out of office for thirty-four months, Indira Gandhi was once again the prime minister and Congress was restored to its old position as the dominant party. Following the wrong precedent set up by Janata gov-

ernment in 1977, Congress government dissolved the nine state assemblies in the opposition-ruled states. In the assembly elections, subsequently held in June, Congress swept the polls except in Tamil Nadu. It now ruled fifteen of the twenty-two states. Though once again the prime minister and the only Indian leader with a national appeal, Indira Gandhi was no longer the same person she was from 1969 to 1977. She no longer had a firm grasp over politics and administration. Despite enjoying unchallenged power, she dithered in taking significant new policy initiatives or dealing effectively with a number of disturbing problems.

She did, however, still manage some success in the fields of economic and foreign policy. But, on the whole, there was a lack of direction and a sense of drift, which led to a feeling among the people that not much was being achieved. The Emergency and the Janata years had left their mark on her. She was suspicious of people around her and trusted none but her son, Sanjay. Her earlier energy, decisiveness and determination were replaced by 'an approach of hesitation and caution'. As time passed she showed signs of being a tired person

Besides, Indira Gandhi had few political instruments to implement her election promises. Most of the well-known and experienced national and state leaders and her colleagues of the past had deserted her during 1977- 78. With a few exceptions, the political leaders around her, in the Centre as also in the states, were raw untried men and women, none of whom had a political base of their own and who had been chosen more for their loyalty than for their administrative or political capacities. Sanjay Gandhi's death while flying a stunt plane on 23 June 1980 left her shaken and further weakened. She tried to fill his place with her elder son, Rajiv Gandhi, who was brought into politics, got elected as an MP and then appointed as the general secretary of the party in 1983.

Like the first one, a major weakness of Indira's second prime ministerial innings was the continuing organizational weakness of Congress and her failure to rebuild it and strengthen its structure. This inevitability affected the performance of the government and its popularity, for a weak party structure meant the choking of channels through which popular feelings could be conveyed to the leadership and the nature and rationale of government policies explained to the people.

Despite Indira Gandhi's total domination of the party and the government, the central leadership of the party again faced the problem of continuous factionalism and infighting—in fact, virtual civil war—within the state units of the party and the state governments. One result of this infighting and the consequent frequent rise and fall of chief ministers was that party organizational elections were repeatedly postponed and, in the end, not held. Another result was the erosion of the feeling that Congress could provide state governments that worked. Organizational weakness also began to erode the party's support and adversely affect its electoral performance, with dissidents often sabotaging the prospects of the official party candidates.

An example of this erosion of the party's popularity was the serious electoral defeat it suffered in January 1983 in the elections to the state assemblies of Andhra and Karnataka, the two states which Congress had ruled continuously since their inception. In Andhra, Congress suffered a massive defeat at the hands of the newly formed Telugu Desam party, led by the film star-turned politician, N.T. Rama Rao. The Congress won only 60 seats against Telugu Desam's 202. In Karnataka, a Janata-led front won 95 seats in the 224-seat assembly, with Congress getting 81 seats. While facing hardly any challenge at the Centre from opposition parties, from the beginning of her second prime ministership Indira Gandhi faced certain intractable problems arising out of communal, linguistic and caste conflicts; none of these was dealt with firmness and insight and all of them were to drag on for years.

Similarly, atrocities on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continued as they began to assert their social and constitutional rights. However, administrative and judicial action, which included long terms of imprisonment, was taken in some cases against the perpetrators of the atrocities. Though hesitatingly, India once again resumed its tasks of planning and economic development, with greater financial allocations being made for the purpose. The government also took note of the changes in world economy and their impact on India and, while making efforts to strengthen the public sector, initiated measures for what has

come to be known as economic liberalization. The government proceeded very gradually and hesitatingly because Indira Gandhi was worried about the role of multinational corporations in eroding India's self-reliance. The government, however, succeeded in raising the rate of economic growth to over 4 per cent per year, with a large increase in agricultural and petroleum crude production and in gradually bringing down the rate of inflation to 7 per cent in 1984.

Indira Gandhi's government also achieved some success in foreign policy. In March 1983, India hosted the seventh summit of the Non-Aligned Movement with Indira Gandhi as its chairman. As formal leader of the Non-Aligned Movement she actively worked for a new international economic order that would be more fair to the developing countries. When on 26 December 1979 the Soviet Union sent its troops into Afghanistan to help its beleaguered government, Mrs. Gandhi refused to condemn die action but, at the same time, she advised the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan as speedily as possible. She, however, opposed the indirect intervention in Afghanistan's civil war by the United States and Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi's stand on Afghanistan issue was determined by India's long-term friendship and 'special' relationship with the Soviet Union and India's strategic interest in preventing Afghanistan from having an administrator hostile to India.

Indira Gandhi tried to improve India's relations with the US despite its tilt towards Pakistan. She also tried to normalize relations with China and Pakistan, despite the latter's support to the terrorists in Punjab. She did not, however, hesitate to order the army in April 1984 to deploy a brigade at the Siachen glacier along the line of control in Kashmir.

THE PUNJAB CRISIS AND OPERATION BLUE STAR

Operation Blue Star took birth after the rise of Khalistan movement in India. The Khalistan movement was a political Sikh nationalist movement which aimed at creating an independent state for Sikhs inside the current North-Western Republic of India. Even though the Khalistan movement started in the early 1940s and 1950s, it gained popularity between 1970s and 1980s.

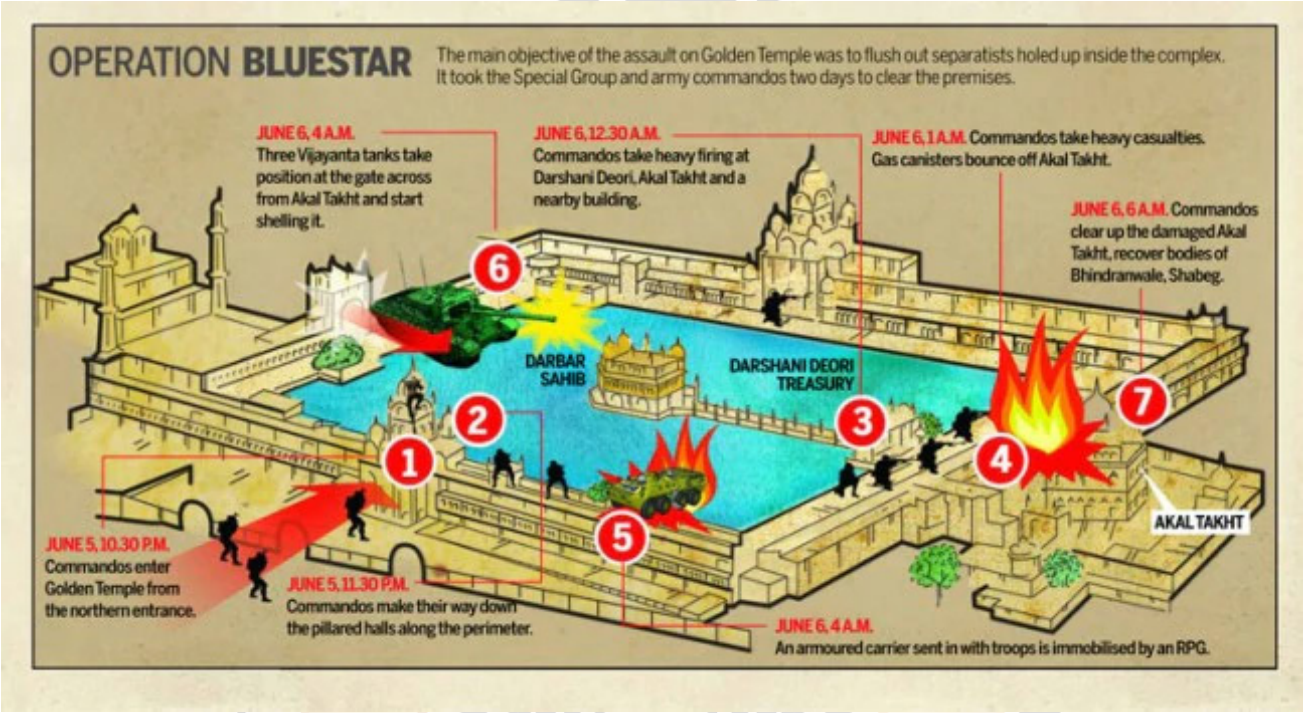
By the early 1980s some Sikhs were calling for more than mere separate provincial statehood, instead demanding nothing less than a nation-state of their own, an autonomous Sikh Khalistan, or "Land of the Pure." More moderate Sikh leaders, such as Harchand Singh Longowal, who was elected president of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Supreme Akali Party) in 1980, unsuccessfully attempted to avert civil war by seeking to negotiate a settlement of Sikh demands with New Delhi's Congress Party leaders. Extremists like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale won the support of many younger devout Sikhs around Amritsar, who were armed with automatic weapons and launched a violent movement for Khalistan that took control of the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), and its sacred precincts in Amritsar.

Indian intelligence agencies had reported that three prominent heads of the Khalistan movement – Shabeg Singh, Balbier Singh, and Amrik Singh – had made at least six trips each to Pakistan between the years 1981 and 1983. The Intelligence Bureau reported that weapons training were being provided at Gurdwaras in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The Soviet intelligence agency KGB reportedly tipped off the Indian intelligence agency R&AW about the ISI working on a plan for Punjab. From its interrogation of a Pakistani Army officer, R&AW received information that over a thousand trained Special Service Group commandos of the Pakistan Army had been dispatched by Pakistan into the Indian Punjab to assist Bhindranwale in his fight against the government. Many Pakistani agents also followed the smuggling routes in the Kashmir and Kutch region of Gujarat, with plans to commit sabotage.

Indira Gandhi and her government seemed unable to do anything to stop the growing number of politically motivated killings and acts of terror in Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi. In 1984, therefore, Gandhi gave her generals permission to launch their "Operation Bluestar," as it was code-named, against the Khalistan terrorist who took refuge in the Golden Temple. The complex housing the two had been occupied and fortified by a fundamentalist Sikh preacher, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was demanding the establishment of Khalistan, a Sikh homeland. The assault was the climax of a nine-hour, gruelling battle between the Indian

army and Bhindranwale with his heavily armed and well-trained followers. Operation Blue Star specifically was aimed to eliminate Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple complex and regain the control over Harmandir Sahib.

On 1 June 1984, after negotiations with the militants failed, Indira Gandhi ordered the army to launch Operation Blue Star. A variety of army units and paramilitary forces surrounded the temple complex on 3 June 1984. The army used loudspeakers to encourage the militants to surrender. Requests were also made to the militants to allow trapped pilgrims to come out of the temple premises, before the clash with the army. However, no surrender or release of pilgrims occurred until 7:00 pm on 5 June. The fighting started on 5 June with skirmishes and the battle went on for three days, ending on 8 June. A clean-up operation code-named **Operation Woodrose** was also initiated throughout Punjab.



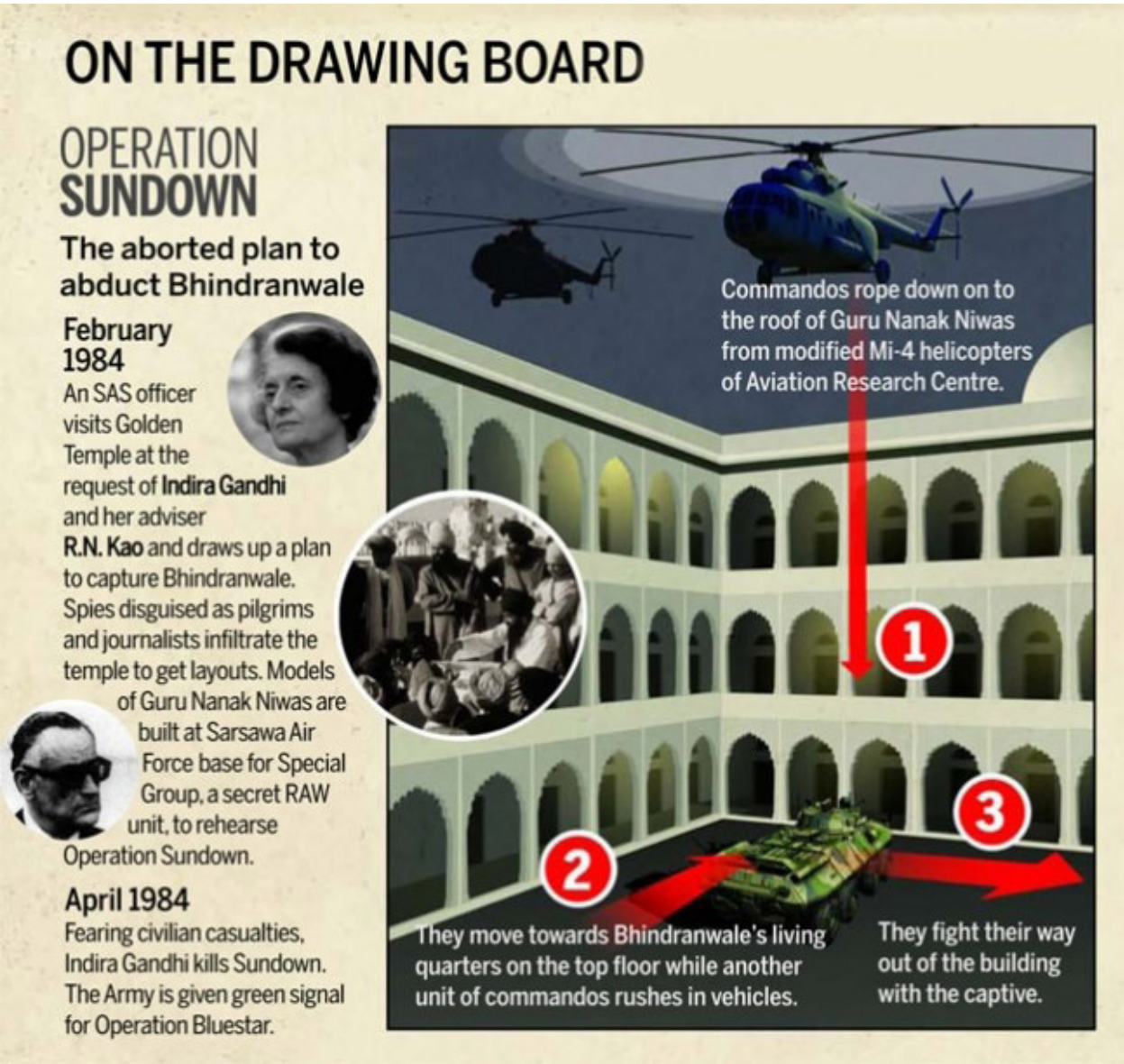
At about 7.30 on the morning of June 6 1984, Operation Blue Star, one of the most extraordinary battles in military history, came to a head when Indian army tanks pounded the Sikh shrine with 105mm high-explosive squash head shells. The army had underestimated the firepower possessed by the militants, whose armament included Chinese-made rocket-propelled grenade launchers with armour piercing capabilities. Tanks and heavy artillery were used to attack the militants, who responded with anti-tank and machine-gun fire from the heavily fortified Akal Takht. After a 24-hour firefight, the army gained control of the temple complex. Casualty figures for the Army were 83 dead and 249 injured. According to the official estimates, 1,592 militants were apprehended and there were 493 combined militant and civilian casualties. High civilian casualties were attributed to militants using pilgrims trapped inside the temple as human shields.

Operation Blue Star was divided into two parts:

- **Operation Metal**: It was limited to Golden Temple but it also led to Operation Shop - the capturing of suspects from outskirts of Punjab.
- **Operation Woodrose:** It was launched throughout Punjab. The operation was carried out by Indian Army, using tanks, artillery, helicopters and armored vehicles.

OPERATION SUNDOWN

Operation Sundown was the aborted mission which was planned by the RAW agency to abduct Bhindranwale.



Operation Black Thunder is the name given to two operations that took place in India in the late 1980s to flush out remaining Kharku Sikhs from the Golden Temple using 'Black Cat' commandos of the National Security Guards like Operation Blue Star, these attacks were on Kharku Sikhs who were based in the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab.

The Operation Blue Star produced a deep sense of anger and outrage among Sikhs all over the country. It was seen by most of them as a sacrilege and an affront to the community rather than as a necessary though unpleasant effort to deal with Bhindranwale and the terrorists. While much of the hostile reaction to the Operation represented an emotional outburst, there was a great deal to be said for its critics who held that some other way than the military storming of the Temple should have been found. Later, critics were to point to the success of the skillfully planned and executed Operation Black Thunder in 1988 which forced the terrorists, once again occupying the Temple in the manner similar to that of 1984, to surrender to the police in a relatively bloodless manner. However, despite its many negative repercussions, Operation Blue Star had certain positive features. It established that the Indian state was strong enough to deal with secession and terrorism; it put an end to the charismatic Bhindranwale and his gang; and it restored law and order. Five months after the operation, on 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in an act of revenge by her two Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. Public outcry over Indira Gandhi's death led to the killings of more than 3,000 Sikhs in the ensuing 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

UNIT-V

INDIA AFTER INDIRA GANDHI TILL 1991 ECONOMIC REFORMS

INDIRA GANDHI's ASSASSINATION

Iron Lady of India, Indira Gandhi died on October 31 in 1984. She was shot dead by two of her bodyguards. Her words spoken just the previous day at a public rally in Bhubaneswar had turned prophetic. Indira Gandhi was reading out from a speech prepared by HY Sharada Prasad, her information adviser. Junking the written script for a few moments, Indira Gandhi spoke about the possibility of a violent end to her life. She said I am here today; I may not be here tomorrow. Nobody knows how many attempts have been made to shoot me I do not care whether I live or die. I have lived a long life and I am proud that I spend the whole of my life in the service of my people.

The last walk-Indira Gandhi was ready for the interview with Peter Ustinov by 7.30 in the morning. Peter Ustinov was waiting for Indira Gandhi at the Prime Minister's Office, then located at 1 Akbar Road adjacent to her residence. At 9.10 am, Indira Gandhi left her residence for the PMO. She was walking down to 1 Akbar Road. Indira Gandhi was accompanied by constable Narayan Singh, personal security officer Rameshwar Dayal and personal secretary RK Dhawan- the veteran Congress leader. When Indira Gandhi reached the gates of 1 Akbar Road, she was in conversation with RK Dhawan; Narayan Singh was carrying a black umbrella to protect her from the early winter sun. Suddenly, one of her bodyguards, Beant Singh fired at her from his revolver. The bullet hit her in the abdomen. Beant Singh fired two more bullets into her chest.

Another assailant, Satwant Singh was standing nearby holding his carbine when Beant Singh shouted at him to fire at Indira Gandhi. Satwant Singh soon emptied all 25 bullets, most of them piercing Indira Gandhi's body. Rameshwar Dayal was also hit and fell. Both men then threw down their weapons and Beant said, "I have done what I had to do. You do what you want to do." In the next six minutes, Border Police officers Tarsem Singh Jamwal and Ram Saran captured and killed Beant, while Satwant was arrested by Gandhi's other bodyguards, along with an accomplice trying to escape; he was seriously wounded. Satwant Singh was hanged in 1989 with accomplice Kehar Singh.

The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, also known as the 1984 Sikh Massacre, was a series of organised pogroms against Sikhs in India in response to the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. It has been alleged that several leaders of the ruling Indian National Congress had been in active complicity with the mob, as to the organisation of the riots. Independent sources estimate the number of deaths at about 8,000–17,000 whilst government estimates project that about 2,800 Sikhs were killed in Delhi and 3,350 nationwide.

Indira Gandhi (during her final journey)

RAJIV GANDHI AS PRIME MINISTER

Rajiv, son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru, became prime minister of India on the night of 31 October 1985. That morning, Indira Gandhi was shot by two of her own body-guards. Rajiv Gandhi, a pilot with Indian Airlines for fourteen years, had kept studiously aloof from politics till the death of his younger brother, Sanjay, in an air crash in June 1980. After Sanjay's death, Indira persuaded him to help her and in June 1981 he formally entered politics by getting elected to the Lok Sabha from Amethi, the constituency in U.P. vacated by Sanjay's death. He was placed in charge of organizing the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1982, and by all accounts did a commendable job. In February 1983, he became one of the seven new general secretaries of the Congress, with the responsibility of rejuvenating the Congress at the grassroots, the urgency of the task having been brought home by losses in provincial elections. But the gradual apprenticeship to politics was cut short and he was catapulted into the driving seat. With elections due in a few months, Congress leaders naturally wanted someone who could rally the people. Rajiv, in their judgement, was most likely to harness the sympathy wave generated by Indira's martyrdom.

In the event, they turned out to be correct, and the Congress won by its largest ever majority in the general elections held from 24-27 December 1984, a little earlier than scheduled. If the seats won in the polls held later in Punjab and Assam are counted, the party garnered 415 out of 543 Lok Sabha seats. Rajiv himself won by a huge margin from Amethi in U.P., in the process defeating conclusively Sanjay Gandhi's wife, Maneka, who wanted to establish her claim to Sanjay's legacy. The Congress election campaign had focused on the threat to India's unity and integrity and, since Indira's death was seen by people as proof of the threat, the response was enormous. The huge majority also meant high, even unreal, expectations, which Rajiv himself once described as 'scary'.

In fact, Rajiv was faced with major crises from the outset. He had hardly any time to come to terms with the personal grief of his mother's violent death. As the dignitaries from across the world were arriving in Delhi for Indira Gandhi's funeral, a horrific massacre of Sikhs in revenge for her assassination was taking

place in the city, especially on its outskirts in the 'resettlement colonies' where the poorer sections lived. From 31 October, the day of Indira's death, to 3 November, many Sikhs were attacked, their businesses and houses looted and burnt, and around 2,800 killed. The perpetrators were the poor, usually slum-dwellers, who looked upon Indira as their leader and sympathizer, and were disoriented by her violent death. It has also been alleged that Congress party workers and even some local level leaders were involved in assisting and guiding the crowd, and that the police at the local level turned a blind eye to what was going on. This allegation has sometimes been enlarged into a broader charge that the Congress, with directions from the top, organized the massacre, a charge that is obviously unfounded and has been impossible to prove. It is also true that thousands of Sikhs were sheltered and protected by Hindu friends and neighbours. The government's delay in bringing the situation under control can only be explained by the confusion following Indira's assassination, with the swearing-in of the new prime minister, the responsibility of arranging the funeral, which was attended by thousands of people, and looking after the foreign guests. It also took a while for the full import of the scale of the massacre to be communicated and understood at the higher levels of the government. On 3 November, the day of the funeral, Rajiv visited some of the affected areas in the morning, and later the army was called in and the violence suppressed. Many voluntary agencies, whose personnel were generally Hindu, worked for months to bring relief to the families of victims. Similar violence, though on a smaller scale, broke out in some other North Indian cities, especially Kanpur and Bokaro.

Within two weeks of his becoming prime minister, there occurred the Bhopal gas leak tragedy, in which around 2,000 people, mostly poor slum dwellers, lost their lives and many thousands more were taken ill because of poisonous emissions from a chemicals factory run by Union Carbide, a multinational company. The legal battle for compensation dragged on for years in Indian and US courts, and the final settlement was not a generous one, and was further bogged down in bureaucratic delays due to difficulties of identifying the sufferers.

The First Round

Despite these travails, Rajiv's administration took off on a positive note, and a number of policy initiatives were launched. At the political level, he set in motion the process that culminated in the Punjab and Assam accords, which have been discussed elsewhere in the book. But perhaps his most well-known initiative was the setting up of six 'technology missions', something that for many Indians epitomized the new, modern and technological approach of the youthful prime minister. The idea was to apply science and technology to six areas of underdevelopment in which a scientific approach would be useful in solving problems. These target-oriented projects were designated as 'technology missions' and in most cases the arrival of the millennium was set as the target date, the idea being that India must enter the new millennium as a modern nation. The most important of these was the drinking water mission, whose aim was to provide drinking water to all Indian villages, only one-fifth of which had potable water supplies. The idea was to use satellites and the disciplines of geology, civil engineering and biochemistry for identifying, extracting and cleansing water supplies. The literacy mission was aimed at attacking the serious problem of mass illiteracy which almost forty years after independence afflicted almost sixty per cent of the population. This was to be achieved by making use of and extending the television network in rural areas, as well as by using video and audio cassettes and other methods. In fact, this was probably in the long run the most significant of the missions, as the Total Literacy Campaign that it spawned made a major dent in many regions and brought the whole issue to the centre of political debate. The third mission was targeted at the immunization of pregnant women and children, again an idea that has caught on and is pursued with greater vigour today with the mass campaign for immunization of children against polio being a recent example. The fourth mission was to promote the 'White Revolution', or milk production, by improving the milk yield and health of cows and buffaloes, and this was remarkably successful. India imported a large quantity of edible oils, which added considerably to her foreign exchange deficit, and the fifth mission was charged with the task of expanding edible oil production. The aim of the sixth mission was to bring one telephone to every village in the country by the end of the century.

The man who inspired and helped implement the technology-mission approach was Sam Pitroda, a young US-trained Indian telecommunications expert who had made a fortune in the US from telephone switching systems. He had convinced Mrs. Gandhi of the need to set up C-Dot or the Centre for the Development of Telematics, and he now became Rajiv's adviser on technology missions, and Telecom Commission chairman. A big push was also given by Rajiv to India's computerization programme, which was already being formulated under Mrs. Gandhi. Import duties on components were reduced so that domestic producers could enhance production, foreign manufacturers were allowed to enter the home market so that quality and competitive prices were ensured, and use of computers in offices and schools was encouraged. Realizing that the future was at stake, Rajiv ignored much ill-informed debate about utility of computers in a labour surplus society, and went ahead with the policy that has stood the country in very good stead, with computer software emerging as a major foreign exchange earner. India had missed out on the industrial revolution because of its colonial status, and it was imperative that she take part in the information and communication revolution (this was a view held by many farsighted Indians, and Rajiv shared it and put his weight behind the effort to make it come real). Efforts at liberalization of controls in the economy as a whole, increase of exports, reduction of import duties, etc. were also made.

Much lip service had been paid to the need for doing something to strengthen local self-government institutions. It was Rajiv and his government that took the initiative to deepen and strengthen Panchayati institutions by generating debate and bringing forward legislation to make panchayat elections mandatory by giving them a constitutional sanction. This necessitated a constitutional amendment and it was Rajiv's great regret that the opposition parties, for no good reason, blocked the passage of the bills in the Rajya Sabha where the Congress did not have a majority. As striking as the objective was the process. Between December 1987 and June 1988, Rajiv met 400 district collectors or officers in charge of districts. In July 1988 there was a meeting with chief secretaries, the highest officers of states, in January 1989 a Panchayati Raj sammelan of 8,000 delegates, followed by a conference on Panchayati Raj for Women in May. The All India Congress Committee discussed and supported the proposals in May 1989, and a meeting of chief ministers of states was held thereafter. Rajiv could claim with some justice, as he did, that 'never before has a government at the highest level taken so carefully into account the views of so many tens of thousands of people at every level about democracy and development at the grassroots.'

Another measure directed at the rural poor was the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana or Employment Plan which aimed at providing employment to at least one member of every rural poor family for 50-100 days in the year. Inaugurated to mark the birth centenary of Jawaharlal Nehru (born in 1889), the central government promised to meet 80 per cent of the cost of the scheme. The new education policy, too, had its focus on the rural areas and the poor, with its main planks being the literacy campaign, Operation Blackboard (which aimed at providing basic amenities to schools) and distance education. The much reviled Navodaya Vidyalayas, a favourite whipping boy of Rajiv baiters, and cited *ad nauseum* as proof of the elitist nature of Rajiv's education policy, were in fact aimed at providing quality education to the children of poor rural families who were to be chosen by merit for free education and stay in the residential schools to be set up in every district. The National Perspective Plan for Women was drafted in 1988, and among its important proposals was the reservation of 30 per cent of elected seats for women in all panchayat bodies, which was included in the Panchayati Raj legislation. It also recommended that 50 per cent of grassroots functionaries should be women. The plan addressed issues of women's health and education as well. Legislation strengthening the punishment for dowry-related offences was also passed in 1986.

The protection of the environment was a project close to Rajiv's heart as it had been to his mother's, and among other things he launched a massive effort to clean the river Ganga, the holiest of Indian rivers, which had become shamefully polluted in many parts. He created a new Ministry for Environment and environmental clearance for big projects was made mandatory. At the Non-Aligned Movement's ninth summit, he placed before it the proposal for a Planet Protection Fund to help developing countries access advanced technology for the protection of the environment. While it became quite fashionable in certain elite circles to berate the cultural policy of the Rajiv government as catering to the West by holding very expensive festivals of India in many western countries, it was forgotten that at the same time seven zonal cultural cen-

tres were set up in different parts of the country to shift the focus of state patronage of the arts away from the capital and encourage local and regional cultural forms. Also, whatever their criticism (there is some truth in the charge of over-enthusiasm leading to precious cultural property being transported abroad and suffering damage, though whether this was a special feature of Rajiv's regime is suspect) the festivals did succeed in placing India on the world cultural map. If one of the legitimate functions of a government is to enhance the standing of the country it governs on the world stage, then the festivals of India fulfilled that function. There appeared to be a serious effort to clean up the political and bureaucratic system, by introducing greater openness, accountability, and taking legislative and other measures to dissuade offenders. Among these was the Anti-Defection Act, drafted after discussions with opposition parties and passed in 1985, which laid down that one-third of the members of a political party in the parliament would have to change loyalties for it to be recognized as a split in a party. Any other defections would invite expulsion from the House. This was meant to check the tendency of horse-trading and shifting party loyalties that was becoming a bane of the Indian political system. Lok Adalats and the Consumer Protection Act were part of the same stream.

Greater freedom to government media, especially the increasingly popular television, and encouragement to programmes critical of government and intended to keep ministers and bureaucrats on their toes, carried the prime minister's personal imprint. V. P. Singh's much advertised raids on business houses, which Rajiv supported, certainly in the beginning, also helped provide the ambience that gave Rajiv the Mr. Clean label. But it was his speech at the centenary celebrations of the Congress in December 1985 that really shook critics and admirers (and at that time there were more admirers than critics, as Rajiv enjoyed a honeymoon for the first eighteen months of his term). Rajiv used the occasion to launch a frontal attack on what he described as the power-brokers who had reduced the great party to a shell of its former self, and promised to rejuvenate it by removing their stranglehold. This was read as a signal to the old leaders to get their act together or else. Many party men who were otherwise sympathetic to Rajiv's policies did not appreciate his 'disrespectful' style and thought the centenary of the grand old party an inappropriate occasion for this exercise. However, Rajiv was no more successful at holding elections within the party than was his mother or his successor as Congress prime minister. The hold of party bosses at the local level meant that they could register bogus members and manipulate elections, and in the process acquire further legitimacy by virtue of being elected! Rajiv soon also found that he needed to build links with party stalwarts and politics was different from running an efficient corporation. Over time, and partly as his own close advisers, Arun Nehru, Arun Singh, and V. P. Singh, were estranged, he brought back old advisers. The process reached full circle in early 1989 with the return of R.K. Dhawan, Mrs. Gandhi's close adviser, who epitomized the old system that Rajiv had vowed in his innocence in December 1985 to overturn!

Foreign Policy Initiatives

Rajiv pursued foreign affairs with the energy of an activist, travelling extensively to countries big and small, and participating in a wide range of international fora. He put his own personal stamp on foreign policy, even while pursuing the well-laid out path of his grandfather and mother. This he did by zealously advocating the causes of nuclear disarmament and the fight against apartheid in South Africa and of Namibian independence. A little while before her death, Indira had formed the Six-Nation Five-Continent Initiative, bringing together heads of government of Argentina, Greece, Mexico, Sweden, Tanzania and India, to put international pressure on superpowers to reduce weapons and eliminate nuclear weapons. Within a month of winning the elections, Rajiv held the first summit of the six leaders. It is important to remember that this was before Gorbachev's assumption of power and before disarmament was on the agenda of superpower relations. Rajiv met Gorbachev after he took over the reins in the USSR, and found in him a believer in disarmament. In fact, Rajiv began to hail Gorbachev as a force for peace much before the US woke up to the new leader's new ideas. In November 1986, on the occasion of Gorbachev's visit, he and Rajiv gave a call for a non-violent world, and the Delhi Declaration, as the programme came to be called, set forth a plan for disarmament. The Six Nation Initiative too matured into a Action Plan for Nuclear Disarmament, which Rajiv then presented to the UN General Assembly's third special session on disarmament in June 1988. This plan called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by 2010.

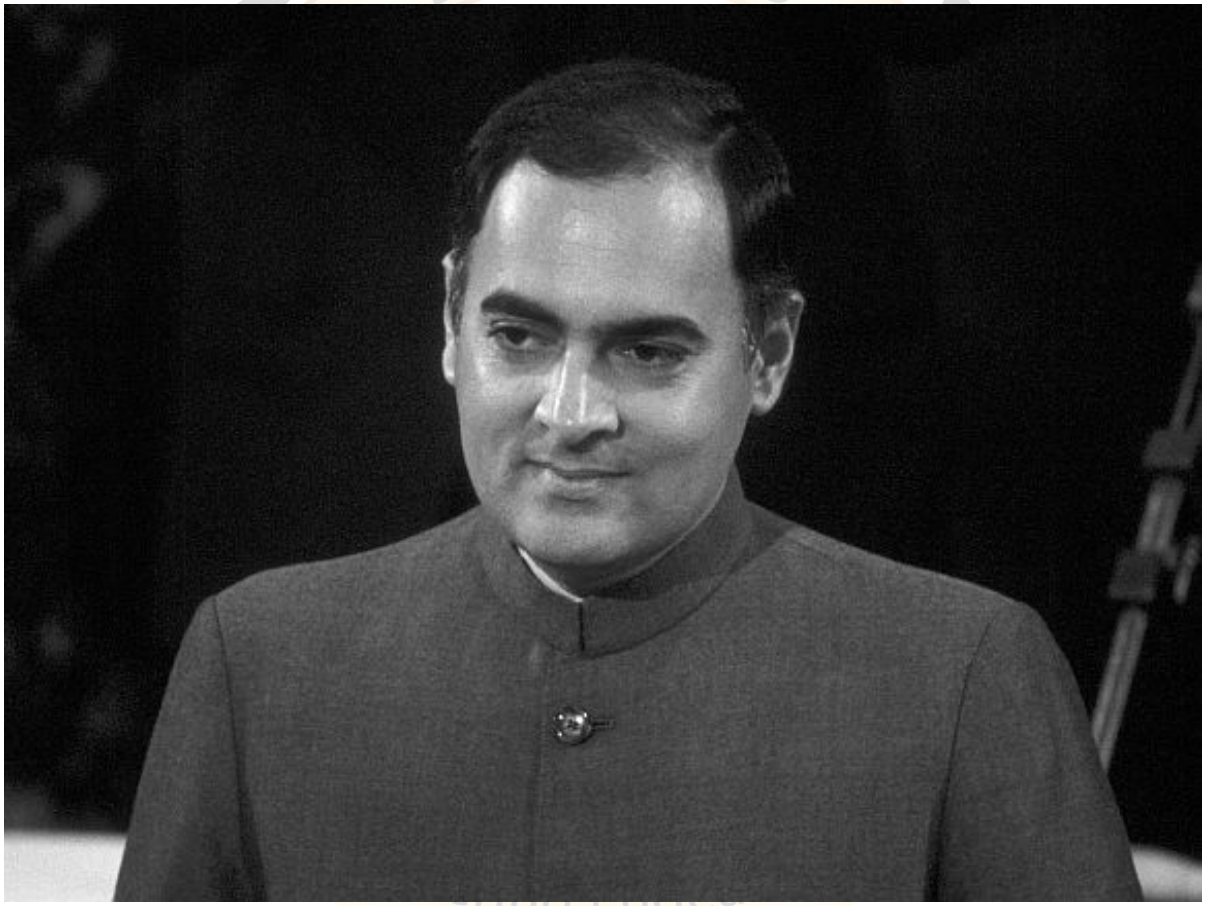
Close to Rajiv's heart was the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In keeping with tradition (Gandhiji was the first to take up the issue in South Africa in 1893, and Nehru the first to raise it in the UN in the late forties, and India the first country to apply sanctions by breaking-off trade and diplomatic links.), Rajiv took up the cause with fervour, even succeeding in getting the majority in the Commonwealth in favour of sanctions but failing to move an obdurate Mrs. Thatcher. More successful was the setting up of the AFRICA (Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid) Fund at the nonaligned summit at Harare in 1986. By the Belgrade Non-aligned Summit meeting three years later, he was able to show a collection of half a billion dollars given by developing and developed countries to help the frontline African states overcome the losses they suffered because of sanctions against South Africa.

Namibian independence was a closely associated cause, Namibia being held as a colony by South Africa. Rajiv extended diplomatic recognition to SWAPO, the organization fighting for Namibian independence, and visited the frontline states of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Tanzania in May 1986, besides adding his voice to the cause at all international gatherings. Namibia got her independence in 1990, by which time Rajiv was no longer prime minister, but he attended the celebrations, where he met Nelson Mandela, and thus was able to witness the success of two favourite causes. Relations with the superpowers improved during Rajiv's tenure, but did not undergo any major change. Contrary to speculation based on the young PM's preference for open-market policies and a technocratic bias, Rajiv did not tilt towards the US. His visit to the US in 1985 was a successful one, and he got along well with Reagan, even persuading him to let India have the supercomputer she had been wanting for processing her weather data. But with the US committed to supporting Pakistan, to promote the Mujahideen against the USSR in Afghanistan, there was little chance of any radical shifts. With Gorbachev, however, a very close relationship developed, and the two leaders met a total of eight times in five years.

Rajiv's visit to China in 1988, the first by an Indian prime minister since Nehru's maiden visit in 1954, was remarkable in that it happened at all. It was also made memorable by TV images of Deng holding on to Rajiv's hand for what seemed like eternity, and by his referring to mistakes made by people of his generation which the new generation represented by Rajiv Gandhi should not repeat. The importance of this meeting was also because there had been a sudden dip in relations in 1986 following some border incidents. The visit was followed by efforts to solve long-standing problems on a regular basis, improvement of trade and extension of consular contacts. India even refrained from condemning the Tiananmen Square massacre of 4 June 1989, clear proof that recent improvements in relations were sought not to be jeopardized. With immediate neighbours, relations were not very good during Rajiv's time. Bangladesh was moving in a more and more Islamic direction, and disputes over water continued. With Nepal there was trouble, their government imposed heavy duties on Indian goods, gave discounts in duties to Chinese goods, received, in 1988, huge amounts of assault rifles and antiaircraft guns from China and asked Indian residents to get work permits for working in Nepal (this when lakhs of Nepalis work and live in India without any permits). The Indian government imposed what amounted to an economic blockade in March 1989, and by September negotiations for a solution began.

Maldives faced a coup attempt, asked for Indian help, which was given and the attempt scotched. With Pakistan, things were much the same despite hopes aroused by Benazir Bhutto becoming prime minister, and Rajiv visiting Pakistan (the first prime minister to do so after Nehru), what with Pakistani support to insurgency in Kashmir and Punjab continuing apace. In Sri Lanka, however, India got involved in a messy situation from which she found it difficult to extricate herself. The problem began when thousands of Tamils from Sri Lanka fled to Tamil Nadu in India in 1983 when the Sri Lankan government launched heavy repression on Jaffna, the base of the LTTE, an organization fighting for Tamil autonomy and later, independence from Sri Lanka. Public opinion in India, especially in Tamil Nadu, whose people spoke the same language as the refugees, was strongly in favour of India doing something to help the Sri Lankan Tamils. Passions were further roused when Sri Lanka imposed a blockade on Jaffna, preventing daily necessities from reaching people. India sent supplies in fishing boats but the Sri Lankan Navy stopped them. This was followed by air-dropping of supplies by Indian transport planes, which carried Indian and foreign journalists as well. Sri Lanka realized it had gone too far and permitted supplies by boat. But the problem of Tamil

insurgency was continuing, and the Sri Lankan government realized that no country other than India could help. President Jayewardene approached Rajiv, and the negotiations led to an accord in July 1987 by which the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka where Tamils were the majority would be merged into a single province, substantial devolution of power would take place, the LTTE would be dissolved and arms surrendered in a very short time, and the Indian Army would come to the aid of the Sri Lankan government if requested by Sri Lanka. The accord failed to take off because the LTTE had given only reluctant consent, were not signatories, and did not trust the Sri Lankan government, and refused to surrender. Jayewardene, in the meantime, asked for the Indian Army to help implement the accord, and since it was the LTTE that was standing in the way, the army got involved in an increasingly messy fight with the Tamil guerillas, who had an edge since they knew the terrain and had local support. The Indian Army was in an unenviable position with Tamils resenting it because it was disarming the LTTE, and Sri Lankans resenting it for being a foreign army. The situation got even messier with Premadasa succeeding Jayewardene and asking the Indian government to withdraw its army. Rajiv agreed to a phased withdrawal, and the soldiers started to come home in mid-1989, but withdrew fully only after the 1989 elections. The Sri Lankan imbroglio was to cost Rajiv his life.



Rajiv Gandhi

India played a major role in negotiating the Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea (Cambodia). It was reminiscent of Nehru's days when India was called upon to play the role of the honest broker in South-east Asia, Korea, Congo, and so on. In January 1987, Vietnam let it be known to India that it wanted to withdraw from Kampuchea which it had occupied a few years ago and that it wished India to work out the modalities in consultation with other countries. Natwar Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs, did a lot of shuttle diplomacy in South-east Asia, met the deposed Kampuchean ruler Prince Sihanouk a number of times in Paris, arranged meetings between Sihanouk and Heng Samarian. As a settlement approached, the US and China got into the act and tried to sideline India. A twenty-one nation meeting was held in Paris, to which India was invited, and the settlement resulted in a Vietnamese withdrawal, elections under UN auspices, and installation of a coalition government of Sihanouk and Heng Samarian.

Rajiv Gandhi gave a new life to the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) by giving it a purpose: nuclear disarmament. He also tried to promote the idea of a G-15, a more compact version of G-77, which approximated more closely to the G-7. He placed India quite prominently on the world map, making her presence felt in a variety of fora on a number of issues. He travelled abroad on an average once a month during his five year term, even inviting snipes from political opponents about his 'occasional visits to India'. In keeping with his effort to build India's image in the community of nations, Rajiv was also committed to maintaining and enhancing Indian security. He gave the go-ahead to the modernization of the armed forces, which led to the doubling of the defence expenditure. The guided missile development programme, initiated by Mrs. Gandhi in 1983, began to show results and two short-range missiles, Trishul and Prithvi, and one intermediate-range missile, Agni, in which Rajiv had taken great interest, were successfully tested. The Indian Navy was considerably expanded with the lease of a nuclear-powered submarine from USSR and the purchase of a second aircraft carrier from Britain. The army got howitzer guns from Sweden and sanction for development of an all-Indian battle tank, the Arjun. In the last two years of Rajiv's tenure, defence spending was one-fifth of total government expenditure.

***Bofors and Its Aftermath*-**Ironically, it was these very same defence purchases that were to become the proverbial albatross around Rajiv's neck. The big one was Bofors, the stink of which continues to this day, but it started with smaller scandals around Fairfax and the HDW submarine deal. Very briefly, since details are available aplenty elsewhere, the Fairfax controversy centred on the appointment by V. P. Singh, Rajiv's finance minister, who had become notorious for his 'raid raj', of an American detective agency, Fairfax, to investigate the illegal stacking of foreign exchange in overseas banks by Indians. A forged letter which suggested that the investigations included Amitabh Bachchan, a close friend of the prime minister, surfaced from nowhere, and big industrialists, Nusli Wadia of Bombay Dyeing and Ambani of Reliance were reported to be involved in the game on opposite sides. The transfer of V. P. Singh from Finance to Defence, which Rajiv claimed was because he needed somebody capable to handle Defence at the time because of the crisis with Pakistan, was projected by the Opposition as proof that Rajiv was trying to shield his friend Amitabh. This was followed by the HDW submarine scandal. When India wanted to place a further order for two more submarines with the HDW shipyard in West Germany from whom it had bought four in 1981, and asked for some price discount, the shipyard declined saying it had to pay heavy 7 per cent commission on the sale anyway. V. P. Singh, who was defence minister, without speaking to Rajiv, ordered an enquiry. This was taken as an unfriendly act since Mrs. Gandhi herself was defence minister at the time of the award of the contract in 1981, and a Congress government was in power.

There was criticism of Singh's conduct in the Cabinet meeting, and he soon resigned from the government. The Opposition and the Press declared this as proof of V. P. Singh's honesty and Rajiv's attempts at a cover-up. The Mr. Clean label was shifted to Singh and Rajiv's honeymoon was over. On 16 April 1987, a few days after Singh's resignation, the Bofors scandal broke. The allegations, which first appeared on Swedish Radio, were that the equivalent of sixty crores of Indian rupees were paid as bribes to Indian officials and Congress party members to secure the contract for the 410 howitzer guns to Bofors company of Sweden in face of stiff competition from a French gun. The allegations, which were taken up in a big way by the Indian Press, particularly the *Indian Express,* and later *The Hindu,* soon snowballed into a major attack on Rajiv himself with sections of the opposition parties charging that he and his family were the recipient of the money. The situation was bad enough for Rajiv to make a public denial of his and his family's involvement. It also provided an opportunity to Giani Zail Singh, the President, to try and settle scores with Rajiv. Annoyed because Rajiv had been lax in observing the convention of regularly calling on the President to keep him informed of important developments, and also because he was not consulted about the Punjab and Mizo accords, and lured by the prospect of a second term, Zail Singh became the centre of a major conspiracy in mid-1987 to dismiss Rajiv from office. Opposition leaders and some Congress dissidents encouraged the President to dismiss Rajiv on charges of corruption or failing to fulfil the constitutional requirement of keeping the President informed. Zail Singh was almost persuaded but V. P. Singh, who was the alternative, declined to play the game and a major constitutional catastrophe was saved.

It is to Rajiv's great credit that, in the midst of scandals and conspiracies, he personally handled with great elan, from all accounts, the crisis arising out of one of the severest droughts of the twentieth century. The South-west monsoon failed in 1987 (June-September), affecting one-fourth of the population of the country, living in one-third of all districts located in eleven states. A massive effort was launched to move food and drinking water, and to start employment schemes, in affected areas. It was claimed by Rajiv with justifiable pride that not a single life was lost. This, in a country where millions died in a man-made famine as recently as 1943, four years before independence.

But Bofors and the stink of corruption would not go away, and resurfaced in 1989, the election year. The Joint Parliamentary Committee Report had given a more or less clean chit, but the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Report cast doubts on the procedure for selection of guns and raised other issues as well. Though it said nothing of the kind, the Opposition insisted it was proof of Rajiv's guilt and demanded his resignation. They followed it up with *en masse* resignation from the Lok Sabha, which was no great sacrifice since elections were round the corner anyway, but were nonetheless an embarrassment for the government. And Rajiv went to his second general elections with the country in a mood very different from the one in his first round.

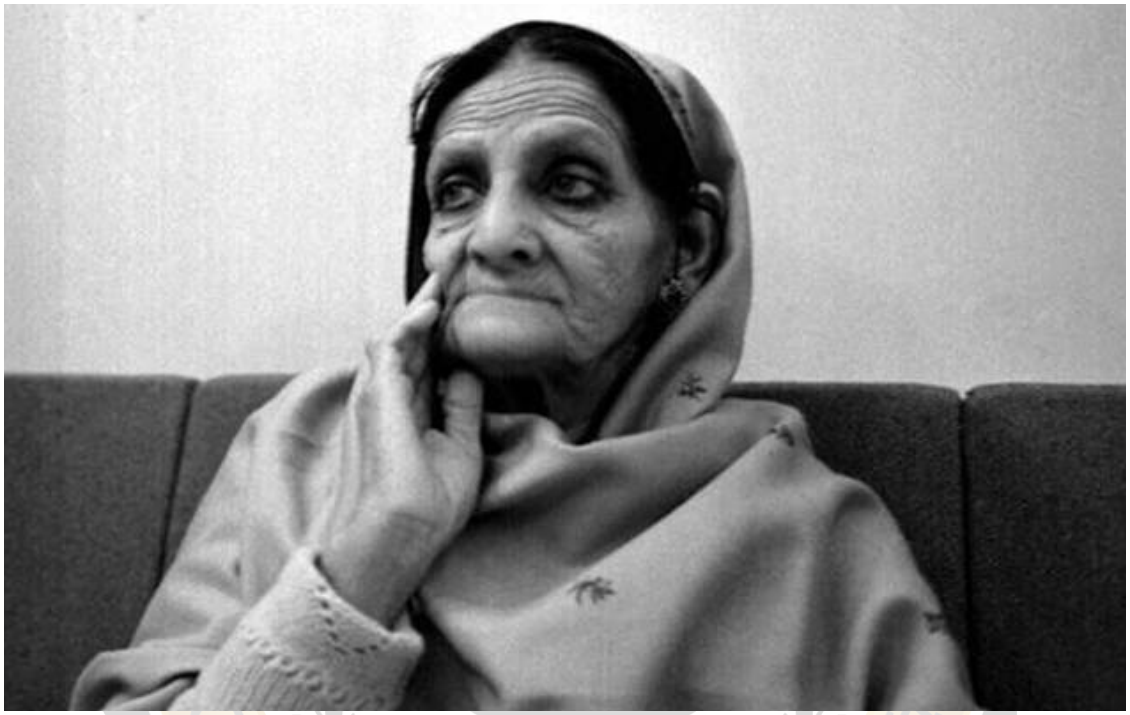
A little older and much wiser, Rajiv had much to look back upon with pride. Except for Sri Lanka, his handling of foreign affairs had met with considerable approval. India's standing in the world had been enhanced, not declined, and relations with superpowers and neighbours were on an even keel, somewhat better, certainly no worse than before. The economy had done well, registering the highest rates of growth to date, though the deficit and debt was piling up. The security and defence policy had been a sound one with the overdue modernization of the armed forces set in motion. Computerization was given a big push, a necessity if India was to remain in the reckoning in the world system. Anti-poverty programmes in general and the literacy, drinking water, immunization, and Panchayati Raj initiatives in particular, had the poor and the rural areas as their main focus, thus giving a lie to charges of elitism.

There were several weaknesses, no doubt. Among them was Rajiv's tendency to change his mind too often. He shuffled his Cabinet once every two months on an average, for example. He was also given to flashes of temper, and sometimes spoke without having thought through the consequences, as in the famous incident when he dismissed the Foreign Secretary in a press conference. Charges of inaccessibility also began to be made, and some thought that he was also becoming arrogant, but these are the usual problems of high office. The biggest problem, in fact, was his relative lack of political experience, unfamiliarity with the nuances of grassroots mobilization, party organization, etc. But most observers were agreed that he was learning fast, and that he was no more the awkward leader, that he had begun to enjoy the rough and tumble of Indian politics. Also, by 1989 he had passed a crucial test of political leadership: of having the nerves for it. He withstood Bofors, in which the most vicious personal allegations were made about him, and he was ready to endure the gruelling election campaign for a second time. Whether he won or lost, he had decided beyond doubt that he was going to be a player in the great Indian game.

THE SHAH BANO CASE

In April 1978, a 62-year-old Muslim woman, Shah Bano, filed a petition in court demanding maintenance from her divorced husband Mohammed Ahmad Khan, a renowned lawyer in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Khan had granted her irrevocable talaq later in November. The two were married in 1932 and had five children — three sons and two daughters. Shah Bano's husband had asked her to move to a separate residence three years before, after a prolonged period of her living with Khan and his second wife. Shah Bano went to court and filed a claim for maintenance for herself and her five children under Section 123 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The section puts a legal obligation on a man to provide for his wife during the marriage and after divorce too if she isn't able to fend for herself. However, Khan contested the claim on the grounds that the Muslim Personal Law in India required the husband to only provide maintenance for the iddat period after divorce.

Iddat is the waiting period a woman must observe after the death of her husband or divorce before she can marry another man. The length of the iddat period is circumstantial. The period is usually three months after either of the two instances. In case the woman is pregnant, the period carries on until the childbirth. Khan's argument was supported by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board which contended that courts cannot take the liberty of interfering in those matters that are laid out under Muslim Personal Law, adding it would violate The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937. The board said that according to the Act, the courts were to give decisions on matters of divorce, maintenance and other family issues based on Shariat.



Shah Bano Begum

After detailed arguments, the decision was passed by the Supreme Court of India in 1985. On the question whether CrPC, 1973, which applies to all Indian citizens regardless of their religion, could apply in this case. Then Chief Justice of India Y.V. Chandrachud upheld the decision of the High Court that gave orders for maintenance to Shah Bano under CrPC. For its part, the apex court increased the maintenance sum. The case was considered a milestone as it was a step ahead of the general practice of deciding cases on the basis of interpretation of personal law and also dwelt on the need to implement the Uniform Civil Code. It also took note of different personal laws and the need to recognise and address the issue of gender equality and perseverance in matters of religious principles.

Justice Y.V. Chandrachud said in his decision: "Section 125 was enacted in order to provide a quick and summary remedy to a class of persons who are unable to maintain themselves. What difference would it then make as to what is the religion professed by the neglected wife, child or parent? Neglect by a person of sufficient means to maintain these and the inability of these persons to maintain themselves are the objective criteria which determine the applicability of section 125. Such provisions, which are essentially of a prophylactic nature, cut across the barriers of religion. The liability imposed by section 125 to maintain close relatives who are indigent is founded upon the individual's obligation to the society to prevent vagrancy and destitution. That is the moral edict of the law and morality cannot be clubbed with religion."

The following events were unfavourable to a great extent with the then Rajiv Gandhi Congress government, elected in 1984, passing the Muslim Women (Protection on Divorce Act), 1986. This law overturned the verdict in the Shah Bano case and said the maintenance period can only be made liable for the iddat period. The new law said that if a woman wasn't able to provide for herself, the magistrate had the power to

direct the Wakf Board for providing the aggrieved woman means of sustenance and for her dependent children too. Shah Bano's lawyer Danial Latifi had challenged the Act's Constitutional validity. The apex court, though upholding the validity of the new law, said the liability can't be restricted to the period of iddat. One of the key points of relevance in the verdict that set it apart from previous cases was the recognition of women's claim for treatment with equality and dignity, particularly in cases of marriage. Significantly, Shah Bano later withdrew the maintenance claim she had filed.

THE ELAM TIGERS AND ASSASINATION OF RAJIV GANDHI

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), commonly known as the Tamil Tigers, were a separatist militant organization fighting for an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority in northern Sri Lanka. Velupillai Prabhakaran founded the group in 1972 and by the late 1980s was the dominant Tamil militant group in Sri Lanka. After a number of failed negotiations, the Sri Lankan government declared an all-out offensive against the LTTE in 2006. By May 2009, government forces had defeated the LTTE and killed Prabhakaran. An estimated 70,000 people were killed during the conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government.

The LTTE is recognized for having carried out a number of high-profile assassinations, including the assassination of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993 and the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. The LTTE consisted of a highly developed military wing and a secondary political wing. The military wing had a naval group, an airborne unit, an intelligence wing, and even a specialized suicide terrorist unit. The group was also notorious for its use of women and children in combat.

The LTTE's primary goal was to attain an independent state for Sri Lankan Tamils, known as "Tamil Eelam", in the Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, where the majority of Sri Lankan Tamils reside. The majority of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese Buddhists; a 2001 census revealed that 82% of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese, 9.4% are Tamil, and 7.9% are Sri Lankan Moor. After Sri Lanka became independent from the British in 1948, the majority Sinhalese practiced discrimination towards the Tamils, who were favored by the British during colonial rule. In 1972, the Sinhalese declared Buddhism as Sri Lanka's national religion. Prabhakaran, the group's leader, stressed that "a struggle for Eelam is a demand of the Tamil people", not only of the LTTE. Although separatist ideology has dominated the LTTE's characterization, Prabhakaran stated in a 2002 press conference that the LTTE's desired self determination entailed autonomy and self-rule, not necessarily statehood and cessation from the rest of Sri Lanka.

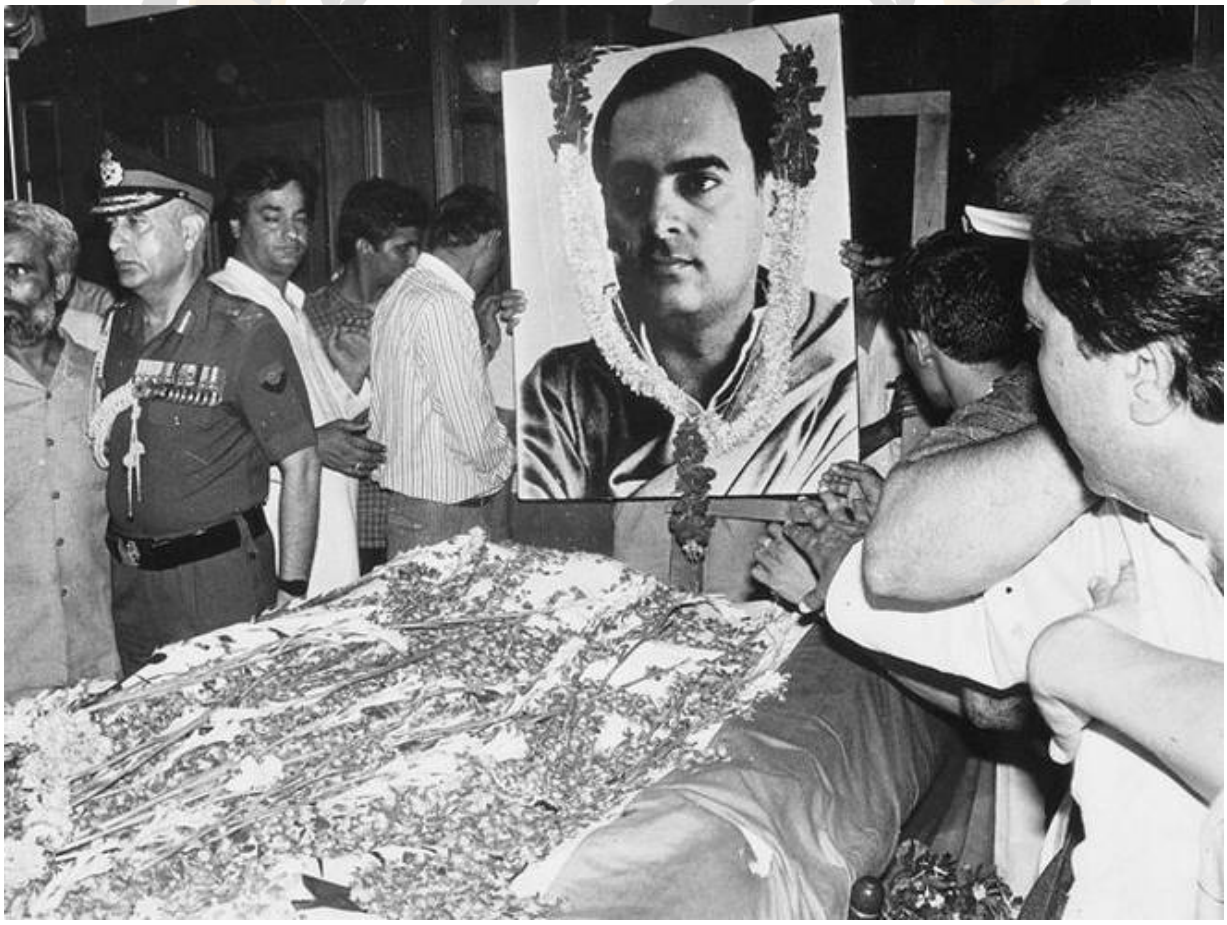
The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, occurred as a result of a suicide bombing in Sriperumbudur, Chennai, in Tamil Nadu, India on 21 May 1991. At least 14 others were also killed. It was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajaratnam, also known as Dhanu, member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a militant organization from Sri Lanka; at the time India had just ended its involvement, through the Indian Peace Keeping Force, in the Sri Lankan Civil War.

Rajiv Gandhi was campaigning for the upcoming elections in southern states of India. On 21 May, after successfully campaigning in Visakhapatnam, his next stop was Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. About two hours after arriving in Madras (now Chennai), Rajiv Gandhi was driven by motorcade in a white Ambassador car to Sriperumbudur, stopping along the way at a few other election campaigning venues. When he reached a campaign rally in Sriperumbudur, he got out of his car and began to walk towards the dais where he would deliver a speech. Along the way, he was garlanded by many well-wishers, Congress party workers and school children. The assassin, Dhanu, approached and greeted him. She then bent down to touch his feet and detonated an RDX explosive-laden belt tucked below her dress at exactly 10:10 PM. Rajiv, his assassin and 14 others were killed in the explosion that followed, along with 43 others who were grievously injured. The assassination was caught on film by a local photographer, Haribabu whose camera and film was found at the site though the photographer also died in the blast.

The Supreme Court held that decision of eliminating Rajiv was prompted by his interview to Sunday magazine (21–28 August 1990), where he said he would send the IPKF to disarm LTTE if he came back to power. Rajiv also defended the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord in the same interview. The LTTE decision to kill him was perhaps aimed at preventing him from coming to power again. Thereafter, the Justice J S Verma Commission was formed to look into the security lapses that led to the killing.

The final report, submitted in June 1992, concluded that the security arrangements for the former PM were adequate but that the local Congress party leaders disrupted and broke these arrangements. The Narasimha Rao government initially rejected Verma's findings but later accepted it under pressure. However, no action was taken on the recommendations of the Commission. Despite no action, the findings throw up vital questions that have been consistently raised by political analysts. Sources have indicated that Rajiv was time and again informed that there was a threat to his life and that he should not travel to Tamil Nadu. In fact, the then governor of Tamil Nadu Bhism Narayan Singh broke his official protocol and twice warned Rajiv about the threat to his life if he visited the state. Dr Subramanian Swamy said in his book, Sri Lanka in Crisis: India's Options (2007), that an LTTE delegation had met Rajiv Gandhi on 5 March 1991. Another delegation met him around 14 March 1991 at New Delhi.

Journalist Ram Bahadur Rai wrote that:-The message conveyed to Rajiv Gandhi by both these delegations was that there was no threat to his life and that he can travel to Tamil Nadu without fearing for his life. I did a series of articles after his assassination that pointed out how, after these meetings, Rajiv became complacent about his security and broke security rules in more than 40 rallies.



Prayers organised after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination

Following his assassination, Rajiv Gandhi's mutilated body was airlifted to New Delhi. From the Palam airport, his body was sent to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi for post-mortem, reconstruction and embalming. A state funeral was held for Rajiv Gandhi on 24 May 1991. His funeral was broadcast live nationally and internationally, and was attended by dignitaries from over 60 countries. He was cremated on the banks of the river Yamuna, near the cremation spot of his mother, brother and grandfather. Today, the site where he was cremated is known as Veerbhumi.

Immediately after the assassination, the Chandrasekhar government handed the investigation over to CBI on 22 May 1991. The agency created a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under D. R. Karthikeyan to determine who was responsible for the assassination. The SIT probe confirmed the role of LTTE in the assassination, which was upheld by the Supreme Court of India. The interim report of Justice Milap Chand Jain, looking into the conspiracy angle to the assassination, indicted the DMK for colluding with the LTTE. The report concluded that DMK provided sanctuary to the LTTE, which made it easy for the rebels to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi. The Commission report stated that the year 1989 signified "the perpetuation of the general political trend of indulging the Tamil militants on Indian soil and tolerance of their wide-ranging criminal and anti-national activities". The report also alleged that LTTE leaders in Jaffna were in possession of sensitive coded messages exchanged between the Union government and the state government of DMK. "There is evidence to show that, during this period, some of the most vital wireless messages were passed between the LTTE operatives based in Tamil Nadu and Jaffna. These messages, which were decoded later, are directly related to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi", the report stated. The Congress subsequently brought down the United Front (UF) government of I K Gujral after the report was leaked in November 1998. The party also demanded the removal of DMK from the UF government, arguing that it had played a key role in the death of Rajiv Gandhi.

RISE OF TERRORISM IN KASHMIR AND EXODUS OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

Kashmir owes its origin to a legendary rishi (ascetic-scholar) Kashyap, who is credited to have reclaimed it from a huge lake that existed where Kashmir Valley is located today. The land was first called in ancient literature Kashyapmar, which was corrupted to become Kashmir.

In July 1988, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) began a separatist insurgency for independence of Kashmir from India. The group targeted a Kashmiri Pandit for the first time on 14 September 1989, when they killed Pandit Tika Lal Taploo, an advocate and a prominent leader in Jammu & Kashmir in front of several eyewitnesses. This instilled fear in the Kashmiri Pandit community especially as Taploo's killers were never caught which also emboldened the terrorists. The Pandits felt that they weren't safe in the valley and could be targeted any time. The killings of Kashmiri Pandits continued that included many of the prominent ones. This must be seen in the background of Pakistan's policy of proxy warfare.

On 4 January 1990, a local Urdu newspaper, Aftab, published a press release issued by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, asking all Pandits to leave the Valley immediately. Another local paper, Al Safa, repeated this expulsion order. Explosive and inflammatory speeches were broadcast from the public address systems frequently. The sense of vulnerabity and insecurity was exacerbated by attacks on prominent Hindu politicians, postings of hit lists with names of specific Pandit individuals and various violent episodes in Srinagar and other places.

In order to undermine his political rival Farooq Abdullah who at that time was the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister of Home Affairs Mufti Mohammad Sayeed convinced Prime Minister V.P. Singh to appoint Jagmohan as the governor of the state. Abdullah resented Jagmohan who had been appointed as the governor earlier in April 1984 as well and had recommended Abdullah's dismissal to Rajiv Gandhi in July 1984. Mufti was convinced that such a move will irritate Abdullah and make him quit. Abdullah had earlier declared that he would resign if Jagmohan was made the Governor. However, the Central government went ahead and appointed him as Governor on 19 January 1990. In response, Abdullah resigned on the same day and Jagmohan suggested the dissolution of the State Assembly. On 21 January 1990, two days

after Jagmohan took over as governor, the Gawkadal massacre took place in Srinagar, in which the Indian security forces had opened fire on protesters. These events led to chaos. Lawlessness took over the valley and the crowd with slogans and guns started roaming around the streets. News kept coming of violent incidents and those Pandits who survived the night saved their lives by traveling out of the valley. They still live in refugee camps mostly in Jammu.

Unknown masked men with Kalashnikovs used to force people to reset their time to Pakistan Standard Time. All offices buildings, shops, and establishments were colored green as a sign of Pakistani rule. Shops, factories, temples and homes of Kashmiri Pandits were burned or destroyed. Many Kashmiri Hindu women were kidnapped, raped and murdered, throughout the time of exodus. The militancy in Kashmir had increased after the exodus.

THE BoP CRISIS AND THE ECONOMIC REFORMS OF 1991

The economic reform of 1991 brought the global transition in India. The transition towards a newer India, and a change in perspective of government towards the role of private players and markets in the economy. The Balance of Payment crisis followed by pledging of Gold reserves, taking loan from IMF and other structural adjustment programme (sponsored by IMF and World Bank) were the initial steps towards the economic reforms that were launched. The BOP crisis was the result of decades of imprudent economic policies that India followed. The institutional arrangements of the economy, pre 1991, were adequate then but were eventually deteriorating the fiscal situation of the country. The role of fiscal policy in India's history is significant. In 1991, India ran into an unsustainable deficit in balance of payments. The country ran into large deficits for long time and as a result faced the balance of payment crisis.

Though this crisis was a turning point but also an opportunity to make some fundamental changes in approaching the economic policies of the country.

To combat the crisis, the government took various fiscal, monetary, trade, finance and industrial measures. Since mid-1991, the Indian economy took a departure from the past policies prevailed post-independence. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation are the words that strike the most listening to the reforms that took place post crisis. India's economy paved itself into a new regime through new economic policy (NEP).

What is BOP and how does it lead to crisis?

Government runs into deficit when it spends more than it receives. Alternatively, it runs into surplus when receives more than it spends. To meet the additional expenditure, when in deficit, it can resort to three options. Printing money, drawing money from foreign exchange reserves, or borrow from domestic or foreign source. But it is not that easy as it appears. It influences other economic variables while resorting to these measures. Excessive printing of money can lead to inflation. It can lead to debt crisis if the government borrows a lot from foreign source. Excessive borrowing from domestic sources can result in higher interest rates and further the situation of "crowding out".

If the government draws down on its foreign exchange reserves, that's when a balance of payments crisis may arise. In all the cases, if a government runs into a large deficit on a long run (which is not prudent for a government), it will lead to the crisis. India faced the worst BOP crisis in 1991 since 1947.

Fiscal Situation before Crisis:

In 1950, planning commission was formed and since then India commenced on the path of planned development. The major portion of planning process was inclined towards strengthening of public sector as a means to achieve economic growth and development. Administrative controls were set up over industries by the introduction of quota-license-inspector raj.

Since 1950, India ran into continuous trade deficit because of license raj system. The private savings were a mode of catering the public sector investment and consumption. The redistribution of income and wealth through tax and transfers was another goal during the time to reduce inequalities and poverty. There were 11 income tax brackets. The Government raised the income tax rates to high levels during the 1970s. The marginal rate of taxation along with the wealth tax reached up to 100% during 70s. In 1974–75 the personal income tax rate was brought down to 77 percent but the wealth tax rate was increased. The central revenue deficit reached to 2.44% of GDP by 1989–90 from 1.4% of GDP in 1980–81. The centre's gross fiscal deficit increased from 5.71% to 7.31% of GDP. Even after the fall in external liabilities, the overall liabilities were huge.

Around 34% of the expenditure was on defence during 1970–71, interest payment had 19% share while the subsidies were at 3%. Furthermore, by 1990–91, the interest payment had the largest share of 29%, subsidies having 17% and defence had 15% of the expenditure share. The burden of public debt and the subsidy burden was quite great at that time.

The phase of 1980–90 saw the self-perpetuating process of deficit induced inflation and inflation induced deficit. The deficit leads to increase in money supply, which eventually raises the price levels. The rise in price increases the government expenditure faster than the receipts, hence increasing the deficit. Since 1950, India ran into continuous trade deficit because of quota license inspector raj. The fiscal imbalances affected the foreign sector resulting in the BOP crisis of 1991.

This was the worst BOP crisis, India faced since independence. During 1980s, inflow of foreign borrowings increased at burgeoning rates. There was an excessive domestic expenditure on incomes, due to which the fiscal deficit of centre and state reached to 11% in 1991. Total public debt as a ratio of GNP got doubled and foreign currency reserves faced a rapid depletion. In 1990–91, India faced a double digit inflation.

The situation aggravated by the rise in price of oil due to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (First Gulf war). First time in Indian history, India's credit ratings were graded down. Due to which it was denied to access the external commercial credit markets.

Immediate and Subsequent steps taken by Government:

Immediate action taken against the crisis included taking condition-less loan from IMF and borrowing money from banks of US and Switzerland against the Gold reserves. There is something good that emerged out of this crisis, the overdue economic reforms. Government took some major policy initiatives to address the balance of payment problem. The fiscal deficit during 1990–91 was around 8.4 percent of GDP. The fiscal imbalances were marginally corrected by the budget 1991–92, which envisaged 2% reduction in the fiscal deficit.

Subsidies on fertilizers were reduced along with the abolition of sugar subsidy. Providing excess of subsidies aggravates the fiscal deficit which was brought to balance by reducing these subsidies. The system of quota and licensing was dismantled. The economy was opened for private markets, foreign investment and trade. The road to economic liberalisation was paved by the government to balance the deficit. Various tax reforms were introduced to make tax structure more stable and transparent. Some of them include the reduction of tax brackets to 3 with rates of 20%, 30% and 40. The role of monetary reform in balancing the deficit was also significant. The reduction in statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and the cash reserve ratio (CRR) and guidelines for opening new private sector banks were part of some monetary policies. The rationale behind these reforms was to bring in competition among public sector, private sector and foreign banks. The government decided to remove direct control of government over capital markets and replacing it with a regulatory framework with transparency. Major industrial and trade policy were reformed. MRTP was repealed and private sector participation was permitted in industrial sector by narrowing down the areas reserved for public sectors.

One of the measures undertaken by the government to improve the balance of payments situation was the devaluation of rupee. Devaluation of currency leads to increase in export and hence increase in inflow of foreign currency. Initially, the rupee was devalued by about 20%. There was a need to bridge the gap between the real and nominal exchange rates, which was emerged due to high inflation. The overhauled exchange rate was corrected by this devaluation.

Year 1991 is marked as a landmark in India's history. The country faced its biggest economic crisis and used it as an opportunity to bring about significant changes in its economic policies. India saw a rapid transformation in its economy and a different perspective of India known as New India came into existence since then. This new India was driven by the three ideals of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG reforms).

UNIT-VI

LAND REFORMS AND CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN

LAND REFORMS: AN INTRODUCTION

Land program in post-Independence India has evolved through different phases. During the Mughal period, before the arrival of the British there were numerous changes in the system of land taxation or revenue. Peasants continued to enjoy customary rights over land they occupied and generally could not be evicted unless they failed to pay the required land revenue (land tax) to the state. The task of collecting land revenue was assigned to a class of agents called zamindars.

When the East India Company (EIC) established in the Seventeenth Century, the agricultural structure underwent fundamental change. The EIC first purchased the right to receive the collected land revenue and later, under the Permanent Settlement introduced in 1793, declared the Zamindars to be proprietors of land in exchange for the payment of land revenue fixed in perpetuity. Zamindars or those to whom they sold their proprietary rights, typically delegated revenue collection to a series of middlemen. The increasing layers of intermediaries meant that there was considerable increase in rent extracted from the tillers and failure to pay this increased amount resulted in large-scale evictions, widespread disturbance, and declining agricultural production. The British sought to stabilize the situation through legislated tenancy reform.

The Bengal Rent Act of 1859 placed restrictions on the power of landlords' to increase rent or evict tenants. However, the Act only protected fixed-rent tenants and did not protect bargadars or agricultural labourers. But it only protected those fixed-rent tenants who could prove they had cultivated the land for 12 consecutive years. Constant cultivation was difficult to prove due to poor records and the Act resulted in an increase in evictions by Zamindars to prevent tenants from possessing land for the required time period. The 1885 Bengal Tenancy Act also sought to protect long-standing tenants, and was similarly ineffective. During this period, another form of landholder emerged in Bengal. The Jotedars were a rich class of peasants who reclaimed and gained control of large quantities of uncultivated forests and wetlands outside the territory governed by the Permanent Settlement. The Jotedars refined some of this land through the direct supervision of hired labour or servants. Nevertheless, the bulk of the Jotedars' land, like much of the land in Bengal, was cultivated by Bargadars.

Rural tensions over the dilemma of Bargadars were common in the decades prior to and after Independence. In the 1940s, the Tebhaga movement called for a smaller crop share payment and also created the slogan, "He who tills the land, owns the land." The movement is given credit for shaping post-Independence land reform legislation in West Bengal (Datta, 1988). At the time of Independence, this matter was of great significance. In the decades following independence India passed a significant body of land reform legislation. The 1949 Constitution left the adoption and implementation of land and tenancy reforms to state governments. This led to a lot of dissimilarity in the implementation of these reforms across states and over time. After India Independence, the government took major step to eradicate the systems of Zamindaris and Jagirdari, to remove intermediaries between state and peasant. This was the first legislature taken by almost all the states called as Abolition of Zamindari / Jagirdari systems Act.

The main objectives of the Land Reforms:

- To make redistribution of Land to make a socialistic pattern of society. Such an effort will reduce the inequalities in ownership of land.
- To ensure land ceiling and take away the surplus land to be distributed among the small and marginal farmers.
- To legitimize tenancy with the ceiling limit.

- To register all the tenancy with the village Panchayats.
- To establish relation between tenancy and ceiling.
- To remove rural poverty.
- Proliferating socialist development to lessen social inequality
- Empowerment of women in the traditionally male driven society.
- To increase productivity of agriculture.
- To see that everyone can have a right on a piece of land.
- Protection of tribal by not allowing outsiders to take their land.

Land reform legislation in India is categorized in to four main sections that include abolition of intermediaries who were rent collectors under the pre-Independence land revenue system, tenancy regulation that attempts to improve the contractual terms faced by tenants, including crop shares and security of tenure, a ceiling on landholdings with a view to redistributing surplus land to the landless and lastly, attempts to consolidate disparate landholdings.

Abolition of intermediaries is generally established to be effective land reform that has been relatively successful. The record in terms of the other components is mixed and varies across states and over time. Landowners naturally resisted the implementation of these reforms by directly using their political influence and also by using various methods of evasion and coercion, which included registering their own land under names of different relatives to bypass the ceiling, and shuffling tenants around different plots of land, so that they would not acquire incumbency rights as stipulated in the tenancy law. The success of land reform was driven by the political will of particular state administrations, the prominent achievers being the left-wing administrations in Kerala and West Bengal.

ZAMINDARI ABOLITION AND TENANCY REFORMS

The process of land reform after independence basically occurred in two broad phases. The first phase which started soon after independence and arguably continued till the early sixties focussed on the following features: 1) abolition of intermediaries—zamindars, jagirdars, etc., 2) tenancy reforms involving providing security of tenure to the tenants, decrease in rents and conferment of ownership rights to tenants, 3) ceilings on size of landholdings, 4) cooperativization and community development programmes. This phase has also been called the phase of institutional reforms. The second phase beginning around the mid- or late sixties saw the gradual ushering in of the so-called Green Revolution and has been seen as the phase of technological reforms. The two phases are not to be divided in rigid watertight compartments. In fact, they were complementary to each other and there was a fair degree of overlap in the programmes followed during these phases.

Zamindari Abolition

Within a year or two of independence, i.e. by 1949, zamindari abolition bills or land tenure legislation were introduced in a number of provinces such as U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Madras, Assam and Bombay with the report of the U.P. Zamindari Abolition Committee (chaired by G.B. Pant) acting as the initial model for many others. In the meantime, the Constituent Assembly was in the process of framing India's Constitution. There was, however, widespread apprehension, including among Congress leaders deeply committed to zamindari abolition like Jawaharlal Nehru, G.B. Pant and Sardar Patel, that the zamindars could try to stymie the acquisition of their estates by moving the courts, raising issues like the violation of right to property or 'unjustness' of the compensation. After prolonged discussion the relevant provisions of the Constitution were framed in a manner that the leaders felt assured that the zamindari abolition bills pending in the state assemblies would go through on the basis of compensation recommended by the state legislatures as these

recommendations were made non-justiciable, requiring only presidential assent which meant ultimately the support of the Union Cabinet. The compensation recommended by the legislatures was of course expected to be small and reasonable from the tenants' point of view. It is significant that there was a wide consensus on giving the legislatures the authority to prescribe principles of compensation on expropriation of the zamindars. The acquisition of commercial or industrial property continued to require an entirely different set of principles.

However, belying the expectation of the framers of the Constitution, the zamindars in various parts of the country challenged the constitutionality of the law permitting zamindari abolition and the courts, as for example, the Patna High Court upheld the landlords' suit. The Congress government responded by getting constitutional amendments passed. The 1st Amendment in 1951 and the 4th Amendment in 1955 were aimed at further strengthening the hands of the state legislatures for implementing zamindari abolition, making the question of violation of any fundamental right or insufficiency of compensation not permissible in the courts. Though the zamindars continued to make numerous appeals to the High Court and Supreme Court, if for no other purpose but to delay the acquisition of their estates, yet, the back of their resistance was broken by the mid-fifties. It may be reiterated that, contrary to a view often put forward, the framers of the Constitution, including the so-called 'right wing' were not participating in a design to stymie land reforms but were in fact trying to complete the process within a democratic framework.

A major difficulty in implementing the zamindari abolition acts, passed in most provinces by 1956, was the absence of adequate land records. Nevertheless, certainly by the end of the fifties (though essentially by 1956) the process of land reform involving abolition of intermediaries (the zamindars of British India, and jagirdars of the princely states now merged with independent India) can be said to have been completed. Considering that the entire process occurred in a democratic framework, with virtually no coercion or violence being used, it was completed in a remarkably short period. This was possible partly because the zamindars as a class had been isolated socially during the national movement itself as they were seen as part of the imperialist camp. But reforms which threatened the interests of sections of the upper peasantry who were very much part of the national movement and had considerable societal support were far more difficult, and sometimes impossible to achieve.

The abolition of zamindari meant that about twenty million erstwhile tenants now became landowners. The figures for area and number of households under tenancy are highly unreliable partly because in many areas a very large proportion of tenancy was 'oral' and therefore unrecorded. Yet, scholars agree that there was some decline in tenancy after the reforms started, one rough estimate being that area under tenancy decreased from about 42 per cent in 1950-51 to between 20 to 25 per cent by the early sixties. However, the decline in tenancy and the considerable increase in self-cultivation was not a result only of tenants becoming landowners but also of eviction of existing tenants by landowners, as we shall see presently.

The compensation actually paid to the zamindars once their estates were acquired was generally small and varied from state to state depending upon the strength of the peasant movement and consequent class balance between the landlords and the tenants and the ideological composition of the Congress leadership and of the legislature as a whole. In Kashmir, for example, no compensation was paid. In Punjab, the occupancy tenants of Patiala were paid nothing and even the inferior tenants given a negligible amount, often just the first installment of the total compensation to be paid over a number of years. Most states followed a variation of the model worked out in U.P., where, very significantly, the compensation paid was inversely related to the size of the land which came under a zamindar. The small zamindars (they were often hardly distinguishable from the well-to-do peasants; land reform initiatives were quite consciously not directed against them) who used to pay land revenue of upto Rs 25 were to receive about twenty times their net annual income as compensation whereas the big zamindars who paid land revenue ranging between Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000 were to receive merely two to four times their net annual income. Moreover the payment of compensation was to stretch over a long period, in some cases forty years. It is estimated that the big zamindars who did receive compensation found that their incomes from alienated land, through compensation, would fetch them only one-fortieth of their earlier income.

Out of a total due of Rs 6,700 million, the compensation actually paid till 1961 was Rs 1,642 million, a small figure considering that India spent, by one estimate, more than six times the amount, Rs 10,000 million in just food imports between 1946-53.

Weaknesses in Zamindari Abolition

There were however certain important weaknesses in the manner in which some of the clauses relating to zamindari abolition were implemented in various parts of the country. For example, in U.P., the zamindars were permitted to retain lands that were declared to be under their 'personal cultivation'. What constituted 'personal cultivation' was very loosely defined '(making) it possible for not only those who tilled the soil, but also those who supervised the land personally or did so through a relative, or provided capital and credit to the land, to call themselves a cultivator.' Moreover, in states like U.P., Bihar and Madras, to begin with (i.e., till land ceiling laws were introduced) there was no limit on the size of the lands that could be declared to be under the 'personal cultivation' of the zamindar. This, despite the fact that the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee (Kumarappa Committee) in its report of 1949 had clearly stipulated that 'only those who put in a minimum amount of physical labour and participate in actual agricultural operations' could be said to be performing 'personal cultivation'. Also, the committee had envisaged a limit or ceiling on how much land could be 'resumed' for 'personal cultivation', under no circumstances leading to the tenant's holding being reduced to below the 'economic' level.

The result in actual practice, however, was that even zamindars who were absentee landowners could now end up retaining large tracts of land. Further, in many areas, the zamindars in order to declare under 'personal cultivation' as large a proportion of their lands as possible often resorted to large-scale eviction of tenants, mainly the less secure small tenants. (This was to be followed by further rounds of evictions once the land ceilings and tenancy legislations came into being, cumulatively leading to a major blot in the record of land reforms in India). Many of the erstwhile essentially rent-receiving zamindars however did actually begin to manage the lands declared under their 'personal cultivation'. They invested in them and moved towards progressive capitalist farming in these areas, as this was indeed one of the objectives of the land reform. Retaining large tracts under 'personal cultivation' was only one way through which the landlords tried to avoid the full impact of the effort at abolition of the zamindari system. Several other methods were used to resist the bringing in of zamindari abolition legislation and their implementation.

Since such legislation had to be passed by the state legislatures, the landlords used every possible method of parliamentary obstruction in the legislatures. The draft bills were subjected to prolonged debates, referred to select committees and repeated amendments were proposed so that in many states like U.P. and Bihar several years passed between the introduction of the bills and the laws being enacted.

Even after the laws were enacted the landlords used the judicial system to defer the implementation of the laws. As we saw earlier, they repeatedly challenged the constitutionally of the laws in the courts, going right up to the Supreme Court. In Bihar, where the landlords put up the maximum resistance, they tried to block the implementation of the law even after they lost their case in the Supreme Court twice. They now refused to hand over the land records in their possession, forcing the government to go through the lengthy procedure of reconstructing the records. Further, implementation of the law was made difficult and, as much as possible, skewed in favour of the zamindar, by the collusion between the landlords and particularly the lower level revenue officials. Such collusion was helped by the fact that in zamindari areas many of the revenue officials were former rent-collecting agents of the zamindars. At all levels involving the legislative, judicial and executive arms of the state, the landlords put up resistance.

The Congress responded by repeatedly reiterating its resolve to complete the process of zamindari abolition as quickly as possible. This resolve was seen in AICC resolutions (e.g. that of July 1954), in the conference of the chief ministers and presidents of provincial congress committees (April 1950), in the First Plan document and most of all in the Congress election manifestoes. Democracy with adult franchise on the one hand reduced the political weight of the zamindars, and on the other increased the urgency of meeting the long-standing demands of the peasantry. The Congress itself had over the years mobilized the peasantry

to make these demands. The Congress also took necessary administrative and legislative steps, such as getting the constitutional amendments of 1951 and 1955 passed by parliament, which would meet the challenge put up by the landlords.

Despite the resistance of the landlords, the process of zamindari abolition was essentially completed, as noted earlier, except in certain pockets of Bihar, within a decade of the formation of the Indian Republic. The typically large 'feudal' estates were gone. While the big landlords, who lost the bulk of their lands, were the chief losers, the main beneficiaries of zamindari abolition were the occupancy tenants or the upper tenants, who had direct leases from the zamindar, and who now became landowners. Such tenants were generally middle or rich peasants who sometimes had subleases given out to lower tenants with little rights, often called 'tenants at will'.

Tenancy Reforms

The issue of continuing tenancy in zamindari areas, oral and unrecorded, therefore remained even after abolition of zamindari was implemented. Such tenancy existed in the lands of the former zamindars now said to be under their 'personal cultivation' as well as in the lands sub-leased by the former occupancy tenant who now became the landowner. Moreover, at independence only about half the area was under zamindari tenure. The other half was under ryotwari where the problems of landlordism and an insecure, rack-rented tenantry too were rampant.

The second major plank of the land reforms envisaged was, therefore, concerned with tenancy legislation. The political and economic conditions in different parts of India were so varied that the nature of tenancy legislation passed by the different states and the manner of their implementation also varied a great deal. Yet, there were certain commonly shared objectives of the various legislations and over time some common broad features emerged in the manner of their implementation in most parts of the country. It is an examination of only these common aspects rather than of the myriad differences that is possible within the scope of this study.

Tenancy reforms had three basic objectives. First, to guarantee security of tenure to tenants who had cultivated a piece of land continuously for a fixed number of years, say six years (the exact number of years varied from region to region). Second, to seek the reduction of rents paid by tenants to a 'fair' level which was generally considered to range between one-fourth to one-sixth of the value of the gross produce of the leased land. The third objective was that the tenant gain the right to acquire ownership of the lands he cultivated, subject to certain restrictions. The tenant was expected to pay a price much below the market price, generally a multiple of the annual rent, say eight or ten years' rent. For example, in parts of Andhra Pradesh the price he had to pay was eight years' rent, which was roughly 40 per cent of the market price of the land.

It needs to be added here that while attempting to improve the condition of the tenants, tenancy legislation in India by and large sought to maintain a balance between the interest of the landowner, particularly the small landowner and the tenant. The absentee landowners' right of resumption of land for 'personal cultivation', which was granted in most parts of India, as well as the tenants' right to acquire the lands they cultivated, was operated through a complex and variable system of 'floors' and 'ceilings' keeping this balance in view. The landowners' right of resumption was limited (this was aimed at the large landowners) to his total holding after resumption not exceeding a certain limit or ceiling prescribed by each state. The First Plan suggested a limit of three times the 'family holding'. A family holding inter-alia was defined as a single plough unit. Also, while resuming land the landowner could not deprive the tenant of his entire lands. In some states like Kerala, Orissa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the tenant had to be left with at least half his holding. In some other states like Bihar the floor was half the holding of the tenant or a minimum of five acres (in West Bengal two and a half acres), whichever was less. Conversely (and this was aimed at the small landowner), the tenants' right to acquire the landowner's lands was restricted by the condition that the landowner was not to be deprived of all his lands and that the tenants' holding after acquisition was not to exceed the ceiling prescribed by each state. It was recognized, as the Second Plan noted that, 'The economic circumstances of small owners are not so different from those

of tenants that tenancy legislation should operate to their disadvantage.' The Plan therefore envisaged that very small landowners could resume their entire holding for self-cultivation. However, the actual experience of implementation of the tenancy laws was more complicated. As P.S. Appu, who headed the Planning Commission Task Force on Agrarian Relations (which reported in 1973) noted, the provisions introduced to protect the small landowners were misused by the larger landlords with the active connivance of the revenue officials.4 The Third Plan also pointed out the abuse of such provisions by large landowners transferring their lands in names of a number of relatives and others so as to enter the category of 'small landowner' and then evicting tenants from such lands by exercising the right of resumption given to small owners. In fact, the right of resumption and the loose definition of 'personal cultivation' referred to earlier (initially only Manipur and Tripura made personal labour by the landowner a condition of resumption for personal cultivation) was used for eviction of tenants on a massive scale. The process of eviction had actually begun in anticipation of the imminent tenancy legislations. The inordinate delays in enacting and implementing the legislations were engineered by vested interests enabling them to evict potential beneficiaries before the law came into force.

Even after the tenants got legal protection against eviction, large-scale evictions occurred. For example, the Planning Commission's Panel on Land Reforms noted in 1956 that between 1948 and 1951 the number of protected tenants in the State of Bombay declined from 1.7 million to 1.3 million, i.e., by more than 23 per cent; in the State of Hyderabad between 1951 and 1955 the number declined by about 57 per cent. Another detailed study of Hyderabad showed that out of every 100 protected tenants created in 1951, after four years, i.e., by 1954, only 45.4 per cent maintained that status; 12.4 per cent became landowners by exercising their right to acquire land; 2.6 per cent were legally evicted; 22.1 per cent were illegally evicted and 17.5 per cent 'voluntarily' surrendered their claims to the land. Voluntary surrenders by tenants was really an euphemism for illegal eviction as most often the tenant was 'persuaded' under threat to give up his tenancy rights 'voluntarily'. So common was the practice that the Fourth Plan was constrained to recommend that all surrenders should only be in favour of the government, which could allot such lands to eligible persons. However, only a handful of states acted upon this recommendation.

Before proceeding further on the failures of tenancy legislation in providing security of tenure to a large section of tenants, it is extremely important to also recognize that a substantial proportion of tenants did acquire security and permanent occupancy rights. The detailed study of Hyderabad referred to in the previous paragraph after all shows that 45.4 per cent of the tenants remained protected tenants and 12.4 per cent became owners, i.e., in sum about 67.8 per cent of the tenants brought under the legislation no longer suffered from insecurity. This was an important development with ramifications on levels of investment and improvement in productivity in the lands of such 'secure' tenant cultivators.

In many cases tenancy legislations led to tenancy being pushed underground, i.e., it continued in a concealed form. The tenants were now called 'farm servants' though they continued in exactly the same status. In the early years of land reform, tenants were often converted to sharecroppers, as surprisingly the latter were not treated as tenants and therefore were not protected under the existing tenancy legislation in some states such as in U.P. Only cash rent payers were treated as tenants and not those who paid fixed produce rents or those who paid a proportion of total produce as rent, i.e., sharecroppers. In West Bengal the sharecroppers, known as bargadars, received no protection till as late as July 1970 when the West Bengal Land Reforms Act was amended to accord limited protection to them. A spurt in the practice of share-cropping in the immediate years after 1951 can partially be explained due to this factor, that sharecroppers had no tenancy rights. Perhaps what contributed most to the insecurity of tenants, was the fact that most tenancies were oral and informal, i.e., they were not recorded and the tenants therefore could not benefit from the legislation in their favour.

However, going only by the recorded tenancies the 1971 Census reached absurd conclusions such as that 91.1 per cent of cultivated area in India was owner-operated and that Bihar had the largest percentage of area under owner cultivation for, any state, i.e., 99.6 per cent and that in Bihar tenancies constituted only 0.22 per cent of operational holdings and 0.17 per cent of total cultivated area! This, when it is commonly

accepted that Bihar had a very high proportion of tenancy, the 1961 Census quoting a figure of 36.65 per cent. The discrepancy between the 1961 and 1971 Census figures would suggest that the overwhelming majority of the tenancies were unrecorded and consequently the tenants remained insecure. The 1961 Census estimated that 82 per cent of the tenancies in the country were insecure! The absence of proper records, for example, was seen as a major impediment in the implementation of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act in U.P. in the initial years after independence. A massive drive had to be launched by Charan Singh, the then revenue minister to get a few million records corrected or newly inscribed. In later years, in certain areas, other such drives were launched, often under the hegemony of left forces, and the targeted beneficiaries were no longer only the upper and middle tenantry but also the poor, totally insecure and unprotected sharecroppers and tenants at will. Some celebrated examples of such efforts were seen in Kerala and West Bengal.

In the late sixties a massive programme of conferment of titles to lands to hutment dwellers and tenants was undertaken in Kerala. The programme, which achieved considerable success, was launched with the active participation of peasant organizations. The Left Front government in West Bengal which came to power in June 1977 launched the famous Operation Barga in July 1978 with the objective of, in a time-bound period, achieving the registration of the sharecroppers, so that they could then proceed to secure for them their legal rights, namely, permanent occupancy and heritable rights and a crop division of 1:3 between landowner and sharecropper. Out of an estimated 2.4 million bargadars in West Bengal only 0.4 million were recorded till June 1978. However, after the launching of Operation Barga the number of those recorded rose from 0.7 million by October 1979 to about 1.4 million by November 1990. A significant aspect of the Operation Barga experiment in West Bengal was that, like in Kerala, an effort was made to mobilize the support of the rural poor and especially the targeted beneficiaries (the bargadars) and their active participation was sought in the implementation of the reform measures. This went a long way in neutralizing the lower level revenue officials like patwaris, etc. who often acted as major impediments in the successful implementation of government programmes. An innovative move of the West Bengal government aimed at both giving a voice to the rural poor and changing the attitude of the revenue officials was to start a number of orientation camps while launching Operation Barga, 'where 30 to 40 agricultural workers and sharecroppers and a dozen and a half officers of Land Reform and other related departments were made to stay together, eat together and discuss together in the same premises in distant rural areas.' Though Operation Barga did lead to recording of a large number of sharecroppers and consequently providing them with security of tenure, the process could not be completed and it reached more or less a stalemate after a little more than half the sharecroppers had been covered. This was because of some significant reasons. First, it was found politically unviable, just as it was ethically indefensible, to proceed with Operation Barga when faced with 'landlords' who themselves were cultivators with holdings only marginally larger, if even that, than that of the sharecroppers; landlords who were entitled to only one-fourth of the produce, the rest being the sharecroppers' share. As it has been noted that in West Bengal where over time the overwhelming majority of the cultivators were small cultivators controlling less than five acres, a further redistributive thrust was difficult. 'The "class enemy" had dissolved into a sea of small holdings.'7 The dilemma was the same as the one that was faced in other parts of India, i.e., the need to balance the interest of the small landowner and the tenant. As mentioned before, tenancy legislation in India generally anticipated this aspect and had provisos built into the legislation which addressed the problem.

The other problem was that such was the land-man ratio in Bengal that the landlord was often able to rotate a piece of leased land among two or more sharecroppers or bargadars, i.e., for each piece of land there could be more than one bargadar claiming tenancy rights. Registering any one would permanently oust the other. Also, if all the bargadars were registered in such a situation the size of the holdings per cultivator would threaten to go way below the optimum. There were, thus, political and economic limits to how far Operation Barga could be carried; the objective situation did not permit the full implementation of the notion of 'land to the tiller' or even the provision of full security of tenure to each cultivator.

Limitations of Tenancy Reform

Thus, the first objective of tenancy legislation in India, that of providing security of tenure to all tenants met with only limited success. While a substantial proportion of tenants did acquire security (many even became landowners, as we shall see presently) there were still large numbers who remained unprotected. The partial success stories such as those of Kerala and West Bengal notwithstanding, the practice of unsecured tenancy, mostly oral, whether taking the form of share-cropping or the payment of fixed produce or cash rent, continued in India on a large scale. It is the continued existence of large number of insecure tenants which, inter-alia, made the successful implementation of the second major objective of tenancy legislation that of reducing rents to a 'fair' level, almost impossible to achieve. The market condition, e.g., the adverse land-man ratio that developed in India during colonial rule, pushed towards high rents. Legal 'fair' rents in such a situation could only be enforced in the case of tenants who were secure and had occupancy rights; i.e., they could not be removed or changed.

Legislation was enacted in all the states regulating the rent payable by cultivating tenants. Most states fixed maximum rents at levels suggested by the First and Second Plan, i.e. to 20 to 25 per cent of gross produce. Some states like Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh (coastal areas) fixed maximum rents somewhat higher, ranging between 33.3 and 40 per cent. In practice, however, the market rates of rent almost in all parts of the country tended to be around 50 per cent of gross produce. In addition the tenant often ended up bearing the cost of the production inputs either fully or to a substantial extent. Further, the Green Revolution which started in some parts of India in the late sixties aggravated the problems with land values and rentals rising further and reaching, for example, in parts of Punjab, rates as high as 70 per cent. What made matters worse was the fact that it was only the poor insecure tenants or sharecroppers who paid the market rates of rent. Only the upper stratum of the tenantry, which had secured occupancy rights, and was often indistinguishable from a landowner, was able to enforce the payment of legal rates of rent.

As for the third objective of tenancy legislation in India, i.e., the acquisition of ownership rights by tenants, this too was achieved only partially. As we saw above, in some detail, the use of the right to resumption by landowners, legal and illegal evictions, 'voluntary' surrenders, shift to oral and or concealed tenancy, etc., eroded the possibility of achieving this objective adequately. Yet, it must be noted quite a substantial number of tenants did acquire ownership rights.

Unfortunately, detailed data on this aspect for the whole country is not available. However, certain case studies of specific regions may serve as an indicator. P.S. Appu wrote in 1975 that, according to 'latest information', in Gujarat out of about 1.3 million tenants ownership rights had been purchased by more than half, namely about 0.77 million; and in Maharashtra out of 2.6 million tenants, again about half, namely, 1.1 million had acquired ownership rights. In other states, too, a substantial number of tenants did become owners, their numbers adding up to a few million. (It must be remembered that this is in addition to the 20 million odd tenants who became landowners as a result of the abolition of intermediaries in zamindari areas). It has been argued that one reason why even a larger number of tenants did not acquire ownership rights was that for a large number of tenants who had acquired permanent occupancy rights and achieved rent reduction, there was hardly any motivation to try and acquire full ownership which would involve not only raising capital (albeit only a fraction of the market value of land) but legal and other complications. These superior tenants were for all practical purposes virtual owners.

The cumulative effect of abolition of zamindari, tenancy legislation and ceiling legislation (see the next chapter for a detailed discussion of land ceiling) in the direction of meeting one of the major objective of land reform, i.e., creation of progressive cultivators making investments and improvement in productivity, was considerable. A very perceptive observer of India's land reforms, the economist, Daniel Thorner had noted, as early as 1968, that despite all the evasions, leakages, loopholes, and so on, 'many millions of cultivators who had previously been weak tenants or tenants-at-will were enabled to become superior tenants or virtual owners.'

If one lists certain changes together, the cumulative impact can be easily ascertained. Abolition of zamindari led to about 20 million tenants, the superior occupancy tenants, becoming landowners and many absentee zamindars actually turning to direct cultivation in the lands 'resumed' for 'personal' cultivation. In the ryotwari areas nearly half the tenants, e.g., in Bombay and Gujarat become landowners. Further, about half (in Bombay about 70 per cent) of the lands from which tenants were evicted were used by the landowners for direct cultivation, i.e., they were not leased out again in a concealed manner. Also, a very substantial number of inferior tenants in

former ryotwari areas got occupancy rights (about half in Gujarat and Maharashtra). Even in former zamindari areas such as West Bengal, nearly half the sharecroppers got occupancy rights. To this may be added between three to five million landless cultivators who got land which was declared surplus under ceiling laws.

Now the tenants and sharecroppers who got occupancy rights and paid reduced fixed rents, the tenants who acquired ownership rights, the landless who got land which was declared surplus over ceiling limits, the absentee landowners who became direct cultivators, all had the motivation, and many the potential, of becoming progressive farmers based on their own resources or on credit from institutional sources which became increasingly available even to the poorer peasants.

LAND CEILING

A major plank of the land reform effort in India was the imposition of ceilings on the size of landholdings, with the objective of making land distribution more equitable. On this question, however, societal consensus was weak, if not non-existent, and that was reflected in the extreme difficulty in implementing this programme with even a reasonable degree of success. The All India Kisan Sabha had supported the demand for a maximum limit of landownership of 25 acres per landholder in 1946. The Congress, perhaps for the first time, officially introduced the notion of land ceiling soon after independence. In November 1947, the AICC appointed a committee, which drew up the economic programme of the Congress. The committee headed by Jawaharlal Nehru had recommended, 'The maximum size of holdings should be fixed. The surplus land over such a maximum should be acquired and placed at the disposal of the village cooperatives.' Similarly, the Congress Agrarian Reform Committee, chaired by J.C. Kumarappa, which submitted its report in July 1949, also recommended a ceiling on landholding which was to be three times the size of an economic holding. (An economic holding being defined as that which would give a reasonable standard of living to the cultivator and provide full employment to a family of normal size and at least to a pair of bullocks.)

The First Plan (1951-1956) too expressed itself 'in favour of the principle that there should be an upper limit to the amount of land that an individual may hold.' Though the Plan broadly accepted the upper limit suggested by the Kumarappa Committee as 'fair', it was nevertheless stated that the exact upper limit was to be 'fixed by each State, having regard to its own agrarian history and its present problems.' Moreover, it was stated, 'The census of land holding and cultivation, which it is proposed to hold during 1953, will give the data relevant to this decision.' Clearly, there was no immediate programme of implementing ceilings and the First Plan anticipated that 'two to three years would be necessary' to even undertake the necessary survey and set up a machinery which would enforce ceiling legislation effectively.

It was a matter of no surprise, therefore, that despite the early statements of intentions and recommendations, not much progress on the question of ceilings occurred in the initial years after independence. This was recognized by the Congress, and the AICC in its session in Agra in 1953 urged, 'The State Governments should take immediate steps in regard to collection of requisite land data and the fixation of ceilings on land holdings, with a view to redistribute the land, as far as possible, among landless workers.' This position was reiterated repeatedly by the Congress Working Committee and the AICC over the next few years. In 1957 the Standing Committee of National Development Council (The NDC was created in 1952. It was a forum where all the chief ministers of the states would assemble, under the chairmanship of Nehru, to discuss critical issues relating to development) adopted a decision to complete the imposition of ceilings in the few states where such legislation had been passed by the end of 1960 and decided that other states should pass such legislation by 1958-59.

In the meantime, opposition to ceilings was building up in large parts of the country, in the Press, in parliament, in the state legislatures and even within the Congress party. A threat to the right to private property was perceived by the rural landowners as well as urban interests. Matters came to a head at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in January 1959. Despite opposition from prominent Congressmen at the AICC and the Subjects Committee meeting preceding the open session, the Nagpur Congress (January 1959) passed a resolution stating that 'in order to remove uncertainty regarding land reforms and give stability to the farmer, ceilings should be fixed on existing and future holdings and legislation to this effect … should be completed in all States by the end of 1959.' Further, the land declared surplus, i.e., above ceiling limits, was to 'vest in the panchayats … and (be) managed through cooperatives consisting of landless labourers.'

A wave of criticism was to follow in the months following the Nagpur session. N.G. Ranga, Secretary of the Congress parliamentary party who had already, in December 1958, sent to Nehru a letter signed by a hundred Congress members of parliament, critiquing the idea of ceilings, resigned from the Congress in February 1959. The Nagpur Resolution contributed considerably towards the consolidation of the right-wing forces both in the rural and urban sectors of the country. N.G. Ranga and C. Rajagopalachari, alarmed at the moves towards land ceilings and threats of compulsory cooperativization now joined hands with Minoo Masani an important leader of the Forum for Free Enterprise which campaigned against the threat of nationalization and the public sector swamping the private sector, to form the Swatantra party in June 1959, with Ranga as a president. The campaigners and beneficiaries of zamindari abolition, the tenants who had now become landowners, also ranged themselves against the next step in land reform, an attempt at redistribution of land ownership through imposition of land ceilings.

The opponents of the ceilings legislation were, however, to have their real victory at the state level, as it was the states which had to formulate and implement the legislation. The state legislatures, which met shortly after the Nagpur session, showed no haste in implementing the Nagpur Resolution. The ceilings issue thus dragged on and most states passed the enabling legislation only by the end of 1961, i.e., nearly fourteen years after the idea was officially mooted.

Weaknesses in Land Ceiling Legislation

The long delay, as well as the nature of the legislation, ensured that the ceilings would have a very muted impact, releasing little surplus land for redistribution. By and large the ceiling laws in most states had certain major shortcomings. First, in a situation where more than 70 per cent of land holdings in India were under five acres, the ceiling fixed on existing holdings by the states were very high. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, it varied from 27 to 312 acres (depending upon the class of land), Assam 50 acres, Kerala 15 to 37.5 acres, Punjab 30 to 60 acres, West Bengal 25 acres, Maharashtra 18 to 126 acres and so on. Moreover, in most states, initially, the ceilings were imposed on individuals and not family holdings, enabling landowners to divide up their holdings 'notionally' in the names of relatives merely to avoid the ceiling. Further, in many states the ceiling could be raised, e.g., by 67 per cent in Kerala, 90 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 100 per cent in Bihar, Madras and Maharashtra, 140 per cent in Tripura and so on, if the size of the family of the landholder exceeded five. Andhra Pradesh had no limit, allowing 6 to 72 acres (depending on the nature of land) per 'extra' member of the family. Very few landed families would have holdings that exceeded these liberal limits. Only in some states, where very few holdings exceeded the ceiling limit such as Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, no allowance was made for the size of the family.

Second, a large number of exemptions to the ceiling limits were permitted by most states following the Second Plan recommendations that certain categories of land could be exempted from ceilings. These were tea, coffee and rubber plantations, orchards, specialized farms engaged in cattle breeding, dairying, wool raising, etc., sugarcane farms operated by sugar factories and efficiently managed farms on which heavy investments had been made. The intention was clearly to promote and certainly not hinder progressive or capitalist farming done on a large scale, while at the same time ending absentee landlordism indulged in by large landowners through tenants and sharecroppers.

However, the exemptions were often carried to absurd limits with Tamil Nadu reportedly permitting 26 kinds of exemptions. In any case, criteria such as 'efficiently managed farm' were sufficiently vague for large number of landholders to evade the ceilings by simply getting themselves declared 'efficient'. Similarly, exemption to land held by cooperatives, as proposed by the Madras government, was open to great misuse with landlords transferring their lands to bogus cooperatives. On the other hand, however, the ceiling laws led to at least some landowners shifting to direct 'efficient' farming in order to avoid alienation of their lands.

Finally, the long delay in bringing in ceiling legislation to a large extent defeated its purpose. The large landowners had enough time to either sell their excess lands, or make malafide transfers in the names of relatives and even make benami transfers. Further, the landowners also resorted to mass eviction of tenants, resuming their lands at least upto the ceiling limit, and claiming, often falsely, to have shifted to progressive farming under their direct supervision. Thus, by the time the ceiling legislations were in place, there were barely any holdings left above the ceiling and consequently little surplus land became available for redistribution. This was recognized by the Congress leadership and the Third Plan also admitted it. In fact, despite the ceiling legislations which were passed by most states by 1961, till the end of 1970 not a single acre was declared surplus in large states like Bihar, Mysore, Kerala, Orissa and Rajasthan. In Andhra Pradesh, a mere 1400 acres were declared surplus but no land was distributed. Only in Jammu and Kashmir were ceiling laws fully implemented and by the middle of 1955 about 230,000 acres of surplus land were handed over to tenants and landless labourers, that too without having to pay any compensation. However, taking India as whole, only 2.4 million acres were declared surplus by the end of 1970, and the area distributed constituted only about half the surplus land, constituting a mere 0.3 per cent of the total cultivated land of India.

The dismal record in using ceiling legislation for a more equitable distribution of land combined with a sharply increasing polarization in the countryside since the mid-sixties called for a new initiative in land reform. The Indian countryside saw the growing consolidation of the owner cultivator/rich peasant interests and their finding a distinct political voice in formations such as the BKD (formed by Charan Singh after he brought down the C.B. Gupta-led Congress government in U.P. in 1967). The BKD later merged with Swatantra and other parties to become BLD in 1974 and the BLD was the principal component of the Janata Party which came to power in 1977, after the Emergency, bringing the strong influence, of the owner cultivator/rich peasant interests, which was hitherto felt mainly at the state level, to the central or national level.

In the wake of the political and economic crisis of the mid-sixties, inflation, devaluation, the Indo-Pak war, and so on, there emerged a strong strand of agrarian radicalism in large parts of the country. The Naxalite Movement led by the CPI (ML) peaked in West Bengal and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar towards the end of the sixties. The year 1970, and in some cases like in West Bengal the preceding few years, saw a widespread 'land grab' movement by the landless in many parts of the country under the leadership of the Communist and Socialist parties. Disturbances were reported from Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, U.P., and West Bengal in 1969-70. The total amount of land seized was not very significant and most of it was government wasteland, land taken over by the government but not distributed, and to some extent homestead land. The movement was effectively suppressed. About 20,000 political activists were arrested. However, despite the very limited success in land seizure and the quick suppression of the movement, on the whole the movement had a significant symbolic effect. The nation's attention was drawn dramatically to the agrarian question.

This was the context in which the second spurt of land reform efforts was to occur in the sixties and early seventies. The Land Reform Implementation Committee of the National Development Council met in June 1964 and made sustained efforts to put pressure on the chief ministers to plug the loopholes in the land reform legislations and implement them effectively. With the political shift of Indira Gandhi to the left in the late sixties, particularly after 1969, these efforts received a further momentum. At a land reform conference of the chief ministers called by her in September 1970, she forcefully argued that social discontent and violence in the countryside had erupted because:

The land reform measures implemented have failed to match the legitimate expectations which were first fostered among millions of cultivators during the national movement ... In short, we have yet to create institutional conditions which would enable small farmers, tenants, and landless labourers to share in the agricultural New Deal.

Reduction of ceiling limits was one of the main issues discussed in the Conference with most of the chief ministers rejecting such a proposal outright. The matter was referred to the Central Land Reforms Committee, which was to look into this and other contentious issues that emerged in the Conference. In August 1971, the Committee made a series of recommendations including a substantial reduction in the ceiling limits, withdrawal of exemptions such as those in favour of 'efficient' or mechanized farms and making ceilings applicable to the family as a unit and not to individuals as was the case in most states.

The Congress, now further strengthened after the electoral victories of 1971 and 1972, was able to get the chief ministers' conference held in July 1972 to approve new national guidelines following months of bitter opposition. The new guidelines were based essentially on the August 1971 recommendations of the Central Land Reforms Committee. Some of the important features of the July 1972 guidelines, which marked a break in the history of ceiling legislation in India, were:

- The ceiling for double-cropped perennially irrigated land was to be within the range of ten to eighteen acres, it was twenty-seven acres for single cropped land and fifty-four acres for inferior dry lands.
- A ceiling was to be applicable to a family as a unit of five members, (husband, wife and three minor children). Additional land per additional member could be permitted for families which exceeded this number but up to a maximum limit of double the ceiling for the five member unit.
- In the distribution of surplus land, priority was to be given to landless agricultural workers, particularly those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Compensation payable for surplus land was to be fixed well below market price so as to be within the capacity of the new allottees.

Following the 1972 guidelines most states (barring some north-eastern states and Goa which had no ceiling laws) passed revised ceiling legislation, lowering the ceiling limits within the range prescribed in the guidelines. Resistance to the ceiling laws and efforts to evade the ceiling continued in a variety of ways. A common method was to seek judicial intervention on a number of grounds. Hundreds of thousands of ceiling cases were filed in the courts all over the country. One estimate mentions five hundred thousand pending cases in Andhra Pradesh alone!

In an attempt to stem this menace the government got the 34th Amendment to the Constitution passed in parliament in August 1974, getting most of the revised ceiling laws included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution so that they could not be challenged on constitutional grounds. While the renewed effort of the seventies did lead to some progress in surplus land being redistributed, the overall results were still far from satisfactory. As a result of the ceiling laws of the seventies, an additional area of about 2.27 million acres of land was distributed by the early eighties, but, quite symptomatic of the entire effort at ceiling reform, an estimated 32.25 million acres of land was willfully dispersed to avoid ceilings. Nevertheless, by March 1985, 7.2 million acres were declared surplus out of which 4.3 million acres were distributed to about 3.3 million beneficiaries. Moreover, more than half, 54.6 per cent of the beneficiaries were members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who received about 43.6 per cent of the area distributed. The objective set out in the 1947 economic programme of the Congress, of distributing surplus lands to village cooperatives or of even using such lands to start new cooperatives did not achieve any success.

Out of the land declared surplus but not distributed, nearly 1.6 million acres was under litigation. There was wide regional variation in the implementation of ceiling laws, with the states, where greater political mobilization of the targeted beneficiaries occurred, or where greater political will was shown by the government, achieving a much higher levels of success. For example, it is estimated that West Bengal, which

had only less than 3 per cent of the cultivated area in India, contributed about a quarter of the total land declared surplus under ceiling laws all over India.

By the middle of 1992, the area declared surplus was 7.3 million acres (it was 2.4 million acres in 1970) and the area distributed was about 5 million acres (it was 1.2 million acres in 1970) and the beneficiaries numbered about 4.7 million. The increase in the number of beneficiaries particularly between 1985 and 1992 was far greater than the rise in area distributed, 1.4 million beneficiaries and 0.1 million acres respectively. This suggests that the new beneficiaries would be receiving only tiny plots or homestead lands. Thus, while there was a distinct improvement after 1972, yet, the total area declared surplus that could be distributed among the landless constituted only about 2 per cent of the cultivated area. Again, while it is true that more than four and a half million people, mostly landless, did receive some land (however poor its quality and however small the size of the holding), the inequities in Indian agriculture, which the ceiling laws were intended to address, persisted to a very large extent. An important impact of the ceiling laws, and perhaps in the long run the most critical one, was that it killed the land market and prevented an increasing concentration in landholdings through de-peasantisation. As the eminent scholar of Indian agriculture and policy-maker, C.H. Hanumantha Rao, put it, 'The law discouraged concentration of landownership beyond the ceiling level and thus prevented the possible dispossession of numerous small and marginal holders which would probably have occurred through a competitive process in the land market in the absence of a ceiling on landholdings.'

Also, though the opportunity to acquire large areas of surplus lands for redistribution was missed because of defective and delayed ceiling laws, in the long run the high population growth and the rapid subdivision of large holdings over several generations (in the absence of the practice of primogeniture for inheritance in India) led automatically to little land remaining over the ceiling limits. In fact, the number of holdings and the area operated under the category of large holdings, 25 acres or above (even 15 acres and above) kept falling in the decades since independence right upto the nineties. Except in certain small pockets in the country, very large landholdings of the semi-feudal type are now things of the past. Inequality among landowners was no longer a key issue, as landholding was not very skewed any more. By one estimate, by 1976-77 nearly 97 per cent of the operated holdings were below 25 acres and 87 per cent of the holdings were below 10 acres. The problem of the landless or the near landless, who it is estimated constituted nearly half the agricultural population still required urgent attention.

However, any further attempt at land redistribution through lowering of ceilings does not appear to be politically feasible or even economically viable. Given the adverse land-man ratio in India and particularly given (unlike many other countries with similar ratios) the fact that a very high proportion of the population continues to be dependent on agriculture (nearly 67 per cent of the total workforce was engaged in agriculture in 1991) and that consequently the number of potential competitors for land is very large, any attempt to further reduce ceilings to provide land for the landless labourers would vastly increase the number of uneconomic and unviable holdings. Also, it would range the entire, now politically very important, landowning classes, powerfully mobilized under the 'new' farmers' movement, against any regime which tried to do so. As an eminent radical journalist said to us recently, 'Only a Pol Pot can try to do land redistribution on the basis of land to the tiller today.'

Perhaps the only viable programme left for the landless was the one which has been to some extent taken up in recent years, of distributing homestead lands or even just home sites, ensuring the payment of minimum wages, as well as providing security of tenure and fair rents to sharecroppers and tenants. Other answers are to be found in increasing off-farm employment in rural areas, in increasing animal husbandry and other activities associated with cultivation but not requiring land.

BHOODAN AND GRAMDAAN MOVEMENTS

The Bhoodan and Gramdan movements led by Vinoba Bhave attempted to bring about a "non-violent revolution" in India's land reforms programme. These integrated movements were an attempted to implement land reforms by urging the landed classes to voluntarily surrender a part of their land to the landless. The Bhoodan was started in 1951. The problems faced by the landless harijans were presented to Vinoba Bhave in Pochampalli, Telangana.

In response to appeal by Vinoba Bhave, some land owing class agreed to voluntary donation of their some part of land. This led to the birth of Bhoodan Movement. Central and State governments had provided the necessary assistance to Vinoba Bhave. Later, Bhoodan gave way to the Gramdan movement which began in 1952. The objective of the Gramdan movement was to persuade landowners and leaseholders in each village to renounce their land rights and all the lands would become the property of a village association for egalitarian redistribution and joint cultivation. A village is declared as Gramdan when at least 75 per cent of its residents with 51 per cent of the land signify their approval in writing for Gramdan. The first village to come under Gramdan, was Magroth, Haripur, Uttar Pradesh.

The movement received widespread political patronage. Several state government passed laws by aimed at Gramdan and Bhoodan. The movement reached their peak around 1969. After 1969 Gramdan and Bhoodan lost its importance due to the shift from being a purely voluntary movement to a government supported programme. In 1967, after the withdrawal of Vinoba Bhave from the movement, it lost its mass base. In the later period, landlords had mostly donated land under dispute or unfit for cultivation. The whole movement was treated as something different from the general scheme of development rather than combining with the existing institutional means. This separation from the mainstream scheme seriously affected its continuation as a policy.

INDIAN WOMEN SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Dramatic changes have taken place in the legal, political, educational and social status of women since independence. This was not unexpected since the question of the improvement of the position of women had been at the heart of the social reform movement from the first quarter of the nineteenth century when Ram Mohan Roy started his questioning of social orthodoxy. Besides, the freedom struggle since the twenties and especially since the thirties had partaken amply of the creative energies of Indian women. Gandhiji's statement in the mid-thirties to Mridula Sarabhai, a valiant fighter for his causes of women and freedom, 'I have brought the Indian women out of the kitchen, it is up to you (the women activists) to see that they don't go back,' was no empty boast and no thoughtless exhortation. The national movement by treating women as political beings capable of nationalist feelings and as, if not more, capable of struggle and sacrifice than men resolved many doctrinal debates about the desirability of women's role in the public sphere. If women could march in processions, defy the laws, go to jail —all unescorted by male family members— then they could also aspire to take up jobs, have the right to vote, and maybe even inherit parental property.

Political participation by women in the massive popular struggles from the twenties onwards opened up new vistas of possibilities that a century of social reform could not. The image of the woman changed from a recipient of justice in the nineteenth century, to an ardent supporter of nationalist men in the early twentieth, to a comrade by the thirties and forties. Women had participated in all streams of the national movement—from Gandhian to Socialist to Communist to revolutionary terrorist. They had been in peasant movements and in trade union struggles. They had founded separate women's organizations as well; the All India Women's Conference, founded in 1926, being the most important of these.

After independence, when the time came to consolidate the gains of the hard-fought struggle, the attention naturally turned to securing legal and constitutional rights. The Constitution promised complete equality to women. It fulfilled the promise made many years ago by the national movement: women got the vote, along with men, without any qualification of education or property or income. A right for which women suffragettes fought long and hard in many western countries was won at one stroke by Indian women! In the early fifties, Nehru initiated the process of the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, a measure demanded

by women since the thirties. A Committee under the Chairmanship of B.N. Rau, the constitutional expert who prepared the first draft of the Constitution of India, had already gone into the matter and submitted a draft code in 1944. Another committee, chaired by B.R. Ambedkar, the law minister after independence, submitted a bill which raised the age of consent and marriage, upheld monogamy, gave women the rights to divorce, maintenance and inheritance, and treated dowry as stridhan, or women's property. Strong opposition from conservative sections of society, and hesitation on the part of some senior Congress leaders, including President Rajendra Prasad, led to the bill being postponed, despite strong support from a majority of Congressmen and from women activists and social reformers. Ultimately, sections of the bill were passed as four separate acts:

The Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act. The extension of legal rights to Hindu women was not sufficient but it was a big step forward. This is seen from the stiff opposition encountered by the government in its attempts to extend legal rights in the case of other religious communities. The Shah Bano case is a good example. In 1985, about forty years after Hindu law was reformed, the Supreme Court granted a pittance as maintenance to Shah Bano, a divorced Muslim woman. There was a furore among the conservative Muslim sections and sufficient pressure was put on the Rajiv Gandhi government for it to wilt and introduce a bill to negate the Supreme Court judgement. It is no doubt easy and even necessary to castigate the government for its cowardice but it should be remembered that while the Opposition brought lakhs into the streets, the supporters of Shah Bano could muster only hundreds. While criticizing Nehru for not pushing through a more radical civil code for Hindus and for not passing a uniform civil code applicable to all citizens, it should be remembered that while Nehru did face opposition, he could also muster considerable support because among Hindus the process of social reform had gone much further than among Muslims, as evidenced by the Shah Bano case thirty years later.

While some legal rights have been exercised, others have remained on paper. The right to vote has been taken very seriously and women are keen voters, acutely conscious of the power of the vote. This is particularly true of rural women. But in other respects, especially with regard to right to inheritance of parental property, legal rights are by and large not claimed. It is still common in most parts of the country for women, both rural and urban, to forgo their rights in parental property. The custom of partilocal residence (residence in husband's home) is very largely responsible for this. This is also one reason women have refused to give up dowry because it is their only chance of getting a share of their parental property. The legal right to divorce has been increasingly used in urban areas, though the stigma attached to divorce is still prevalent, and the difficulties of setting-up as a single woman immense.

Women's Movements: Post-1947

A positive development is that women's issues have been taken up by women's organizations as well as by mainstream political parties and grassroots movements. As expected, attention has been focussed on the more visible forms of gender injustice such as dowry deaths, rape, and alchohol related domestic violence. From the seventies onwards, through the nineties, various movements have been launched, sometimes localized, sometimes with a bigger spatial reach, on these issues, and public awareness of these has therefore heightened.

After independence, with different political forces in the national movement going their own ways, the women's movement too diversified. Many women leaders became involved in government-initiated and other institutional activities for women's welfare, including rehabilitation and recovery of women lost or abandoned as a result of the mass migration and riots accompanying Partition, setting up working women's hostels in cities, and women's vocational centres. In 1954, Communist women left the All India Women's Conference to form the National Federation of Indian Women, which became, a party forum and not a broad united platform for women. Perhaps inevitably, there was not much evidence of women's 'struggles' in the fifties and sixties, which led to a view that there was no women's movement after independence till the new initiative in the seventies. But such a perception fails to comprehend the inevitable phases of consolidation and quiet constructive work that follow phases of intense struggles as being integral parts of the movement. The Indian women's movement went through precisely such a phase after independence.

Women have also played an important role in peasant, tribal, farmers', trade union and environment movements and this has also enabled them to raise women's issues within them. In the Tebhaga peasant movement in Bengal in 1946-47, women had organized themselves on a separate platform of the Nari Bahini and they ran shelters and maintained lines of communication. Communist women activists also mobilized rural women on specifically women's issues such as rights to finance and property, and village-level Mahila Atma Raksha Samitis (women's self-defence committees) were formed which also took up the issue of domestic violence or wife-beating. In another major Communist peasant struggle of that time in the Telangana area of Hyderabad State from 1946-1950, women's participation was also quite significant, and the leadership did pay attention to women's issues such as wife-beating. But there is no evidence of women's organizations emerging. It is also said that women were discouraged from joining the guerilla force and, when they did succeed in joining, felt they were not totally accepted. Communist women in other areas also complained later that they were strongly encouraged to marry men comrades and edged into working on the 'women's front', radier than integrated into the leadership as members in their own right.

In the late sixties and early seventies, there was a new political ferment in the country which gave rise to a host of new political trends and movements, such as the Naxalite movement, the JP movement, the Chipko movement, and the anti-price rise movement. In the anti-price rise movement of 1973-75, which was organized by Communist and Socialist women in the urban areas of Maharashtra, thousands of housewives joined in public rallies and those who could not leave their houses joined by beating *thalis* (metal plates) with *lathas* (rolling pins). The movement spread to Gujarat where it meshed into the Nav Nirman movement influenced by Jayaprakash Narayan's 'Total Revolution'. Though neither of these directly addressed what are called women's issues, the very fact of mass participation of women had a liberating effect and enabled women to gain the self-confidence needed for moving on to more complex issues of patriarchy and women's oppression. Meanwhile, in Gujarat, a very important new development was the founding of a women's wing of the Textile Labour Association (TLA), an old Gandhian organization, called SEWA or Self-Employed Women's Association, which eventually became independent of the TLA. It was unique in that it took up women in the unorganized sector who worked as vendors and hawkers and at home in the putting-out system and organized them into a union which along with collective bargaining provided training, credit and technical help. SEWA spread to Indore, Bhopal, Delhi and Lucknow and even today under the able leadership of Ela Bhatt is among the top success stories of Indian women.

A very different kind of movement emerged in the Shahada tribal area of Dhulia district in Maharashtra in 1972. Led initially by Gandhian Sarvodya workers and later also by Maoist activists, the movement for drought relief and land in which the Bhil tribal women were very prominent culminated in a militant anti-liquor campaign in which women, who saw liquor as the main cause of wife-beating, broke liquor pots in drinking dens and marched to punish in public, men who beat their wives. In Uttarakhand, in the hill areas of U.P. in the early sixties, a similar movement had taken place under the influence of Gandhians such as Vinoba Bhave, Gandhiji's followers Sarla Behn and Mira Ben, who had set up ashrams in Kumaon after independence, and the local Gandhian leader Sunderlal Bahuguna, who became famous in the Chipko agitation. Women had come out in large numbers to picket liquor vendors and demand prohibition of sale of liquor. Anti-liquor movements have continued to erupt from time to time in different parts, the most recent being in Andhra Pradesh in the mid-nineties, when a powerful wave of antiliquor protest by poor rural women led to a policy of prohibition and later restriction of liquor sales. Clearly, Gandhiji had understood a very important aspect of women's consciousness when he made liquor boycott an integral part of the nationalist programme and entrusted its implementation to women.

From 1974, women in Uttarakhand were again very active in the Chipko movement which got its name from the actions of women who hugged trees in order to prevent them from being cut down by timber contractors. It became famous as the first major movement for saving the environment and gave rise to the understanding that women had a special nurturing role towards nature, and that environment issues were very often women's issues because they suffered most from its deterioration, as when forests disappeared and they had to walk for miles to collect fuelwood, fodder and water. In Chattisgarh, women were very militant in the Chattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh which was set up in 1977 in the tribal belt to protest against the Bhilai steel plant's policy of mechanization, which was seen as being specially detrimental to women's

employment; the Mahila Mukti Morcha developed as a new platform. In 1979, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, an organization influenced by the ideas of Jayaprakash Narayan, which was leading a struggle of agricultural labourers against temple priests in Bodh Gaya in Bihar, and in which women activists and ordinary women were playing a major role, raised the demand that land should be registered in the names of women as well. This idea caught on in later years and in some states *pattas* or title deeds for land distributed by government and even tree *pattas* were given only in the name of women.

The Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan played the leading role in the effort to secure justice for the victims of the chemical gas leak in the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in 1984. In the mid-eighties, the Samagra Mahila Aghadi emerged as the women's wing of the Shetkari Sangathana, which was spearheading the farmer's movement in Maharashtra from 1980. Over one lakh women attended its session in November 1986 and took a stand against brutalization of politics which affects women more than other sections of society and also decided to put up all-women panels for the panchayat and zila Parishad elections.

Another stream of the women's movement took the form of what have been called 'autonomous' women's groups. These mushroomed in the urban centres from around the mid-seventies. Many of these consisted of women who had been active in or influenced by the Maoist or Naxalite movement, and its decline in the early seventies triggered off a process of debate and rethinking in which the issues of gender relations and the place of women in political organizations were prominent. Among the earliest of these was the Progressive Women's Organization in Osmania University in Hyderabad in 1974, and the Purogami Stree Sangathana in Pune and the Stree Mukti Sangathana in Bombay in 1975. The declaration by the UN of 1975 as the International Women's Year probably contributed to a flurry of activity in Maharashtra in 1975 with party-based and autonomous organizations celebrating March 8 as International Women's Day for the first time and a women's conference being attended in October in Pune by women from all over the state belonging to Maoist groups, the Socialist and Republican parties, CPM, and Lal Nishan Party.

After the Emergency in 1977, another spurt of activity began. A women's group in Delhi began what turned out to be one of the most enduring institutions of the women's movement. *Manushi,* a journal which has documented and analyzed the women's movement, told its history, presented literature by women, and much else, has continued till today under the able leadership of Madhu Kishwar, undoubtedly among the most original, self reflective and fearless voices in the women's movement. The women in the Janata Party, mostly Socialists, formed the Mahila Dakshata Samiti and played a major role in initiating the campaign against dowry in which the Delhi-based Stri Sangharsh was also very active. The issue of dowry harassment and dowry deaths was taken up from 1979 in a big way through street rallies and plays, demonstrations outside houses of dowry victims, and demands for legal reform. The Janwadi Mahila Samiti, a wing of the CPM women's wing, the All India Democratic Women's Association set up in 1981, conducted a door-to-door campaign on the issue. A bill to amend the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) was sent to a Joint Select Committee of the parliament and throughout 1981 and 1982, women's organizations and other activists presented evidence before the committee as it toured the country.

The amendments strengthening the law against perpetrators of dowry-related crimes were passed in 1984; a few minor ones followed later. The movement declined after this, leaving behind a feeling that the victories have not meant much, given the persistence of dowry and difficulty in securing convictions of offenders. The other major campaign issue that emerged was rape, especially police rape. A number of cases, the Rameeza Bee case in 1978 in Hyderabad, the Mathura case in Maharashtra and the Maya Tyagi case in western U.P. in 1980, brought the whole issue to public attention. Women's groups and organizations, along with mainstream political parties, took up the issue in a big way and a bill was introduced in 1980 itself to amend the existing law on rape. Passed in 1983, the main change that it brought about was that custodial rape was treated as a more heinous crime than other forms of rape and the burden of proof was shifted from the victim to the accused and this made a sea change in the possibility of bringing about convictions of offenders. The campaign had subsided in the meantime, having shown up in its course the sharp divisions in the women's movement, which were caused as much by struggles over turf as by differences of ideology and strategy. The prompt response of the government also left many activists feeling that their agenda had been hijacked or 'appropiated' by the government. The inherent weakness in a strategy that does not have room for absorbing reformist gains was revealed starkly.

The anti-dowry and anti-rape agitations seemed to have spent the energies of the movement for some time, and while there were protests around the Shah Bano case in 1985-86, there was not the same enthusiasm or unity. The issue was also less clear, being complicated by the overall communal atmosphere in which issues of Muslim identity got entangled with the simpler issue of women's rights, and the Hindu women enthusiasm for Muslim women's rights often left women's rights activists confused and helpless.

The agitation against what was called the sati but looked like the murder of Roop Kanwar, a young woman in Deorala in Rajasthan, was also on the same lines, with the issues being muddled by Hindu communal groups portraying it as an attack on Indian tradition and putting women on to the streets to defend their right to sati. Interestingly, some of the more effective opposition to sati came from Arya Samajists like Swami Agnivesh, who toured the rural areas of Rajasthan and Haryana mobilizing opinion against sati, and also challenged the head priests of the Puri and Benares temples to a debate on their claim for a scriptural sanction for sati. In Orissa, Gandhians organized a rally of 10,000 women to gherao the head priest of the Fluri temple, challenging him to prove his claim, which he could not. Opposition also came from the anti-caste movement in Maharashtra and rural women in Rajasthan. Among the 'autonomous' women's groups, by the eighties there was a clear shift away from mass campaigns to less dramatic work such as setting up of women's centres for legal aid, counselling, documentation, research, publication and the like, at least partly because it was felt that the mass campaigns with their focus on legal reform had not really succeeded in solving the problems they had set out to address. Many women's groups such as Saheli in Delhi felt it was important not only to focus on women's problems but also on their joys, and encouraged women to express themselves through music, dance and art. Others brought out magazines, acted as watchdogs on the media for scanning advertisements and films derogatory to women, raised issues related to women's health, or campaigned against foeticide, for the rights of the girl child, or for water and housing for women in the slums. Many groups who worked with communities and not exclusively with women also brought a greater focus on women's issues into their work.

In Hyderabad, Anveshi was set up as a platform for theoretical studies of women's issues and in Delhi the Centre for Women's Development Studies promoted research and documentation, including in later years the launching of a Journal for Gender Studies. Many more university-based centres also came up in the nineties, and enough research and writing was available for courses on Women's Studies to begin to appear in university curricula. Clearly, the movement had entered another phase of institutionalisation and consolidation as it had in the early fifties, and what appeared to some activists as a watering down of the movement was more likely diffusion of its ideas into the wider society which was bound to be accompanied by some dilution of its sharp ideological content. It is also true that the movement suffered from a lack of unity about goals, strategies, and methods, from sectarianism which was probably the contribution of the left, and a tendency for reacting to immediate crises rather than building a consensus on an agenda for action. It has also been alleged that some sections were swayed by the money received from foreign organizations into taking up issues that concerned the donors but had little relevance to the movement in India, and at least some of the more convoluted debates on theoretical issues that absorbed the energies of some feminists suggest that the charge is not without substance. The gap between urban educated women's groups and rural or poor urban women's concerns also remained, though it narrowed in some instances. The sense of achievement that was so palpable in the thirties and forties, when the leaps in empowerment and consciousness were huge, was missing as one looked at the women's movement since the seventies.

This is not to say that the efforts were in vain. Government policy was certainly affected, and it came up with a National Perspective Plan for Women in 1988, which detailed plans for women's health, education and political participation. In 1989, the Panchayati Raj bill was introduced (though it was passed only in 1993) which instituted one-third of the seats in the panchayats to be reserved for women. The Scheme for Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) was introduced which sponsored Mahila Mandals or Sanghams in rural areas and it enabled many poor women who had no other access to organize and express themselves, often helped by local level voluntary groups and political activists. Another innovative scheme called the Mahila Kosh was also started which extended credit to Mahila Mandals to enable their members to improve their skills and standards of living. The effectivity of these depended on the capacity of their utilization at the local level, and this varied with the level of politicization and awareness

of women's issues. But large numbers of groups were able to use the legitimacy or protective cover of a government scheme as a stepping stone to reach poor rural women whom otherwise they would find difficult to touch. Attempts to increase women's role in local and national politics are still being made. Since one-third of the seats in the panchayats are now reserved for women, women panchayat members and village pradhans are now being given special training to perform their new roles. A serious move to reserve one-third of the seats in parliament for women has been going on for some time and has received considerable support from women politicians and women's groups and some political parties, and generated a great deal of debate.

Health and Education: A Record

The flip side of the coin is that female literacy in Barmer, the worst district in the most backward state (Rajasthan), is 8 per cent, lower than Burkina Faso, the worst country in sub-Saharan Africa, where it is 10 per cent. The infant mortality rate in Ganjam, the worst district of India in this respect, is 164 per thousand live births, which is worse than Mali, the worst country in sub- Saharan Africa, where it is 161. The fertility rate in U.P. is 5.1, which is higher than the average for all low-income countries and much higher than even Burma and Bangladesh. The female/ male ratio, i.e. number of women per 1000 males in Haryana is 865, a level lower than that of any country in the world. Among elderly widows, the mortality figures are generally 86 per cent higher than for married woman of the same age.

The population of rural females aged 12-14 who have never been enrolled in any school is one-half in India as a whole, above two-thirds in U.P., MP and Bihar, and as high as 82 per cent in Rajasthan. Only 42 per cent of rural females in the 10-14 age group, and 40 per cent in the 5-9 age group are reported to be attending school. The dropout rate is also very high. Average number of years of schooling for persons aged 25 and above is 2.4 in India as a whole, while it is only 1.2 for females and 3.5 for males. In India, half of all females in the 15-19 group are illiterate, in China less than 10 per cent. The all-India averages and the focus on dark areas, however, hides the bright spots that hold out a candle of hope. The state of Kerala has a record that would be the envy of any developing country and in some respects even equal to that of the developed countries. The adult literacy rate for women in 1990-91 was 86 per cent (and 94 per cent for men). This was far higher than China's which was 68 per cent for women and 86 per cent for men. It was even higher than any individual Chinese province. By 1987-88, Kerala had a female rural literacy rate in the 10-14 age group of 98 per cent. By 1992-93, 60 per cent of females aged 6 and above had completed primary education, the all-India average being only 28.1. The total fertility rate in 1992 was 1.8, which is below the replacement level of 2.1, and which is the rate in the US and Sweden. The all-India average for fertility rate is 3.7. The infant mortality rate, which is closely tied, as is well known, to the position of women, was only 17 per 1000 live births in Kerala in 1992, compared with 31 in China and 79 in India as a whole. The female-male ratio improved from 1004 to 1036 between 1901-1991, whereas at the all-India level it has declined from 972 to 927 over the same period.

Fortunately, Kerala is not the only glowing example. It would appear that it is unique because of the historical advantage of having a very early start in the field of education, and because of the matrilineal customs of a significant part of its population. While both these advantages are a fact—the erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin which constitute the bulk of modem Kerala, did give a very strong emphasis to education from the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the matrilineal system, which includes matrilocal residence, inheritance through females, etc. is a strong positive factor—other factors such as an activist and participatory political culture, itself helped by high literacy levels, positive public policies in the areas of health, public distribution system, and primary education, have been extremely important. And these are replicable, as shown by other success stories, notably Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

As recently as 1961, the crude literacy rates in Himachal were 9 per cent for females (and 21 per cent for males), which were below the all-India averages. By 1987-88, literacy rates in the 10-14 age group were as high as 81 for females in rural areas and even higher at 97 per cent in the urban (the corresponding, figures for males being 95 and 96 per cent). Thus, in urban areas women had outstripped men. Himachal Pradesh in this respect was second only to Kerala. In terms of number of girls in urban areas attending school, Himachal even did better than Kerala: 95 per cent versus 94 per cent. In rural areas, Kerala had the lead with

91 per cent versus Himachal's 73 per cent, but Himachal's figures were still higher than those of any other state. Other indicators followed suit. The female/male ratio in Himachal increased from 884: 976 between 1901-1991, the biggest increase (+92) in the whole of India. Kerala had increased only from 1004 to 1036, though in absolute numbers it was way ahead. The ratio of female death rate to male death rate in 0-4 age group was only 88.2 per cent in 1991, even lower than Kerala's figure of 91.1 per cent and way below the all-India average of 107.4 per cent. However, the infant mortality rate was still quite high at 70 per 1000 live births in 1990-92, as was the fertility rate at 3.1 in 1991, though both were below the all-India average.

In Tamil Nadu as well, there have been dramatic improvements in various gender-related indicators. It stands second only to Kerala in its fertility rate, which was 2.2 in 1991. The infant mortality rate is 58 per 1000 live births in 1990-92, which is the third lowest in the country, only Kerala and Punjab having lower rates. The female literacy rate in the 10-14 age group in 1987-88 was 85.6 per cent in urban and 70.8 per cent in rural areas. The ratio of female death rate to male death rate in age group of 0-4 was 90.5 per cent in 1991, the all-India average being 107.4. About 97 per cent of children between the ages of 12-23 months had received some vaccination by 1992-93, the highest percentage in the country.

The extreme diversity that we have encountered enables us to analyse the factors that facilitate and inhibit positive trends in gender justice. While history and tradition are important and the south of the country, historically, has a better record than the north, a strong commitment in public policy can bring about rapid change, as shown by Himachal Pradesh. The diversity also shows that economic prosperity or growth does not automatically lead to greater gender justice; Punjab, and even more Haryana, two prosperous states, perform pretty poorly on the gender front. The factors which facilitate improvement in women's position also emerge quite clearly. Female literacy and education are unambiguous winners, with the links with improvement in all other indicators coming out very sharply. Conversely, low literacy and education levels lead to negative trends in other indicators.

Women, therefore, have been the main victims of India's failures on the elementary education and literacy fronts. When primary schools in villages do not function, boys are sent to neighbouring villages or towns or even to private schools, but girls are usually just kept at home. Social conservatism, combined with the notion that investing money in a girl's education is like watering a plant in another man's house, since the benefits will accrue to the girl's in-laws' family, lead to this decision. But if schools are available, and teachers are regular, and classes are held, a large proportion of girls do get sent to school in most parts of the country. The consciousness of the value of education has spread to this extent even among the poorest sections. In fact, the poor are more aware that education is their one route to upward social mobility. But in a situation when single-teacher schools accounted for one third of all schools (in 1986) and where, as recent surveys have shown, two thirds of teachers were found to be absent during inspections, where there are fifty-eight children for each teacher at the 6-10 age group level, where India ranks 82nd in terms of the proportion of public expenditure on education to GNP among 116 countries for which data is available, it is small wonder that the rate of female literacy is as low as 39 per cent (1990-91). Another factor that is very important in improving gender justice is the provision of free primary health facilities at the grassroots level. As in the case of education, if health facilities are not easily accessible or are expensive, the loss is unequally that of women and female children. In fact, unequal access to improved facilities as well as to improved living standards is the major cause of the sharp decline in the female-male ratio in India from 972 to 927 between 1901-1991. It is not that the survival chances of women have decreased in absolute terms—on the contrary. But relative to men, women have gained less from the improved access to health facilities and better living standards and therefore their proportion has declined. To correct this imbalance, health facilities have to be brought within the reach of women. Where this has been done, as in Kerala, where over 90 per cent of women deliver their babies in medical institutions, the results are dramatic. Thus, if the legal and political rights granted to women in the Constitution, which are theirs by virtue of their own efforts as well as by all norms of social justice, are to be realized and democratized, millions of women have to become capable of understanding and exercising them. Kerala, and Himachal, at two poles of the country, have shown the way: the heartland has to follow. The women's movement also needs to incorporate education and health as priorities into its strategy for women's empowerment.

UNIT-VII

NAXALISM AND ISI SPONSORED TERRORISM

THE NAXALBARI MOVEMENT

The term 'Naxal' derives its name from the village Naxalbari of district Darjeeling in West Bengal, where the movement originated in 1967 under the leadership of **Charu Majumdar** and **Kanu Sanyal**. It refers to the use of violence to destabilize the state through various communist guerrilla groups. It soon became out of fashion in its homeland West Bengal, but the underground operations of the outfit continued. Naxalites are far-left radical communists who derive their political ideology from the teaching of Mao Zedong, a Chinese revolutionary leader. They have been operating in various parts of the country since the early seventies. At various points of time, different areas of the country have been seriously affected due to overt violence resorted to by Naxalite groups active in those areas. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described naxalism as the most significant threat to internal security being faced by the country today. The threat has existed since long though there have been many ups and downs.

PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF NAXALISM/MAOISM/LWE

History has been witness to repeated occurrence of violence against the ruling elite mostly by the peasant class motivated by leftist ideologies. The ideological basis for these violent movements was provided by the writings of Marx and Engels. This ideology is commonly called Communism / Marxism. This was later supported by Lenin and Mao Zedong. Leftist ideologies believe that all existing social relations and state structures in an elitist/capitalist society are exploitative by nature and only a revolutionary change through violent means can end this exploitation. Marxism advocates removal of the capitalist bourgeois elements through a violent class struggle.

Maoism is a doctrine that teaches to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances. Mao called this process, the 'Protracted Peoples War'. The Maoist ideology glorifies violence and, therefore, the 'bearing of arms is non-negotiable' as per the Maoist insurgency doctrine. Maoism fundamentally considers the industrial-rural divide as a major division exploited by capitalism. Maoism can also refer to the egalitarianism that was seen during Mao's era as opposed to the free-market ideology.

Maoism's political orientation emphasizes the 'revolutionary struggle of the vast majority of people against the exploiting classes and their state structures". Its military strategies have involved guerilla war tactics focused on surrounding the cities from the countryside, with heavy emphasis on political transformation through mass involvement of the lower classes of society. 'Political power rows out of the barrel of a gun' is the key slogan of the Maoists. They mobilize large parts of the rural population to revolt against established institutions by engaging in guerilla warfare. Maoism is no longer an ideological movement. Maoists are now creating a fear psychosis and denying democracy and development to tribals. Unlike the political mass movements with violent underpinnings in the border areas, Naxalites do not seek to secede from the Indian Union to establish a sovereign independent state of their own but their aim is to capture political power through armed struggle to install the so called 'people's government.

EVOLUTION OF NAXALISM IN INDIA

The spread and growth of Naxalism in India can broadly be divided into three phases or stages. The three stages have been

described below.

FIRST STAGE

The Naxalite movement began in May 1967 in the three police station areas, Naxalbari, Khoribari and Phansidewa, of Darjeeling district in West Bengal. The CPI Marxist – Leninist (ML) party that was based on Maoist ideology was founded in 1969. Soon, the Naxalite movement spread to many parts of the country, especially West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Their main followers were peasants and adivasis, or tribals, who often experienced discrimination and exploitation from state authorities. Also, several young unemployed people and students got attracted to the Naxal ideology. The period of 1970 to mid-1971 was the peak period of violent activities by Naxalites. A joint operation of police and army in 1971 in the worst affected areas in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha led to the arrest and death of almost all top leaders of the movement. Charu Majumdar was caught and died in 1972 in police custody. The movement faced a severe blow during emergency when around 40,000 cadres were imprisoned in 1975.

SECOND STAGE

The movement arose again in a more violent form after the Emergency. It continued to widen its base as per the strategy of 'protracted war'. Their base grew from West Bengal to Bihar to Odisha and also to Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. CPI (ML) was converted into People's War Group (PWG) in 1980 which had its base in Andhra Pradesh and struck heavy causalities among police personnel. PWG was banned by Andhra Government in 1992 but it continued its activities. Simultaneously, Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) grew in strength in Bihar and carried out large scale attacks on landlords and other upper caste outfits. Naxal movement continued to grow at a steady pace across many parts of the country.

THIRD STAGE

The problem became more serious after the merger of the Peoples War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in September, 2004 which led to the formation of the CPI (Maoist). Today, the left extremist movement is a complex web that covers many States. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, at present, 88 districts in the 10 States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Telengana and West Bengal are afflicted with ultra-left extremism forming an almost continuous Naxal corridor. The CPI (Maoist) is the major left wing extremist outfit responsible for most incidents of viole0nce and killing of civilians and security forces, and has been included in the Schedule of Terrorist organizations along with all its formations and front organizations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. After the formation of CPI (Maoist), Naxal violence has been on the rise since 2005, to the extent that in 2006, the Prime Minister had to declare Naxalism the single biggest internal security challenge being faced by India. Estimated to be 10,000 strong, the Naxalites have been a strain on the country's security forces and a barrier to development in the vast mineral rich region in eastern India known as the 'Red Corridor'. It is a narrow but contiguous strip passing through Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. In fact, at the peak of Maoist movement in Nepal, Naxal influence was seen to be spreading from 'Tirupati to Pashupati'.

In the last decade, extremist violence is increasing and expanding, taking a heavy toll of lives in the affected states. Most of the affected areas are forest areas predominately inhabited by tribal populations. Most of these areas fall in the Dandakaranya Region which includes areas of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. CPI (Maoist) has stationed some battalions in the Dandakaranya region. Local Panchayat leaders are often forced to resign and the Maoists hold regular Jan Adalat. They have been running a parallel government and parallel judiciary in these areas. But violence alone cannot be the only yardstick to measure Maoist expansion. Maoists are also expanding in terms of indoctrination and consolidation. They are also trying to spread their ideology in the Bheel and Gond tribes dominated area, the 'Golden Corridor' stretching from Pune to Ahmedabad. They are trying to exploit new areas, various social groups and marginalized sections like Dalits and minorities through active association with their grievances against the state. Maoists have also made their presence felt in western Odisha, Upper Assam and Arunanchal Pradesh.

The movement's capacity to challenge the state has also increased enormously considering the incidents of violence and casualties resulting from them. The biggest incident was when they ambushed a whole CRPF Company in April 2010 in Dantewada of Chhattisgarh and killed 76 CRPF armed personnel, showing the extent of their strategic planning, skills and armament. In 2013, the left wing extremist movement made international headlines when they killed 27 people, including some high-level politicians, in Sukma District of Chhattisgarh.

Barring a phase in the late 1960s and early 1970s the left extremist movement has been largely agrarian in the sense that it seeks to mobilise discontent and mis-governance in the rural areas to achieve its objectives. Some of the major features of the left extremist movement include the following;

- It has emerged as the greatest challenge to internal security.
- It has gained people's confidence, grown in strength particularly in forest and tribal areas, by mobilising dispossessed and marginalised sections.
- It creates conditions for non-functioning of the government and actively seeks disruption of development activities as a means to achieve its objective of 'wresting control'.
- It spreads fear among the law-abiding citizens.

While these features also form part of the activities of all terrorist organisations, due to its wider geographical coverage, left extremism has made a deep impact on the conflict scenario of the country.

The aim of the Naxalites is to destroy the legitimacy of the State and to create a mass base, with a certain degree of acceptability. The ultimate objective is to attain political power by violent means and establish what they envisage as 'The India People's Democratic Federal Republic'. The Naxalites predominantly attack the police and their establishments. They also attack certain types of infrastructure, like rail and road transport and power transmission, and also forcibly oppose execution of development works, like critical road construction. Naxalite activity is also manifesting itself through various civil society and front organizations on issues such as SEZ policy, land reforms, land acquisition, displacement, etc., with the objective of expanding their mass base and acquiring support of some intellectual elite. While impeding development works and challenging State authority, the Naxalites simultaneously try to derive benefit from the overall under development and sub-normal functioning of field institutions like police stations, tehsils, development blocks, schools, primary health centers and Anganwadi centers, which administer and provide services at the ground level and also reflect the State presence.

Naxalites have very powerful propaganda machinery which is active in all major towns as well as in the national capital. They even have their supporters in the media. These NGOs and activists wage a non-stop propaganda war against any government step that aims to check the Naxalite movement. As a matter of strategy, Naxalites try to be on the right side of the media all the time. They have their sympathizers everywhere who raise a hue and cry in the name of human rights against police action on the Maoists. These media groups are conveniently silent when Naxalites kill innocent people.

THE KARGIL WAR

India observes Kargil Vijay Diwas on 26th July every year to mark the anniversary of the day we achieved victory over Pakistani infiltrators in the 1999 Kargil War. This day is also a day of remembrance for the hundreds of Indian soldiers who were martyred in this war initiated by Pakistan.

Background to the war and course of conflict

The war took place between May and July of 1999 in Jammu and Kashmir's Kargil district which was the part of Baltistan district of Ladakh before the partition of India 1947 and was separated by the LOC after the first Kashmir War (1947-1948). The conflict began in the winter of early 1999, when Pakistan Army along with the Mujahideen reoccupied the forward positions and strategic peaks of Kargil, Drass and Batalik. "**Operation Al-Badar**" was the name given to Pakistan's infiltration. Based on information from local shepherds, the Indian Army was able to ascertain the points of incursion and deployed four divisions to take back the strategic peaks for securing its main supply line in Kashmir. India's operation to recapture their territory was named "**Operation Vijay**". The Pakistani soldiers had positioned themselves at higher altitudes which gave them an advantage in combat, as they could fire down at advancing Indian troops. Pakistan shot down two Indian fighter jets while another fighter jet crashed during the operation It was fought for around 40- 60 days under minus 10-degree temperature. Until July 4, 1999, the Indian Army had captured strategic peaks like Tiger Hill and Tololing. The war saw the use of Bofors FH- 77B artillery guns. Although it is said that the USA refused GPS help, Israel helped India with ordnance and armaments and provided UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or drones) The Indian Air Force also used MiG-27 and MiG-29 against Pakistani troops and the bomb was also dropped wherever Pakistani soldiers occupied the area. With the help of MiG-29, several targets of Pakistan were attacked with R-77 missiles. IAF's MiG-21s and Mirage 2000 were extensively used in the Operation Safed Sagar during this war. Captain Vikram Batra, was an officer of the Indian Army, posthumously awarded with the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest and most prestigious award for valour, for his actions during the 1999 Kargil War in Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

Brave Indian Army Jawans after the Kargil Victory

International pressure on Pakistan

Pakistan was criticised by the International community for allowing its paramilitary forces and insurgents to cross the Line of Control (LOC). Pakistan also attempted to internationalise the Kashmir issue, by linking the crisis in Kargil to the larger Kashmir conflict but, such a diplomatic stance found few backers on the world stage. The US and the West including the G8 nations identified Pakistan as the aggressor and condemned it The other G8 nations, too, supported India and condemned the Pakistani violation of the LoC. The European Union was also opposed to the violation of the LoC. China, a long-time ally of Pakistan, did not intervene in Pakistan's favour, insisting on a pullout of forces to the LoC and settling border issues peacefully. ASEAN Regional Forum too supported India's stand on the inviolability of the LOC Pakistan asked the US to intervene, but then-President Bill Clinton declined to do so until Pakistani troops were withdrawn from the Line of Control. Faced with growing international pressure, PM Nawaz Sharif managed to pull back the remaining soldiers from Indian territory. As Pakistani troops withdrew, the Indian armed forces attacked the rest of the outposts, managing to get back the last of them by July 26.

The Hero of Kargil (Param Vir Chakra- Captain Vikram Batra)

Reasons why Kargil war was a limited conflict

Post war, Clinton in his autobiography stated that "Sharif's moves were perplexing" since the Indian prime minister had travelled to Lahore to promote bilateral talks aimed at resolving the Kashmir problem and "by crossing the Line of Control, Pakistan had wrecked the bilateral talks." He applauded **Indian restraint for not crossing the LoC and escalating the conflict into an all-out war.** One of the main concerns in the international community during the Kargil crisis was that both neighbours had access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and if the war intensified, it could have led to nuclear war. Both countries had tested their nuclear capability in 1998. India conducted its first test in 1974 while 1998's test was Pakistan's first-ever nuclear test. Pakistani foreign secretary had made a statement warning that an escalation of the limited conflict could lead Pakistan to use "any weapon" in its arsenal. Many such ambiguous statements from officials of both countries were viewed as an impending nuclear crisis. The nature of the India-Pakistan conflict took a more sinister proportion when the U.S. received intelligence that Pakistani nuclear warheads were being moved towards the border. Bill Clinton tried to dissuade Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from nuclear brinkmanship, even threatening Pakistan of dire consequences. Sensing a deteriorating military scenario, diplomatic isolation, and the risks of a larger conventional and nuclear war, Sharif ordered the Pakistani army to vacate the Kargil heights Additionally, the threat of Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) included a suspected use of chemical and even biological weapons. Pakistan accused India of using chemical weapons and incendiary weapons such as napalm against the Kashmiri fighters. India, on the other hand, showcased a cache of gas masks, among other firearms, as proof that Pakistan may have been prepared to use non-conventional weapons. However no nuclear arsenal or WMDs were used, thus making the war a limited conflict

Indian diplomacy at Kargil war

India's success in the Kargil war was a result of its successful combination of diplomacy and the use of force. In the aftermath of the 1998 nuclear tests India was under sanctions—the UN Security Council resolution 1172 had condemned its actions, and multilateral and bilateral sanctions had India on the back foot when 1999 came around. It was in this context that India decided to not cross the Line of Control (LoC). It needed international opinion to be in its favour—much like the support of the domestic audience, the support of the international community was seen to be a potential "major force multiplier." Kargil was India's first television war. This rallied public opinion in favour of Indian action. Blood donations to the Indian Red Cross Society in New Delhi increased during the war. Additionally, donations to soldiers' welfare funds increased exponentially. Images of wounded soldiers, coffins, and bereaved families created awareness and solidarity. Furthermore, the use of the media was seen as a booster for the Indian armed forces. By the end of June, the U.S. government, the European Union and the G-8 all threatened sanctions on Pakistan if it did not withdraw to its side of the LoC. International pressure was building up. Even Pakistan's traditional allies in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) chose to water down its resolutions against India. The Kargil war marked the first instance in the history of South Asian conflicts that the United States strongly supported India. It laid the foundation of the current United States-India that eventually culminated in the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal almost a decade later. Furthermore, in subsequent conflicts too, India was able to bear international pressure down on Pakistan—particularly in the aftermath of the 2001 Parliament attacks and the 2008 Mumbai attacks

Kargil Review Committee report

To review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil District of Ladakh in Jammu & Kashmir and to recommend measures considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions, a committee under **K. Subrahmanyam** was set up.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that there must be a **full time National Security Adviser.** Members of the National Security Council, the senior bureaucracy need to be continually sensitised to assessed intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international issues.

- Kargil highlighted the gross inadequacies in the **nation's surveillance capability**, particularly through satellite imagery. It highlighted the fragmented nature of communication capabilities in India and its inadequacy in funding.
- The role and the **tasks of the para-military forces have to be restructured** particularly with reference to command, control and leadership functions. They need to be trained to much higher standards of performance and better equipped to deal with terrorist threats.
- It recommended a detailed study in order to evolve force structures and procedures that ensure **improved border management** and a reduction, if not the elimination, in the inflow of narcotics, illegal migrants, terrorists and arms.
- It suggested the need to **enhance India's Defence outlays** as budgetary constraints have affected the process of modernisation and created certain operational voids. Priority should be given for equipping infantrymen with superior light weight weapons, equipment and clothing suited to the threats they are required to face in alpine conditions.
- It recommended that the entire gamut of **national security management and apex decision-making and the structure** and interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters be comprehensively studied and reorganised.
- It recommended the publication of a **White Paper on the Indian nuclear weapons programme.**
- It recommended that the Government must **review its information policy** and develop structures and processes to keep the public informed on vital national issues by publishing authentic accounts of the 1965 and 1971 wars as well as Kargil war.
- **Facilitating defence exports, the better utilisation of highly sophisticated industrial capacity** and related manpower.
- The establishment of a **civil-military liaison mechanism at various levels,** from the ranking Command headquarters to the operational formations on the ground is most necessary to smoothen relationships during times of emergency and stress, like war and proxy war.

Given the low ebb in the relations between India and Pakistan at the moment—coupled with greater Indian willingness to use force—it is important for the Indian government to learn from Kargil, and lay out specific political goals and use diplomatic means to attain them. This needs to be in the form of an institutionalised agenda to put diplomacy first and the ad hoc show of strength second.

OPERATION SHAKTI

On May 13, 1998, at 15:45 hours, India secretly conducted a series of underground nuclear tests with five bombs in Pokhran, Rajasthan. Although this was not the first time the country was testing its nuclear weapons (the first successful test took place in 1974 under the codename "Smiling Buddha"), this one was certainly the most memorable if one takes into consideration the sheer effect it had on its states and neighbouring countries. Pokhran-II (AKA Operation Shakti-98) was the name assigned to the series of tests that comprised one fusion bomb and four fission bombs. On May 13, 1998, shortly after the detonation of all five warheads, then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared India a full-fledged nuclear state. This statement resulted in consequences. Numerous sanctions were placed on India by countries such as the United Sates and Japan.

Thousands of miles away, in an interview, US senator Richard Shelby articulated that the CIA's failure to identify that these tests were going to take place was "the biggest failure of our intelligence gathering agencies in the past ten years or more".

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, George Fernandes, APJ Abdul Kalam, R Chidambaram, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and Pramod Mahajan in Pokhran after the nuclear tests on May 11 and 13, 1998.

Although foreign countries viewed India's nuclear programme as a threat, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief APJ Abdul Kalam, in a press conference, clearly mentioned that the nuclear weapons were for "national security". In a sense, Kalam was right. As he stated, in the last 2,500 years, not once had India invaded outside territory, but numerous foreign invaders had laid siege to parts of the subcontinent. On national television, the then Prime Minister of India stated that India would never be the first one to initiate nuclear weapons and would also refrain from using warheads against countries that had not acquired any of their own.

Amid these events, a very important question that most people miss is, how did the United States fail to identify in advance that Pokhran-II was going to take place? It is a well-documented fact that satellites worth billions were used to spy on Pokhran at all times. In fact, hovering over Pokhran were four satellites that were so technologically advanced they could supposedly even be used to count the number of green patches the Indian Army soldiers had on their fatigues. They were called "Billion Dollar Spies". And all India had against them were the "Regiment 58 Engineers" from the Indian Army.

So how exactly did India successfully "fool" the CIA?

Chidambaram and Kalam in army fatigues in Pokhran, 1998.

A lesser-known fact is that these men had a year and a half to rehearse what they were supposed to do. Every move was planned and took time to formulate. The forces had thought through every aspect of the mission. India's access to state-of-the-art satellites gave it pivotal intel on what could and could not be seen from space. Scientists only worked on test sites during the night, when satellites would be unable to capture clear images due to the absence of light. As dawn approached, everything was placed just as it had been the previous day. When the analysts at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) downloaded images from the satellites the next day, it would seem as if not a single strand had been moved. Additionally, in locations where holes were dug, sand was aligned towards the direction of the wind. This prevented suspicion since unaligned sand could have signalled activity.

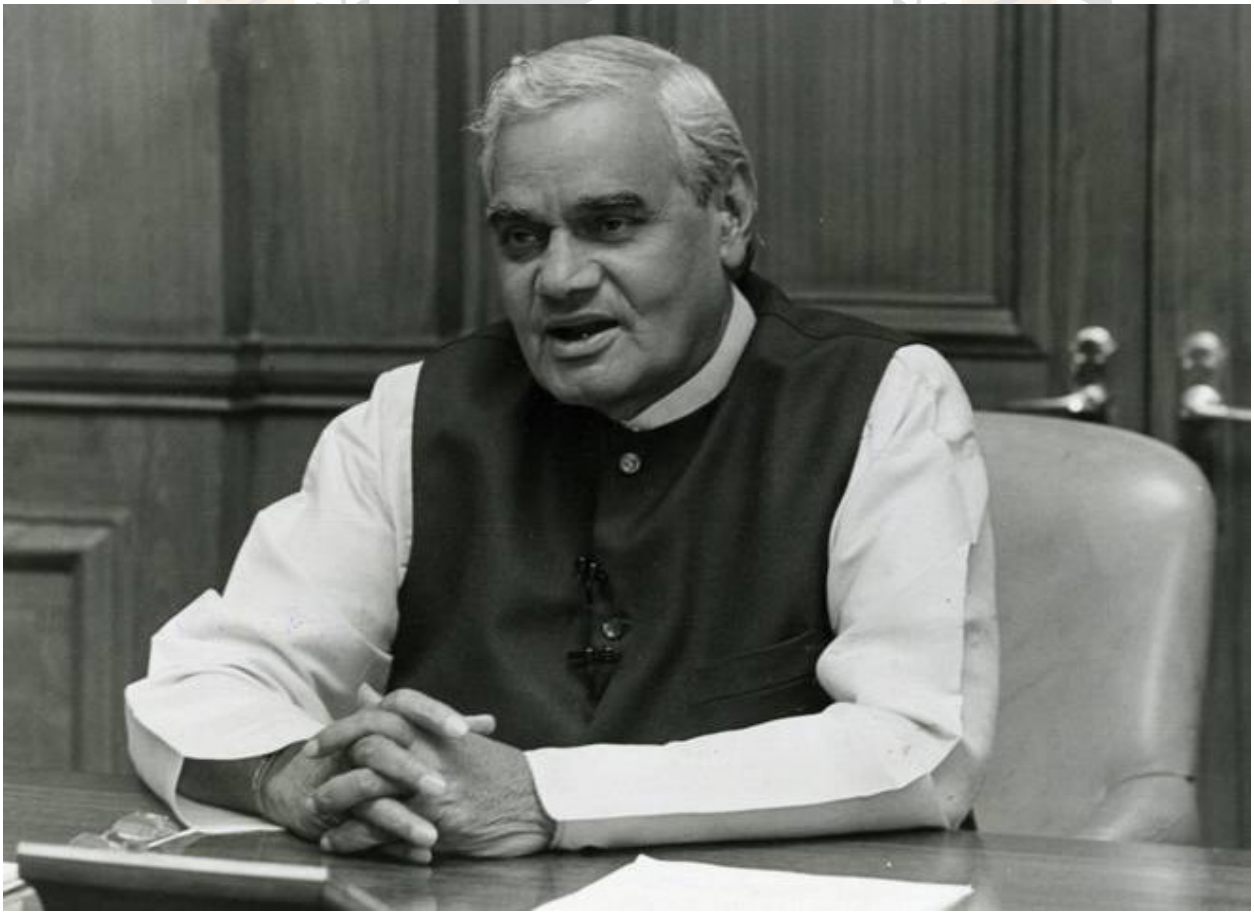
But satellites were not the only thing that could compromise the secrecy of the mission. The CIA spying on communication was no news. To counter this, code words were used for shafts. One shaft was named "White House" or even "whisky", while the other was called "Taj Mahal".

When scientists of the DRDO and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) would come to visit Pokhran, they went undercover and wore army fatigues. False names were provided to scientists. APJ Abdul Kalam's name was switched with Major General Prithvi Raj and Rajagopala Chidambaram's codename was "Natraj". The surplus use of code words was so efficient that it is said that one senior scientist was known to be complaining, expressing that he found the code words to be more complicated than physics calculations.

In the dark

At times, to protect the secrecy of the mission and avoid leakages, India had to keep its own officials in the dark, including George Fernandes, the then defence minister who was not told about a confidential meeting which took place between Vajpayee, Kalam and Rajagopala Chidambaram (then atomic energy chief) to discuss the nuclear weapon tests.

It is also important to keep in mind what India achieved in those three days.



Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

It is, however, believed by many that India, in return, created history. If secrecy was the cost, so be it. Before the detonation, only a few ministers knew about the tests. The list included Lal Krishna Advani, George Fernandes, Pramod Mahajan, Jaswant Singh, and Yashwant Sinha. As for the CIA, they were unaware that the tests had taken place until Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister, declared the feat India had accomplished on television. US officials blamed The New York Times, stating that the daily had released an article that declared the CIA was spying on India's nuclear test sites and leaked intel on the existence of US spy satellites above Pokhran. These leaks, apparently, gave India a heads-up. I believe that, in all of this, if there is one thing the US should learn about India, it should be that India is very good at keeping secrets. The nuclear tests might have been carried out a little more than 17 years ago, but it is imperative to consider that Pokhran-II would not be known as the success it is if not for the scientists and the government who performed in synergy. Above all Pokhran was one of the biggest achievements during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government apart from the Kargil victory

RISE OF TERRORISM AND SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN KASHMIR

Over the years terrorism has emerged as a systematic use or threatened use of violence to intimidate a population, community or government and thereby effect political, religious or ideological change just to achieve personal gains. Modern terrorism has resorted to other option of intimidation, i.e. influence the mass media, in an effort to amplify and broadcast feelings of intense fear and anger among the people. Needless to mention here that acts of terror are carried out by people who are indoctrinated to the extent of following a strategy of dying to kill. They are the ones who have become pawns in the hands of their masters who direct their paths, sitting in the comforts of far off places with all the facilities available to them. Masters have their vested political interests while as pawns seemingly have nothing to gain except suffer for a cause about which they themselves don't know or know very little.

Terrorism in Kashmir is almost three decades old now and has likeness to the second side of the picture. It has a history long enough to be traced from the date when partition was forced resulting in the emergence of two nations - India and Pakistan - after the sub-continent freed itself from the colonial rule of the British Empire. It may not be out of context here to probe into the consequences in detail that gave rise to terrorism in Kashmir. But again, before that, giving a brief introduction of this widely known beautiful valley would be too apt.

Kashmir – Paradise on Earth – (Switzerland of Asia) Nature's grand finale of beauty is a masterpiece of earth's creation of charm and loveliness. Famous for its beauty and natural scenery throughout the world and for its high snow-clad mountains, scenic spots, beautiful valleys, rivers with ice-cold water, attractive lakes and springs and ever-green fields, dense forests and beautiful health resorts, enhance its grandeur and are a source of great attraction for tourists. It is also widely known for its different kinds of agricultural products, fruit, vegetables, saffron, herbs, and minerals, precious stones handicrafts like woolen carpets, shawls and finest kind of embroidery on clothes. During summer, one can enjoy the beauty of nature, trout fishing, big and small game hunting etc.; during winter climbing mountain peaks and sports like skating and skiing on snow slopes are commonly enjoyed. In addition to the above, Pilgrimage to famous religious shrines of the Hindus and the Muslims make Kashmir a great tourist attraction. About Kashmir Sheikh Sadie a great Persian poet is believed to have said, "**If there is any heaven on earth, it is here in Kashmir, in Kashmir in Kashmir only**."

Apart from natural beauty, Jammu and Kashmir has a unique cultural blend which makes it different from the rest of the country (India). It is not only distinct in cultural forms and heritage, but in geographical, demographical, ethnical, social entities, forming a distinct spectrum of diversity. The people of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh, all follow diverse religion, language and culture, but continuously intermingling which symbolizes Indian Unity amidst diversity. Its different cultural forms like art and architecture, fair and festivals, rites and rituals, seers and sagas, languages and literatures, embedded in ageless period of history, speak of endless unity and diversity with unparalleled cultural cohesion and amicability. Kashmir has been a great centre of learning. A treasure of rich Sanskrit literature is to be found here. Early Indo-Aryanic

civilization has originated and flourished in this land. It has also been embracing point of advent of Islam bringing its traditions of Persian civilization, tolerance, brotherhood and sacrifice.

After the British withdrew from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and India and Pakistan emerged as two separate countries, princely states were given an option to choose the country they wanted to stay on. Obviously, the states falling geographically within had no other option but to merge with the country they were situated. Border states like Kashmir, Jodhpur etc. took time to come out with their firm decisions probably because they wanted to enjoy the status of an independent Statehood.

In the case of Kashmir, where Maharaja (King) Hari Singh was the ruler, situation worsened considerably. Territorial disputes over Kashmir had already started brewing – Pakistan claiming that Kashmir should go to his side since Muslims were in majority there. Apprehending that Maharaja might opt for an accession to India, Pakistan prepared for an aggression in a bid to capture the State forcibly hoping that masses, mainly Muslims, would support its mission but that didn't happen. Secular forces headed by the then popular mass leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah fondly known as Sher-i-Kashmir motivated the Kashmiri people (Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs) to rise to the occasion and stand united to counter and frustrate the evil designs of the enemy who was marching to the capital city Srinagar indulging in bloodshed and mayhem. A new slogan echoed the entire valley: "Hamlavar khabardaar, hum Kashmiri hai tayaar – Hindu Muslim Sikh Ithaad, Naya Kashmir Zindabaad"Beware you attackers! We Kashmiris are ready to counter you – Long live the Unity of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs!!

At Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar before a large crowd on October 1, 1947, Sher-i-Kashmir proclaimed:"Till the last drop of my blood, I will not believe in two-nation theory." It was a rebuff to Mr. Jinnah-father of the nation of Pakistan who was watching the developments so closely from his country side. Finding their designs on Kashmir not fructifying, Pakistan rulers launched an armed attack on Jammu and Kashmir to annex it. Tribes in thousands along with Pak regular troops entered the State on October 22, 1947 from several points and indulged in loot, arson, rape, bloodshed and mayhem. Bowing before the wishes of the people and seeing his own regular army being out-numbered and to push back the invaders, the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession in favor of India on October 26, 1947 on the prescribed terms and conditions. This was accepted by the Governor General of India, Lord Mountbatten the next day. The Instrument of Accession executed by Maharaja Hari Singh was the same which was signed by other rulers of the other princely States. Similarly, the acceptance of the Instrument of Accession by the Governor General was also identical in respect of all such instruments.

With J&K becoming legal and constitutional part of Union of India, Indian army rushed to the State to push back the invaders and vacate aggression from the territory of the State. The first batch of Indian Army troops arrived at Srinagar airport immediately after the Accession was signed. On October 30, 1947 an Emergency Government was formed in the State with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as its head. The Army fought sustained battle with the tribals/Kabayilies and after several sacrifices pushed them out of the Valley and other areas in the Jammu region. (Earlier Brigadier Rajendra Singh Chief of State Forces with a small number of soldiers at his disposal fought valiantly with the enemy and laid down his life in the process.)

Meanwhile, the people of Kashmir under the towering leadership of Sher-I-Kashmir were mobilized and they resisted the marching columns of the enemy. Till the arrival of India troops, it was mainly the Muslim volunteers under the command of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who braved death to push back invaders. While the army pushed back the invaders, there were several instances where people put up a gallant resistance and stopped the advancing invaders. The most glaring examples of people's resistance were the martyrdom of Mohammad Maqbool Sherwani and Master Abdul Aziz both staunch followers of Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah.

Sherwani did not oblige the invaders when they enquired from him the route to Srinagar. Instead, he put them on a wrong track gaining time for troops to reach Srinagar from New Delhi. Somehow the tribesmen came to know about his tactics and nailed him at a Baramulla crossing and asked him to raise pro-Pakistan

slogans. He did raise slogans but these were different. These were pro-Hindu-Muslim unity and in favor of Sher-i-Kashmir. Enraged by this, the ruthless tribesmen emptied their guns on him. The sacrifice of Master Abdul Aziz too was exemplary. The invaders who raped the nuns and wanted other non-Muslim women to be handed over to them, Master Abdul Aziz, a tailor by profession, held the holy Quran in his hand and said that they can touch the women only after they pass over his dead body and the holy Quran. The brutal killers did not spare him either.

On January 1, 1948 India took up the issue of Pak aggression in Jammu and Kashmir to UNO under Article 35 of its Charter. The Government of India in its letter to the Security Council said, "…Such a situation now exists between India and Pakistan owing to the aid which invaders, consisting of nationals of Pakistan and tribesmen… are drawing from Pakistan for operations against Jammu and Kashmir, a State which has acceded legally to the Dominion of India and is part of India. The Government of India requests the Security Council to call upon Pakistan to put an end immediately to the giving of such assistance which is an act of aggression against India. If Pakistan does not do so, the Government of India may be compelled, in self defense, to enter into Pakistan territory to take military action against the invaders."

After long debates, cease-fire came into operation on the midnight of January 1, 1949. Eventually, India filed a complaint with the UN Security Council, which established the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). Pakistan was accused of invading the region, and was asked to withdraw its forces from Jammu & Kashmir. The UNCIP also passed a resolution stating: "The question of accession of the state of Jammu & Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of free and impartial plebiscite". However, this could not take place because Pakistan did not comply with the UN resolution and refused to withdraw from the State. The international community failed to play a decisive role in the matter saying that Jammu & Kashmir is a "disputed territory".

In 1949, with the intervention of the United Nations, India and Pakistan defined a ceasefire line ("Line of Control") that divided the two countries. This has left Kashmir a divided and disturbed territory up till now. In September 1951, free and fair elections, as per the Constitutional modalities, were held in Jammu & Kashmir, and National Conference party under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah came into power. With the advent of the Constituent Assembly of the State of Jammu & Kashmir representing the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the State became an integral part of India constitutionally. After Sheikh Abdullah; Bakshi Gulam Mohammad, G.M.Sadiq, Mir Qasim, Gul Shah, Mufti Sayed and Dr.Farooq Abdullah ruled the State as Chief Ministers. Mr.Gulam Nabi Azad is the current Chief Minister of the J&K State.

Though the governments ran smoothly over the years, continued instigations and arousing religious frenzy by Pakistan did not stop. The year 1965 saw a war between India and Pakistan claiming many lives on either side. A cease-fire was established and the two countries signed an agreement at Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in 1966, pledging to end the dispute by peaceful means. Five years later, the two again went to war that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. Another accord was signed in 1972 between the two Prime Ministers — Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto — in Simla. After Bhutto was executed in 1979, the Kashmir issue once again flared up.

During the 1980s, massive infiltrations from Pakistan were detected in the region, and India has since then maintained a strong military presence in Jammu & Kashmir to check these movements along the cease-fire line. India says that Pakistan has been stirring up violence in its part of Kashmir by training and funding "Islamic guerrillas" that have waged a separatist war since 1989 killing tens of thousands of people. Pakistan has always denied the charge, calling it an indigenous "freedom struggle."

In 1999, intense fighting ensued between the infiltrators and the Indian army in the Kargil area of the western part of the state, which lasted for more than two months. The battle ended with India managing to reclaim most of the area on its side that had been seized by the infiltrators.

In 2001, Pakistan-backed terrorists waged violent attacks on the Kashmir Assembly and the Indian Parliament in New Delhi. This has resulted in a war-like situation between the two countries, with Pakistani

President General Pervez Musharraf asking his army to be "fully prepared and capable of defeating all challenges," and the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee saying, "We don't want war but war is being thrust upon us, and we will have to face it."

Plight of Pandits

The Pandits, who are the Hindu community of Kashmir and have an ancient and a proud culture, have been amongst the most afflicted victims of the Pakistani-supported campaign of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Their roots in the Kashmir Valley run very deep. They are the original inhabitants of this beautiful valley. Their number being small and peace-loving by nature, they have been the soft targets of terrorists. Virtually the entire population of 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits have been forced to leave their ancestral homes and property. Threatened with violence and intimidation by Muslim fundamentalists, they have been turned into refugees in their own country leaving behind their shops, farms, cattle and age-old memories.

As a matter of fact, Jammu and Kashmir has become a target of Pakistan, sponsored by religion-based terrorism. The persecution by Muslim extremists of the Hindu minority and the systematic religion-based extremism of terrorist elements has resulted in the exodus of these Hindu/Pandits and other minorities from the Kashmir Valley to other parts of India. Fundamentalists and terrorists have also targeted and assassinated Muslim intellectuals and liberal Muslim leaders too, who spoke of Hindu-Muslim unity and brotherhood. Terrorist acts by Kashmiri militant groups have also taken place outside Jammu and Kashmir.

India claims most of the separatist militant groups are based in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir (also known as Azad Kashmir). Some like the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), demand an independent Kashmir. Other groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed favor a Pakistani-Kashmir. Of the larger militant groups, the Hizbul Mujahideen, a militant organization is based in Pakistan administered Kashmir. Sources reveal that Al-Qaeda too has a base in Pakistani Kashmir and helping to ferment terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

India is unwilling to lose even one additional inch of his land. New Delhi is also concerned that Kashmiri autonomy would set a precedent for breakaway movements in other Indian states (e.g., Punjab or Assam). To Pakistan, Kashmir is symbolic of its national ethos and commitment to protect Muslim interests against Indian encroachment. It believes that the creation of a separate, strongly sectarian nation is incomplete without contiguous Kashmir. In brief, Kashmir is a target of externally sponsored religion-based terrorism. The aim is to divide people on the basis of sectarian affiliation and undermine/weaken the secular fabric and territorial integrity of India.

However, now with the passage of time, the passion of the Jehad/movement which once had the mass public support has started declining since it has turned out to be a movement run by those who are more interested in their own personal gains. Confusion within the separatist groups too has weakened the movement. The hard liners led by Jamat-e-Islami advocate total merger of Jammu and Kashmir, with Pakistan whereas the soft liners led by J.K.L.F (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) stands for total independence of J&K. This has given rise to a totally confusing and conflicting situation resulting in disillusionment, disarray and disinterest of the common man in Kashmir who has suffered a lot for the past 18 years and is not prepared to suffer any more.

UNIT-VIII

THE DAWN OF NEW MILLENNIUM

DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The great success story of independent India has been its secular, federal and multi-party political system. The nation has had to face tasks of immense magnitude and confront numerous problems, e.g., having to function in a backward economy with an impoverished citizenry, being torn by violent social conflicts, having to wage three major wars and face high costs of national defence since 1947, gradual weakening of many of its institutions and being constantly under international pressure. Despite all this, the political system has, however, shown remarkable resilience and flexibility and has stood the test of time and exhibited an ability to overcome several crises, for example those of 1967-69 and of 1974-77. Indira Gandhi was to put it pithily in August 1972 when asked to list India's achievements since 1947: 'I would say our greatest achievement is to have survived as a free and democratic nation.'

Political stability has been an important characteristic of independent India's political system. There have been since 1967, rapid changes of governments in the states and since 1989, at the Centre, but political stability has persisted. Different political forces and formations have, waged their political battles in the political arena prescribed by the Constitution. Changes in governments have taken place according to constitutional and democratic rules and have invariably been quietly and often gracefully accepted by those voted out of power by the parliament or the electorate. People have taken it for granted that elections, largely free and fair and held regularly, would decide who would rule the country, a state or a panchayat. Greater political participation by the people, including in its agitational forms, has not led to political instability.

The political system has also acquired more or less unquestioned legitimacy, the few who have questioned its basic tenets having fallen in line in the end. Thus, the Communists for several decades challenged, though only in theory, the basic constitutional structure as being geared to domination by the ruling, exploiting classes. But today they are among the more vocal defenders of the Constitution. The communalists have been trying from the outset to undermine the secular character of Indian society and polity but even they pay verbal obeisance to secularism though they try to distort its character through redefinition. Similarly, though Jayaprakash Narayan questioned the multi-party parliamentary system during the sixties and the early seventies, in the end he too accepted it after the lifting of the Emergency in 1977. It is also significant that new aspiring groups have been increasingly functioning within the broad parameters of the political system to advance their interests. In fact, the very longevity of the system, its continued functioning for over five decades has given it strength and enabled it to strike deep roots. What W.H. Morris-Jones wrote in 1966 is equally valid today: 'The combination of political stability with the establishment of a free, and freely moving, political system is what we are entitled to call India's political miracle.'

ENTRENCHMENT OF DEMOCRACY

Perhaps the most significant of India's achievements since 1947 is the firm entrenchment of political democracy and civil liberties which have become a basic feature of Indian life. Indians enjoy today a free Press, the freedom to speak, travel and form associations, the right to freely criticize the government; they have competitive elections, unrestricted working of political parties, an independent judiciary, the right to participate in political life and to change the government through the ballot-box, and freedom from fear of arbitrary arrest.

India alone among the post-colonial countries has sustained a democratic and civil libertarian polity since its inception. Commitment to democratic values has deepened over the years among most Indians. Paradoxically, even the experience of the Emergency underlined this attachment. The belief has also taken root that social transformation through a democratic political framework is possible. Nationalization of banks

and several industries, land reforms—even quite radical as in Kerala and West Bengal—and effective functioning of Panchayati Raj, with its provision for 30 per cent reservation of seats for women, and successful and unopposed working of the system of reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in several states, has shown that political democracy as such is not an obstacle to social transformation and socio-economic reforms in the direction of equity and equality.

A prominent and positive feature of Indian political development in the post-independence period has been the steadily growing political awareness among the people and their greater direct and indirect participation in the political process. The freedom struggle had already politicized large sections of the people. Popular agitational and electoral politics have pushed this process further. India has certainly become over time a politically more active society with an ever larger number of people and social groups being politically mobilized and 'incorporated into the body politic'. The disadvantaged—women, agricultural labourers, small peasants, the urban poor—have increasingly come to believe that their social condition is unjust and is capable of being changed and that the desired change can be brought about through politics and by the assertion of their political rights.

The people in general want a share in political power and a greater share of the wealth they produce. They are also no longer willing. to tolerate certain naked forms of oppression, discrimination, deprivation and neglect. For example, a government which would let a large number of people die in a famine, as happened during the droughts in the colonial period, would not last even a few weeks.

People have also become aware of the power and value of their right to vote at various levels from the panchayats to the parliament and of the benefits to be derived from its exercise. The politics of booth-capturing, sale and purchase of votes, vote-banks and patronage have been gradually receding and the voter's choice becoming more autonomous. One example is the increasing refusal of women to vote according to the wishes of the male members of the family. Moreover, the poor and the oppressed no longer accept dictates in regard to their choice of parties and candidates. Though they are still open to populist appeals or appeals on grounds of caste, region or religious community, they can no longer be easily bullied or bought. People now tend to vote according to issues, policies, ideologies or group interests so as to garner greater advantage from the government's development and welfare schemes. It is true that the role of caste in electoral politics has increased in recent years, but quite often caste as a political factor has come in primarily when other social, economic and political issues have been absent in the electoral arena or when such issues have got grouped around caste as in the case of jobs and educational opportunities. However, caste as a factor in politics has invariably receded when broader national issues have come to occupy centre stage as in the garibi hatao election of 1971, the JP Movement of 1974-75, the anti-Emergency election of 1977 and the 1984 election, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, when the country was seen to be in danger.

The voters have not only become more sensitive to the larger social, economic and political issues but are also more assertive and demanding—the people they vote for have to respond more actively to their needs and demands. A major reason for the volatility of the voters' behaviour in recent times, resulting in wide swings in electoral mandates is the heightened voter expectation from the electoral process and the pressing demand by the voters for performance and fulfilment of the promises made during elections. Interestingly, elections at all levels have repeatedly shown that people have little hesitation in voting against those in power because they are no longer in awe or fear of people in authority. Politicization and mobilization of the hitherto unpoliticized, which has been a continuous and ongoing process, has sometimes taken the form of popular agitations, which have involved many of the urban and some of the rural sections of society. They have, however, so far left the rural poor untouched in large parts of the country. The politics of protest has fed on demands for social justice, a share in the gains of development and participation in decision-making. It has grown as the more disadvantaged and oppressed classes and groups have come on the political stage. Power struggle and popular mobilization in rural areas has, however, often taken a casteist form in the absence of mobilization around class and of struggle against the caste system and caste oppression and discrimination. A major step towards further democratization of the political system and greater people's participation as also greater control over their own lives has been recently taken with the inauguration of the freshly designed Panchayati Raj.

POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESSES

Perhaps the most important political task today is to deepen democracy and make it more meaningful for the mass of the people by enabling their greater participation in the political process. Voting in periodic elections should not be regarded as the form of such participation. So far there has been a general failure to politically mobilize the poor and the disadvantaged and to shift the balance of social and political power in their favour. The capitalists, who are major beneficiaries of economic development, the landed peasants, who have gained most from land reforms and the Green Revolution, the intelligentsia, the professionals, and the middle classes, for whom immense opportunities have opened up after 1947, the government and public sector employees, the organized working class and the upper layers of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, all have been able to find various means of protecting and promoting their interests. They have thus been able to tilt democracy in their favour. But the poor have been unable to do so to any great extent. They have been left out of the larger decision making process and have had little voice in the day-to-day decisions affecting their lives. Their access to resources being generated in the economy and the social system has remained limited. They have been unable to turn the strength of numbers into effective power because the level of their mobilization has been low. Their political self-activity has lain dormant. Even the radical parties, groups and organizations have tended to neglect their organization and mobilization. The poor do, of course, at times rise up in protest and sometimes even revolt, and at elections exercise, often enthusiastically, their voting right in the hope that the persons elected would help improve their social and economic condition. But much more accountability to the agenda of the poor is needed.

The widest mobilization of the bottom millions is also necessary because neither development nor social change and not even national unity can be fully promoted without their active involvement. That this should have been forgotten by the heirs to the freedom struggle is ironical, for was not a hallmark of that struggle the active role of the masses in it? And did not Gandhi's greatness lie precisely in promoting the non-violent mobilization of the common people, thus making India's freedom struggle perhaps the greatest mass movement in world history. Jawaharlal Nehru's design for development and social transformation too depended on active pressure from below; that he failed to implement his own design is another matter.

FORMS OF POLITICAL PROTEST

Political protest, along with the right to vote, is one of the basic ingredients and a normal part of democratic politics. For the oppressed sections of society, it is a critical part of their effective participation in politics and is essential for the expression of their demands and grievances. India is, therefore, going to have more, not less, protest as different sections of society awaken to political life and work for faster changes in their social condition. Protest movements are also very important means for the people to force those in authority, particularly those wielding political power, to respond to their demands. For the poor, perhaps this is the only means of doing so. All this should be taken for granted. The important question, therefore, is what are to be the forms of protest in a civil libertarian representative democracy?

As of now, Indians have, however, failed to evolve appropriate forms of protest or a consensus on what they can or cannot do. Popular protest movements by political parties, students, workers, farmers, government employees and common citizens have most often taken the form of demonstrations, hunger strikes, hartals, strikes in the work place or educational institutions, dharnas, bandhs, gheraos, blockages of roads (rasta roko), satyagraha, civil disobedience or disobedience of laws, leading to mass arrests, and rioting. While some of these forms of protest are inherently coercive, others more often than not culminate in violence and breakdown of law and order and wanton violation of laws duly enacted by elected legislatures or rules laid down by those authorized to do so. In many cases the protesters coerce into joining their actions the very people they are supposed to represent. The protest, especially in the form of demonstrations, quite often ends up in attacks on cars, buses, trains, government and private property, college buildings and so on. The situation is quite often worsened by an overreaction and an equally and often greater violent response by the authorities and the police, leading often to a vicious circle.

The purpose of such protest movements is, however, not to convince the concerned authority of the justness of their demands, or to win it over by 'changing his heart', to use a Gandhian phrase, but to erode its authority and to coerce it to accept their demands. The blame is, of course, not to be put only on one side, viz., the protesters. One reason why many take to violent protest is because those in power turn a deaf ear to peaceful protest and respond only to violent agitations. In this respect, what Myron Weiner wrote in 1962 continues to have relevance:

Only when public order is endangered by a mass movement is the government willing to make a concession, not because they consider the demand legitimate, but because they then recognize the strength of the group making the demand and its capacity for destructiveness. Thus, the government often alternates between unresponsiveness to the demands of large but peaceful groups and total concession to groups that press their demands violently. In other words not only the organizers of popular agitations must not coerce the authorities but try to change their hearts, the latter too must be willing to undergo a change of heart whenever the protestors' demands are justified. We believe that just as the effort to prevent or suppress peaceful protest is undemocratic, violent protest too poses a threat to the functioning of democracy.

We may raise another question in this context. Is even Satyagraha or nonviolent disobeying of laws legitimate in a democratic system, and, if so, under what conditions or circumstances? For some insights on this, we may turn for guidance to Gandhiji, the originator of Satyagraha and in whose name protest movements have often been launched after independence. On the eve of independence Gandhiji warned the people that satyagraha and civil disobedience would no longer be the appropriate technique in free India against a government elected by the people themselves. Even against the British, he insisted on satyagraha and civil disobedience being completely non-violent in word and deed. In any case, they were to be 'the weapon of last resort' where gross injustice or immoral action by the government or other authorities was involved and all other methods of redressal had been tried and failed. The forms of protest tried out in independent India in imitation of Gandhiji's methods are, in fact, more akin to what he described as duragraha. We may give a long quotation from the Conquest of Violence by the Gandhian scholar, Joan V. Bondurant, to make the clear difference between Satyagraha and duragraha as Gandhiji perceived it:

In the refinement of language for describing techniques of social action, duragraha serves to distinguish those techniques in which the use of harassment obscures or precludes supportive acts aimed at winning over the opponent … In those instances where democratic procedures have been damaged through default or design, and where the legal machinery has been turned towards a travesty of justice, civil disobedience may be called into play … But if civil disobedience is carried out in the style of duragraha, and not within the framework of satyagraha, it may well lead to widespread indifference to legality and lend itself to those who would use illegal tactics to undermine faith in democratic processes. Gandhiji would never have advised giving up of protest which was to him the breath of the life of a citizen. But he would also not have followed the route which some of the Gandhians and most of the non-Gandhians have followed since his death. Smaller men could only imitate him. He would, however, have, as he did promise, innovated and evolved new forms of protest as also political activism suited to a self-governing, democratic and civil libertarian polity. That is also the task which leaders and organizers of popular protest should undertake today. That this can be done is shown by the Civil Rights Movement in USA and the anti-nuclear peace movement in Britain.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Independent India's economy has been quite vibrant and its performance on the whole satisfactory, as chapters 25 to 31 bring out. It has made long strides in almost all its different aspects though the extent of achievement is not what was possible and what was needed. India has overcome economic stagnation and broken through the vicious circle of poverty-underdevelopment-poverty. It has also broken from the colonial economic structure and has been successful in laying the foundations of a self-reliant, independent economy. It has thus fulfilled the design of the founders of the Republic, to go from political independence to economic independence.

India has not been autarchic or self-sufficient or based on national seclusion, living within its own shell like a cocoon. That was in any case not possible. It could only develop as an integral part of the world economy. But independent India's integration with the world economy has been different from that of the colonial period; it is based on the needs of India's autonomous development and free of subordination to the economies of the advanced capitalist countries of western Europe and North America. Nor has foreign capital any longer a stranglehold on Indian economy. In fact, dependence of independent India on foreign capital and foreign aid has been quite low. Today, neither finance nor any major or economically strategic industry is under the control of foreign capital. Multinational corporations have also played a relatively minor role in the Indian economy. However, for advanced technology India still continues to be dependent on some industrialized countries.

Immediately after independence, India successfully developed an economic pattern of its own, namely, a mixed economy, which placed equal emphasis on the active economic role of the state and the market and developed a complementary relationship between the public and the private sectors. In the last decade of the millennium, India has also been able to carry through economic reforms; dismantling bureaucratic controls and the licence-quota raj and developing a closer integration with the world economy, through a gradual process, without hurting the economy or the people's living standards. India has also been able to transform its landlord-ridden, semi-feudal agrarian structure, though with many weaknesses and not to the benefit of the landless.

India has had consistent growth over the years in agriculture and industry and in national income. Indian economy has been remarkably stable and little susceptible to world cyclical swings. It was able to withstand without serious damage three major adversities in the world economy: the oil-shock of the seventies, the collapse of the socialist countries of Europe with which India had close and significant economic ties, and the East and South-east Asian economic crisis of 1997. It was also able to recover from the 1991 fiscal and foreign exchange crisis without serious cost or dislocation.

Stagnation of the colonial period in agricultural production and productivity has come to an end with agriculture growing more than three and a half times since 1950. India has achieved self-sufficiency in food with foodgrains production having grown at 3 per cent per year. Famines have become a distant memory, despite periodic droughts. The effect of the monsoons on agricultural production lessens with the passage of time. Industry has grown more than seventeen times since 1950. It has, moreover, undergone structural transformation and considerable diversification. The weakness in the basic and capital goods sector has been overcome to a considerable, though not to the desirable extent. The share of this sector in total industrial production has gone up sharply, and India's dependence on the advanced countries for basic goods and capital equipment has been greatly reduced.

There has also been a massive expansion of power, transport and banking sectors. India has also become more or less self-sufficient in defence production with capacity to produce long-range missiles and atomic weapons, though it still has to purchase some items of highly sophisticated defence equipment from abroad. It has also acquired a large trained scientific and technical force. India's national income has grown more than seven-fold since 1950 and its per capita income by two and a half times despite a very high rate of population growth. Referring to the Indian economy, a sympathetic scholar, Francine R. Frankel, had written in 1978: 'During much of the later 1960s and into the 1970s, there were chronic food shortages, sharp inflationary price spirals, low availability of domestic raw materials, shortfalls in industrial output, underutilized capacity in consumer goods industries, stagnant or declining rates of public investment, and diversion of scarce foreign exchange for imports of foodgrains and raw materials.' Such a situation is not easy to conceive today. And her prediction that India was likely to 'return to a low level equilibrium in which growth rates did not significantly exceed the rate of population increase'9 was proved false in the eighties itself. India has during the last few years entered a period of high economic growth and is on the way to becoming an important global economic power. As such it is bound to play a major role in the world economy of the twenty first century.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND DANGERS

All the same the economic problems that India is yet to solve are enormous. It is likely to face major new challenges in the first few years of the new millennium. India is still a poor and backward country by world standards, and the economic gap vis-à-vis the advanced capitalist countries has widened instead of getting narrowed. This is especially true of the technological gap between the two. Despite the long strides Indian economy has taken, it still does not manage to fully satisfy the basic needs of all of its people, what to speak of their aspirations, in part because of the skewed income distribution. Nor is India's economic independence irreversible. We are living in a world capitalist system which is utterly unequal and still divided into core and peripheral countries. The world system even now consists of competing sovereign states and national economies; and the core, developed countries do everything to maintain their privileged position in the world economy while trying to weaken still further the relative position of the states and economies of the periphery. India's economic development, though independent so far, has not reached that stage where its economy because of being incorporated into and integrated with the world capitalist system, no longer faces the danger of re-peripheralization, that is, subordination and subservience to the core economies.

Under Nehru and Indira Gandhi it was attempted to bridge the gap between India and the advanced countries by concentration on heavy industry and electricity generation. This was a necessary task for India had to compress in a few decades what Europe had achieved in more than 150 years. But while we were running to catch up with the past, the present was moving into the future in the advanced parts of the world. While the vision and the objectives of the Nehru era—that of catching up with the western world while being self-reliant and retaining economic independence and on that basis building a more egalitarian and just society—have to continue to inspire the Indian people, the means and goals of technological transformation have to undergo a change. The world economy has entered a new, momentous phase. Application of science to industry, agriculture, trade and communication has taken another leap forward.

Today, economic development or the fourth industrial revolution is based on micro-chip, bio-technology, information technology, new sources of energy and advanced managerial techniques. All these rely overwhelmingly on the development of intellect or what may be described as 'brain-power' or the developed scientific, technical, managerial and other intellectual capacities of the citizens. There is every danger that there may be a new international division of labour where advanced technology, research and development and other 'brain' activities would get concentrated in currently advanced or core countries while India and other underdeveloped and developing countries would be confined to production of traditional consumer and producers' goods and to 'muscle and nerves' activities.

The danger of peripheralization also takes the form of domination through the investment of financial or industrial capital. But, obviously, not all foreign capital investment poses this danger. Indian economy, the Indian capitalist class and the Indian state have reached a stage where they can definitely take in a certain quantum of foreign capital, especially to serve the dual purposes of absorption of technology and organizational structures and skills and provide a degree of competition to indigenous entrepreneurs, private or state. What India has to avoid is the pattern of Latin American style dependent development where the multinational corporations control key economic sectors and positions and determine the predominant patterns of internal production and international exchange. There is the great danger that though foreign capital investment would result in industrial development it would simultaneously perpetuate technological backwardness relative to the advanced capitalist countries. While some industries of the earlier phases or even of the latest phase of industrial revolution would be transferred to India, the advanced 'brain' activities would largely continue to be kept out of it and would remain the monopoly of the core that is, advanced countries. While there is a need to moderate our former hostility to foreign capital, the policy of controlling its direction and role has to be continued.

Because the latest phase of the Industrial Revolution is based on brain activity, education, especially higher education, acquires great significance. However, its quality and not merely its spread is important. The fact that the education imparted to the overwhelming majority of students in rural as well as urban areas is of extremely low quality means that the country is deprived of the vast potential of its brain-power. In fact,

this weakness may be described as internal brain drain. The task of renovating the utterly insufficient and defective educational system, therefore, acquires added urgency. Any populist effort, in its many guises, to neglect the quality of education has to be opposed, for the cost of neglect in this sphere is as great as the neglect of machine-making and other capital goods industries in the earlier periods.

For various reasons, India has been subjected to large-scale brain drain to the United States and Europe. Ways and means have to be found to prevent and reverse this trend. More than NRI (Non-Resident Indian) capital we need the NRIs physically back in India; and we have to find ways to somehow check the continuing outflow.

Planning and an active role of the state in economic development, including the role of the public sector in production, still retain their great significance for without them India cannot hope to compete in the new technology sector. However, the public sector has to be not only maintained but also made more productive through the more efficient use of resources and competition with the private sector. It also needs to be freed from the stranglehold of political patronage and the ill-fitting and incompetent bureaucracy.

THE AREAS OF DARKNESSS

Wide prevalence of poverty, inequality and social injustice and the poor quality of life of the vast majority of the people are the major areas of darkness in India's social and economic development. The Indian people enter the twenty-first century with a low per capita income, an intolerable level of illiteracy and a lowly position on the world index of human resources development, despite commendable achievements in terms of economic growth and political democracy. A change in the social and economic condition of the people has occurred since independence but at too slow a rate. Putting forward the social objectives of planning before the parliament in 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru had said:

We are starting planning for the 360 million human beings in India ... What do the 360 million people want? ... it is obvious enough that they want food; it is obvious enough that they want clothing, that they want shelter, that they want health ... I suggest that the only policy that we should have in mind is that we have to work for the 360 million people; not for a few, not for a group but the whole lot, and to bring them up on an equal basis.

When placing the Second Five Year Plan before the parliament, Nehru defined socialist society as a 'society in which there is equality of opportunity and the possibility for everyone to live a good life.' These objectives have been only partially fulfilled. A humane, egalitarian and just social order has still to come into existence. For too many, 'a good life' is still a pie in the sky.

POVERTY

In over fifty years, independent India has failed to eradicate poverty despite consistent economic growth. This is a major blot on its record. Yet, it is also true that though poverty remains, it has been lessened. In the early sixties, the Planning Commission formulated the concept of the poverty line. Below this line were people whose consumption, especially of foodgrains, did not come up to a minimum level in terms of calories. While no figures were available for the colonial period or the early years after independence, it was calculated that in 1970-71 nearly 59 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line. Since then, this figure has been steadily going down. It had declined to 51.3 in 1977-78, 44.5 in 1983, and 36 in 1993-94. The obverse side of these figures is that over 300 million people, equal to the population of India at the moment of freedom, are still below the poverty line. Moreover, poverty varies across different states, being as high as 63 per cent in Bihar, and 20 per cent in Punjab and Haryana in 1993-94. The main brunt of poverty is borne by landless agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers and the urban poor.

The reduction in poverty levels was largely the result of various antipoverty, mostly employment generating, programmes initiated in the mid seventies by the Indira Gandhi government under the guidance of one of India's finest and socially committed economists, Sukhamoy Chakravarty. These programmes have been

pursued more vigorously, though still inadequately financed, since 1984-85. As the figures show, they have had a significant impact despite corruption and the failure to always reach the targeted groups. Particularly effective has been the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) in Maharashtra. In this context, it may be pertinent to point out that what made possible the taking-up and implementation of the anti-poverty programmes, was the radical restructuring of the Indian economy brought about by the Nehruvian planning strategy during the fifties and sixties. Even apart from the proof of the poverty line statistics, it is observed that Indians no longer live in abysmal poverty as they did under colonialism. The mass starvation of that period has been conquered. India has not had a major famine since the Bengal famine of 1943. In the worst drought of the century in 1987-88 very few died of hunger or disease. The same was the experience of the serious droughts of 1965-67 and 1972-73.

Similarly, in the colonial period and the immediate post-independence years a vast number of Indians went without two meals a day, several months in a year, and sometimes without even one meal. A recent study has shown that the number of people who could not obtain two square meals a day had dropped to 19 per cent of the households in 1983 and to less than 5 per cent in 1994.12

The reduction in the incidence of poverty is also indicated by the greater availability of foodgrains and other food items over the years. For example, while per capita foodgrains consumption fell by over 24 per cent between 1901 and 1941, it increased from 394.9 grams per day in 1951 to 468.8 grams per day in 1971 and 507.7 grams per day in 1995—an overall increase of 28 per cent. This growth in availability is also evident in the case of several other items of consumption. The annual availability of cloth per head was 9 metres in 1950, 15 metres in 1960 and 29.3 metres in 1995. The chart below presents the picture of annual per head availability of certain other important articles of consumption. Similarly, from 1950 to 1996, production of milk has increased four times, from 17 million tons to 68.3 million tons, of eggs more than fifteen times, from 1,832 million to 28,400 million, and fish more than seven times, from 752 thousand tons to 5388 thousand tons.

We have already pointed out earlier, that per capita income, a crucial aspect of standard of living, has increased by 250 per cent from 1950 to 1995. From 1975 to 1995, it has grown at the rate of 2.8 per cent per year, which compares favourably with the rates of increase in per capita income in advanced countries at a comparative stage of development: Britain (1.34 per cent from 1855 to 1967), France (1.7 per cent from 1861 to 1966), Germany (1.83 per cent from 1850 to 1967), and the USA (1.75 per cent from 1834 to 1967).

Still, the incidence of poverty and especially endemic undernourishment, particularly among children, is very much there, though not stark hunger or utter destitution, except among the very old and the handicapped. A dent in poverty has been made, though it is not deep enough. The problem of poverty has been further compounded by the existence of glaring inequality, social and economic. While the poor have not become poorer and have derived some benefit from economic growth, the gap between them and the rich has grown before our very eyes. The fruits of this growth and the resulting significant rise in national income have been disproportionately gathered by a few belonging to the upper and to a certain extent middle layers of society. Misdistribution of income, opportunities and power has been, moreover, built into the very social and class structure of the country. With the onset of liberalization of the economy and economic development on the basis of 'the animal spirits of the capitalists', inequality is likely to grow in the short run, but if the government can provide the necessary skills and infrastructure and back it with fair-predictable tax policies, inequality will come down in the long run.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Even apart from the problem of poverty, the quality of life of the masses in India is another major area of neglect as their physical and social needs have not been met even at a minimally desired level. Some progress has been made in this respect but it has been tardy and inadequate. India has been quite weak in the all-round transformation of human condition. Its record is quite dismal when compared even with that of the other developing countries. In the latest index of human development, another name for the measur-

able parts of the quality of life, compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1999, India occupies the 132nd position among the 174 nations covered.

Quality of life encompasses certain immeasurable components, such as love, human relationships, appreciation of arts, music, literature. But progress or lack of it in some of its other components can be measured. We will first take up three of these pertaining to health and education-life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate (MR) and literacy—which are most commonly used in discussions on the subject. A comparison of the post-independence record in these fields with that of the colonial period shows that India's performance has been quite creditable during the last three decades. This, despite the fact that health and education are two areas which have received low priority from successive central and state governments in India. However, a very brief comparison of the statistical progress made by some other countries such as China and Sri Lanka reveals how far we are lagging behind in regard to these important areas and what we still have to achieve.

An Indian's life expectancy at birth which was 32 years in 1950 rose to 45.6 years in 1970 and to 63 years in 1998—very creditable indeed. But it was already 69.8 and 73.1 years in 1997 in China and Sri Lanka respectively. The rise in life expectancy in India was basically the result of the steep fall in death rate per thousand from 27.4 in 1940 to 14.9 in 1970 and 8.9 in 1997. Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births which was 227 in 1941 had fallen to 130 in 1970 and to 71 in 1997. However, it was much lower for China (38) and Sri Lanka (17) in 1997. Another sad fact observed is that too many women still die in India during childbirth. The current maternity mortality rate per hundred thousand live births in India is as high as 507 compared to 95 in China and 140 in Sri Lanka. One reason for this is that 60 per cent of all child births in rural India are still attended to only by untrained persons. Perhaps India's biggest failure is the continuation of high illiteracy among its people. In 1950, nearly 82 per cent Indians were illiterate; this figure was still as high as 38 per cent in 1997. The comparative figures for China and Sri Lanka were as low as 17.1 and 9.3 per cent respectively. Moreover, the gender gap in case of literacy was astonishingly high in India, nearly twice as many women being illiterate as men.

As has been shown in earlier chapters, India's record in higher and technical education is far better. Also, there has been rapid expansion of school education in the last decade with increase in the percentage of school age children going to school and over 88 per cent villages being provided with primary schools. The flip side is the deterioration in the quality of education both in the case of schools and institutions of higher education in recent years. With rare exceptions the system of public education has become virtually dysfunctional with the 'cooperation' of all concerned—the government, political parties, educational administrators, teachers, parents and students. The standard of rural schools has fallen so low that quite often a child, who has spent five years in school, is not able to read or write at all and is, at the most, able to write only his name, if even that.

Health care, especially in rural areas, is another area of human development that has been grossly neglected in the last fifty years. For example, during the last decade, 19 per cent of Indians had no access to safe water, 25 per cent to health services, 71 per cent to sanitation. 53 per cent of Indian children under five are underweight, though this ratio has been declining in the last few years. The bright spot in this respect is the great success of the programmes for the immunization of children against polio, smallpox, tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. As in the case of education, in the field of public health too, the quality of services provided is quite poor in most states, especially of the Hindi belt. The housing situation shows improvement in rural areas of India where the number of pucca houses has increased dramatically, but it has been deteriorating in urban areas, with millions being homeless and living on pavements or in jhuggis (shanties), unprotected from sun, rain or cold and with hardly any provision for water, electricity or sanitation. Even otherwise, Indian cities have been declining in regard to many aspects of the quality of life—sanitation, housing, transport, electric supply, schooling. Also there is very low consumption, especially in rural areas, of goods which make life easier and more joyful: scooters and motorcycles, radios, electric fans, room-coolers, telephones, televisions, electric or gas or even coal chullahs, refrigerators, washing machines, though their use is way above that at the time of independence.

On the other hand, the number of towns and villages electrified has expanded rapidly since 1950. In the nineties, nearly 43 per cent of the rural and almost all the urban households, except the jhuggis, have acquired electric connections. Electricity generation has gone up from 5.1 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) in 1950 to 434 billion KWh in 1996. Indians, both rural and urban, have also acquired greater access to media and entertainment: newspapers, magazines, films, music and television.

The prevalence of large-scale under- and unemployment in India also has a highly adverse impact on the quality of life and not only at the level of physical existence. Economic development has failed to create enough jobs in industry and services to make a serious impact on the unemployment of the landless and the rural and urban educated, thus introducing serious psychological, social and economic disequilibrium in their lives. We may make a few other observations. Both in terms of development and poverty and the quality of life, there exists a great deal of disparity between different states and among their sub-regions which has to be rectified. An improvement in the quality of life or in the indices of human development would invariably require the state to play a more active role in the social sector than before.

Agricultural labourers and marginal and small peasants, with no or small patches of land and increasingly unable to get employment, are the most deprived section of Indian society in all aspects of the quality of life and standard of living. They suffer more than others from poverty and disease and lack of education, housing, health facilities, protected water supply, sanitation, electricity, and cultural and entertainment facilities. They are also likely to be the greatest victims of caste discrimination and caste oppression. They are also least organized, in class organizations and least involved in political processes.

THE PROMISES TO KEEP

No doubt we still have 'promises to keep and miles to go …' we still face the challenges of poverty, disease, illiteracy, inequality, social backwardness, and gender and caste discrimination and oppression. But there is no ground for pessimism or resignation, for frustration or lack of pride. Many of our current problems are the outcome of the tremendous changes we have undergone and not because of regression or stagnation. Despite many maladies and shortfalls, India has impressive achievements to its credit in the economic and, political arena. It has made significant progress towards social justice. As a result of economic development and transformation of the agricultural and industrial production base of society during the last half century, India has now the resources to further its social agenda. The earlier debate whether a poor society could pursue social justice is no longer relevant. There is no longer any need to counterpose increase in production and productivity to the removal of poverty and better distribution of wealth and opportunities. Nehru's dilemma as to how to combine development with equity has also disappeared, for we can now achieve this. It would, therefore, not be wrong to expect and to predict that in the next decade or so India is likely to make immense progress, to almost take a leap forward, in transforming the lives of the mass of the people and give them a decent standard of living.

The major reason for our optimism lies in our belief that a vibrant democracy can find a solution for these problems. Women, the rural poor and the oppressed castes have increasingly come to believe that a better, more humane life is possible. They have woken up to the political power that inheres in them. India's democratic political system, despite many weaknesses, provides them the framework in which to exercise that power. The power of the people in a democracy is the 'liberating deluge' that can, and we are sure will, sweep away the accumulated dirt of the ages. This is, of course, all the more reason for the preservation and deepening of democracy in India.

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