



# BULLETIN

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(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

## SUCCESS OR SURVIVAL?

Indian democracy has always been a puzzle. In a land of paradoxes the puzzle of democracy may baffle many outside India. But to the people of India who sustain it with their unflagging faith in the democratic process, it is normal, as normal as the traffic chaos on the roads in our cities. Despite noise, rage and recklessness the traffic slowly but certainly moves on. It is chaos in motion, like the 'functioning anarchy' as India was once described. For democratic India it is indeed a crawl, compared to authoritarian China's swift and successful march on the path of modernization.

As the Republic celebrated its 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the usual show of military strength the Speaker of Lok Sabha went about with quiet efficiency mobilizing the views and support of Speakers of state assemblies in tackling the sensitive issue of Parliament vs Supreme Court. The Speaker is the custodian of the rights and privileges of the members of Lok Sabha and has the right to expel or suspend members guilty of breach of conduct. The decisions of the Speaker cannot be subject to judicial review, according to the Speaker. The other argument is that the Constitution is supreme in India and the Supreme Court has the power to review the decisions of Parliament when an issue of Constitutional importance arises. The issue should not simmer into a confrontation between the legislature and the judiciary, elected representatives vs nominated judges.

Half a century after the Constitution came into force basic issues concerning domain and jurisdiction cause a stand off between the highest branches of government. Is it due to lack of clarity in the world's longest Constitution or inability of the people at the helm of affairs to arrive at an understanding on the respective areas of functioning? Modern world's oldest democracy America faced such situations, if not crises, in its early years. The famous Marbury vs Madison case of 1801 resulted in the Supreme Court asserting its power of review. Thomas Jefferson, "a politician among thinkers" and later Abraham Lincoln "a thinker among politicians" strengthened the democratic

system with their firm assertion that the power of the people should ultimately prevail. Jawaharlal Nehru, often likened to Jefferson, struck an identical note in the early years of our Independence, when he proclaimed that the judiciary should not come in the way of social progress.

In the sixties the nation witnessed an interesting debate over the same issue with noted Parliamentarian Nath Pai leading it. In the years that followed amendments to the Constitution and judgements of the Apex Court added to the sharpness of the debate. There is no last word in such matters. Speaker of Lok Sabha Mr Somnath Chatterjee, himself a noted lawyer, now feels compelled to put the jurisdictional record straight following the suspension case of eleven members of Lok Sabha. The matter assumes considerable significance necessitating a fresh look into the powers of jurisdiction of the three branches of government.

At a time when the economy is poised to get India a global status, it is vital for the political leadership to steer the nation away from even a semblance of instability. Granting that governance is not easy in coalition politics and that India is a 'rainbow country' with a variety of political formations, still it is possible for the leaders, especially those in charge of the major institutions of our democracy, to make the impossible possible.

For too long we have heard such terms as 'electoral democracy' and a country that always promises but never performs. We are tired of it all. There can be no further delay in converting the present opportunity into an advantage and asset so that the fruits of a long struggle and heavy sacrifice are made available for the people of the world's largest democracy. Survival is not stability. For that matter mere stability does not represent success. And our idea of a successful democracy is 'to wipe out every tear from every eye' and 'lead the people into that heaven of freedom' where people realize the goals of Justice, Liberty, and Equality enshrined in the Preamble to our Constitution.

- The Editor

"Democracy acknowledges the right to differ as well as the duty to settle differences peacefully".

—Aung San Suu Kyi

## **Career Awareness and Recruitment Drive-an, APSCHE – NASSCOM, Initiative**

- Prof. K.C. Reddy  
Chairman APSCHE

The importance of human capital in the transformation of societies is well documented. The new growth theory of the 1980's and the subsequent contributions by Amartya Sen and other development economists present an alternate equitable and sustainable perspective to both theory and applications in the development processes. Development is about people, about expanding their choices to lead lives they value. "Fundamental to enlarging human choices is building human capabilities: the range of things that people can do or be".

Simultaneously during the last two decades there had taken place across the world both in the advanced and developing countries a remarkable structural change in the composition of national output in favor of services. Service economy is now regarded in India a key sector from the stand point of both employment generations, and foreign exchange earning. Its contribution to national output is not only significant but increasing at an accelerated rate. The world is now acknowledging India as a stone house of talent, primarily because of her contribution in the areas of information technology and leadership talent, particularly over the last two decades. India's predominance in both IT and BPO in the world economy is evident as her share in the global IT is 65 percent and in the BPO it is 46 Percent. The issues of concern now are how to sustain this competitive advantage and more importantly how to ensure that the benefits of these technologies are shared among a larger proportion of population, particularly the vulnerable sections and those who live in rural India. NASSCOM. Report of 2005 analysing India's leadership in the global IT and BPO industries during the next 5-10 years predicted an addressable global market of 300 billion in this sector. The report however cautions that there will be a shortage of 0.5 million skilled manpower to meet the requirement of global off shoring. India, and Andhra Pradesh in particular to take advantage of these emerging opportunities need to address the issues of skills and competencies among the graduates rather urgently. The state and the country need to design and implement appropriate short-run, medium, and long term initiatives in curriculum, content development and training. Awareness need to be created among the stakeholders on the issues concerned.

Undoubtedly, the way forward is quality education that conforms to key global standards and creates professionals that are equipped with international-level certifications and accreditations. In this context there is every need to beef up the education system in Andhra Pradesh and improve the training needs to meet the requirements of the IT and ITES industry to attract more investments and further the cause of employment.

The Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education reflecting the views of the market and industries has taken up long term structured approach to the issue of skills/talent development, with a clear mandate and specific objective to improve employability through appropriate skill enrichment. Players in the employment scenario maintain that job seekers often fall short of global benchmarks. This is due to paucity in the current educational system that encourages a curriculum structured to impart intensive domain knowledge but that does not support a parallel development in the relevant dynamic skills (soft, professional and technical skills), so essential for employment and employability.

All educational institutions do recognize that they have an added responsibility to empower students with life and employment skills and enable their learners towards gainful employment. Towards this end, Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education in collaboration with NASSCOM, has initiated a drive to create awareness about the various jobs in IT and ITES among the students and help enable campus placements with a special focus on the rural areas of the state.

The CARD is an initiative to bring major ITES and IT companies to 2 tier cities as one of the projects of the Institute of Service Management (ISM). ISM, an institute under the aegis of Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education. In this programme Institute of Service Management, is in collaboration with NASSCOM. This CARD programme is the first of its kind in the state and country. It is for final year students, and graduates employed and unemployed from all universities in Andhra Pradesh. It is for creating awareness in IT and IT Enabled Services among the students, bringing home to them industry requirements and enabling recruitment for rural students in particular.

### **Objectives**

- The CARD will help students, faculty, managements of Colleges and Universities to help improve the employability of students through appropriate skill enrichment by bridging the educational rural-urban divide, thus making Andhra Pradesh the premier port of call for all industry HR requirements both national and international.

- The CARD will help educate students and their parents on the various career trends and the importance of communicative skills irrespective of domain competence.
- Students will get first hand experience of interviews.
- Is also aimed to empower the teaching community by creating awareness on the importance of communicative skills in today's employment scenario.
- This will give first hand information to both the teacher and the taught about expectations and the availability of jobs and of the required employment profiles for which students have to be prepared for, empowered by the teachers concerned.
- In this drive NASSCOM is to mobilise a large number of industry players eager to increase their talent pool and to offer the students of the state, first hand, an awareness of industry requirements.

### **Eligibility**

Any final year student, graduate / Postgraduate employed, unemployed, preferably from the University and its affiliated colleges where the CARD is being conducted.

### **Registration**

- Students walk in for interviews after paying Rs. 10 for the Registration form
- They need to fill in the form, detach the original and submit at the Registration / Help Desk. Maintain the duplicate for personal use to be presented during interviews at the CARD.
- Application forms are available at the University concerned. They will also be sent in advanced to various university affiliated colleges.
- Students are advised to bring 10 copies their photographs and 10 copies of their resume

### **Achievement**

The first CARD was held during the 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2006 at the Dr.B.R Ambedkar Assembly Hall, Andhra University Visakhapatnam.

- Over 9000 students registered and over 3000 had taken the advantage of interview.
- About 119 candidates were recruited in the Job fair by the companies.
- Listed here:
  1. ADP (recruited -06)
  2. GENPACT (recruited-20)

3. HSBC (recruited – 55)
  4. IVY Comptech Pvt. Ltd (recruited – 15)
  5. 24/7 Customer (recruited –20)
  6. KNOAH Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (recruited – 30)
- The companies that participated to create awareness and for future recruitment include:
    1. WORLDTECH,
    2. Young India
    3. NEXT
  - Integreo India Pvt. Ltd. supported this initiative financially.
  - Industry requirements: Proficiency in English language and having the right attitude towards work is a must to work in the ITES/ BPO verticals. The ability to work in a team is also a critical requirement
  - Students responded that the job fair was immensely helpful and requested for more such fairs at regular intervals. Students commented that it also helped them to learn/discover what it is that they were lacking.
  - The next job fair / CARD is scheduled at Acharaya Nagarjuna University in the later half of April 2006.

### **Participating the companies at CARD in Visakhapatnam felt that :**

“The students were very well behaved and surprisingly the number of girls who applied were equal to the boys for a place like Visakhapatnam. Most students had great grades, but due to heavy Mother Tongue Influence (MTI), poor language, and lack of communicative skills we could not recruit them. Their listening comprehension was also questionable. Students lacked confidence. Some of the students would not even open their mouths to speak and hence we could not identify their deficiencies. Colleges/ Universities must improve the English teaching and let students speak more and also teachers must emphasize and focus on communicative skills in the classroom”.

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## **Global Trends in the Funding of Higher Education**

*Dr. Jandhyala B.G. Tilak*

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Higher education has been in crisis. One of the most important aspects of this crisis refers to funding. The recent trends in funding higher education are associated with changing perceptions on the role of higher education. The several basic characteristic features of higher education,

such as higher education as a public good, merit good, social investment, and as a human right are getting completely ignored. The long-cherished and well-established role of the State in higher education is being increasingly questioned. In fact, higher education is no more recognised as important for development. It is increasingly being argued that it is primary education and literacy, and not higher education, which matter for development, for reduction in poverty, improvement in income distribution and for social and economic development in developing countries. The global campaign on Education for All also led to rather exclusive focus on basic education, and to the neglect of higher education, as it is argued that unless developing countries put a cap on the growth of higher education, goals relating to education for all cannot be accomplished. Most importantly, the launching of neo-liberal economic reforms in most developing and developed countries of the world has led to shrinking the public budgets for higher education. The reform policies clearly involve drastic cut in public expenditures across the board, including higher education, necessitating a search for alternative methods of funding higher education.

Against this background, one notices six major trends in funding higher education.

First, the decline in the public expenditure on higher education. Compelled by the economic reform policies some countries on the one hand, and convinced by the rationale of reduced role of the state in funding higher education and of the role of the markets in higher education by others on the other, most countries have deliberately inflicted serious cuts in public budgets for higher education. The resultant fall in public expenditures can be noticed in many countries.

The extent of decline in public expenditure on higher education per student as a percent proportion of gross domestic product per capita during the last decade in a select few countries shows very clearly that (a) the decline is not confined to the developing countries, though a larger number of developing countries experienced the decline than the number of developed countries, there has been a very significant fall even in advanced countries such as United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, though on the whole on average higher education in high income countries did not suffer much. and (b) the fall in the ratio is very steep in some of the countries. in Botswana it declined by 73 percent, by 62 in Jamaica and by above 40 percent in Hungary and New Zealand.

However, there is no decline in some countries, and in fact, some countries could increase the ratio, but it may be

noted that in general, the increases are modest. At the same time, in several countries private expenditure on higher education has increased fast, and given the negative, stagnant, or modest increases in public expenditures, the relative share of public expenditure in total (public plus private) expenditure on higher education declined from 65 percent to 51 percent in Australia, from 94 percent to 88 percent in Sweden and from 97 percent to 93 percent in Portugal between 1995 and 2000.

Along with reduction in grants, to reduce financial commitment, many governments changed their funding systems. The new modes of funding include a variety of mixes, such as 'lump sum' or 'block' grant plus grant based on student enrolments, or block grant plus performance related grant, or enrolment related grant plus research grants, or block grant plus incentive grant, or block grant plus matching grant, matching grant to match, e.g., amount of resources generated by the universities through non-conventional measures.

The second major trend in the recent years has been increased efforts on cost recovery through introduction of tuition fees in those societies where higher education used to be provided by charging no fees, and increase in fee rates in others where fees already existed. Though earlier a good number of countries used to provide higher education free, now except for a few countries (e.g., Brazil, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and some east and west European countries) a majority of countries charge fees in higher education, some very small nominal amounts, and some reasonable large. Tuition fees were introduced in higher education in China in 1997, which contributed to nearly 13 percent of the total revenues of higher education in 1999, in Britain in 1998, and in 2001 in Austria. Still in a very few countries such as Sweden and Finland, tuition fees are not allowed in higher education by national constitution. But such countries are very few. Some countries (e.g.) India) have also hiked tuition fees selectively to equal the costs, while providing free of subsidized higher education to some or many students. This dual track system of tuition fees is common now in many countries of the former Soviet Union. This dual track of fees system is able to generate as much as 50 percent of the total revenue of the universities in the most recent years in Russia. On the whole, steep increases in tuition fees in the recent past have been the common feature in most countries - developing and even in advanced countries such as US. For example, in China, tuition fees increased between 1996 and 1999 at a rate of 40 percent!

While tuition fees alone may not form a significant proportion of income of the universities, fees that include all kinds of charges collected from students, seem to be

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accounting for higher and higher proportions. For example, in some public universities in India, corresponding figures are found to be as high as 50 -60 percent. in South Korea and Chile all types of student fees in public universities accounted for nearly 40 percent of the costs.

Another important method of financing higher education that has become increasingly fashionable and adopted by many countries, is student loans. Student loan programs are particularly becoming popular in many countries, though loans as a mechanism of financing of education are also associated with certain inherent weaknesses, apart from poor rates of recovery. Loan as a method of financing of higher education was introduced in recent years in many countries such as China and Thailand where it did not exist earlier, and was revitalized in many other countries where it existed with a view to increase the rates of recovery of loan amounts. Several loan programmes were changed into income - contingent loans (e.g., in Australia and UK). Income contingent loans were also introduced in New Zealand and South Africa, and government operated loan schemes were replaced by commercial bank operated loan schemes in India. The fundamental assumption underlying loan programmes in that higher education is not a public good, nor a social merit good, but is a highly individualized private good, as the mechanism of loans shifts the responsibility of funding higher education from the society to the families, and more importantly within families from the parents to the individual students themselves.

Fourthly, governments began insisting on the public universities to generate resources from 'third parties' such as corporate sector. Accordingly, public universities in many countries have developed various kinds of mechanisms of generating funds from the corporate sector by selling their services, mainly consultancy and sale of physical products and patents. Generation of revenues from alumni also comes close to this category, as only those alumni who are well placed in corporate sector are able to contribute to their alma - mater. Corporate sector also finds it convenient to provide research funds to universities and research institutions, if such projects benefit their business. An increasing reliance on corporate funds by the universities may shift the balance of higher education in favour of those activities where the commercial possibilities are the greatest, finally changing even the very character of higher education institutions. Traditional academic disciplines of study and research give way to market - relevant, resource - generating studies. Reliance on corporate funds may also lead to distortions in research priorities and even the research outcomes.

Fifthly, privatisation has become the mantra of the day everywhere. Many modes of generation of funds for higher education some of which are described above, do mean privatisation of public higher education. More directly, governments in many countries seem to be increasingly wedded to the neoliberal philosophy that exemplifies the role of markets in every sphere, and they promote the growth of private higher education institutions, most of which can be described as 'for-profit' institutions. The wave of privatisation of higher education has become so strong that even those higher education systems that were predominantly public, began to emerge 'predominantly private' in a very short period. For example, in some major states in India, the private higher education institutions have increased in number at such a rate that in certain areas of study, the relative presence of the public higher education institution sector has turned out to be almost invisible.

Lastly, the cuts in public grants to higher education institutions in many countries also forced them to go across the borders in search of finances. Under the name of internationalisation, many universities have been following aggressive policies of attracting foreign students, and the foreign students are charged fees above the costs, so that they cross subsidize the higher education of the native students, if not help in making surpluses. It is unfortunate that even some of the best universities of the world, such as Oxford and Cambridge also seem to be adopting the same approaches, contrary to what they used to do earlier, viz., offering scholarships to foreign students to attract and promote the best talent. In the framework of the WTO, many countries find it convenient further to sell cheap higher education degrees to gullible students in developing countries by adopting different modes under the GATS. Universities are fast becoming entrepreneurial institutions both domestically and internationally.

To conclude, the UNESCO World Conference on higher Education in 1998, the Report of the International Task Force on Higher Education and Society sponsored by the World Bank and the UNESCO (2002) or the World Bank Policy Paper on Higher Education (2004) which underscored the importance of public higher education in national development have not made any significant impact on the policies of the governments or of the international development organisations relating to funding higher education, which tend to forget the golden rule in education, viz., the best method of financing education, including higher education, is financing by the State out of its tax and non-tax revenues.

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## "OPTIMISM ON INDIA'S ROLE IN GLOBAL ECONOMIC SCENARIO"

*Symposium paints a bright picture of country's role on the global scene*

Divergent views on India's role on a global scale were expressed by speakers at a symposium on the theme organised by the Centre for Policy Studies here on Monday.

While former Union Energy Secretary E.A.S. Sarma exuded optimism that India could take the role of a global player in spite of its many drawbacks, retired head of Andhra University Economics Department Jagadeeswara Rao wanted the country to put its act together and decide what role it should play.

Centre director and former AU Rector A. Prasanna Kumar, who presided, pointed out that Nehru's framework had stood the test of time and wanted India to go back to the Nehruvian model.

Dr. Sarma wanted the country to look inward and from his overview of history and noted that from the aggressive and productive period of the 6th century BC to 17th century AD, when the country produced great mathematicians, astronomers and others and had high quality universities and spread trade to other countries, India had been an influential player. However, it saw a decline in the 18th and 19th centuries, he added.

"The next phase starting from the mid-19th century to the present time could be termed as renaissance. The Indian Diaspora spread to different parts of the world during this period and people of Indian origin became leaders of the countries to which their forefathers had migrated. The emigrants produced Nobel Laureates and the present lot of talented youngsters were spread all over the world."

### Drawbacks

Dr. Sarma felt that rampant corruption, low placement in the world in the area of per capita income, deep divisions on the lines of caste and religion and a wide gap between the poor and rich and rural folk "do not make India's case strong to be a leader in promoting democracy or flexing its economic muscle."

He regretted that India could not also influence investment and free trade. Its acts of surrendering to the US on issues like voting in the IAEA would not get support if it wanted to play a major role in global politics, he said. "However I am an optimist and we can do it if we set our house in order," he said.

He said that according to a report, the global economy would have less of Western influence and the world would witness a shift in respect of the manufacturing sector from

the West to Asia, particularly China and India. "A once-meeek India would be the toast and attention of the world," he predicted. The demography of the country would be its asset in future as a large and young work force was ready to control world trade, he said.

*(Courtesy : The Hindu) 11th Jan, 2006*

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## INDIA-A GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWER- I

*-Prof. M. Jagadeeswara Rao*

Retd. Prof and Head of the Dept, of Economics (A.U.)

'The elephant Turns Tiger'!

'The Dawn of an Indian Century'

India now seems to be a horse on a fast track ready for the global race'.

These are some of the descriptions of India, in recent years, by the world. Perceptions of India by the rest of the world are more bullish than in India. World has begun to recognize India's future potential to become an Asian major, about to play a lead role in the world economy. This reflects a change in the perception on India by the world and its assessment about the potential of India as a major economic power in the making. It is therefore pertinent to examine what is happening around the globe and the reasons for this change in perception on India to become stronger in recent years.

### INDIA'S GROWTH EXPERIENCE :

The one important factor cited in this context is India's growth performance in recent years. As the latest IMF publication 'World Economic Outlook' pointed out, India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. Between 1980 — 2004 — during the last 25 years — India's average annual growth rate has been 5.6%. It has joined the fast movers' club with China leading the group. Growth trends in these two countries, have been twice that of the global economic growth rate for almost two decades. India accounts for 6% of global GDP — in PPP terms — it is the world's Fourth largest economy after U.S., China and Japan. 15 Years of Reform, have made India more competitive and much better off. The buoyancy in growth rate in recent years, coupled with IT boom has brought India to the fore in the world economy, forcing the present economic powers to recognize its emergence. Given the current average growth rate, India looks all set to be the century's biggest super-power.

### CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY:

India's emergence on the global scene, forcing others to recognise it, is to be viewed in the context of changes in the global economy. The global economy is undergoing a

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dramatic transformation. With Japan's Economy on the decline, Russia rising slowly, with their populations declining by 25% over the next 50 years, and the large economies of Europe undergoing varying population declines that will reduce their GDP relative to the USA, the global economic space is to be occupied by the emerging powers.

The global economy, by the beginning of the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, will have less of western phase, with China and India leading the charge. Together, they account for about 40% of the world's working population and nearly 18% of the global economy, based on PPP (Purchasing Power Parity). These two described as "arriviste" powers will be the key global economic players.

One striking feature of the global power shift is the shift of manufacturing from the West to Asia. The global epicenter of economic activity will shift from Europe and U.S.A. to Asia. World's manufacturing is already moving to China, being described as 'World's Factory'. India is talked of as 'World's Back Office' indicating its preeminent position in the software world, as a software superpower.

The impact of these changes on the global balance of power will be significant. This is shown by the "Index of Power Potential" based on economic projections. Currently, the USA is the strongest power in a world, described as 'Unipolar.' With the rise of India and China, this is going to change—the world will become bipolar by 2025 and tripolar by 2050.

All these indicate the change in the manner in which Asia is being perceived by the rest of the world, especially by the developed world and within Asia, India. A number of researchers, analysts, multilateral institutions, economists, mostly based in the developed world, have been busy assessing the emergence of Asia — the progress of the Elephant, the Dragon and the Tigers. It is in this context of these changing perceptions of Asia, perceptions of India in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have also changed in an optimistic manner. India is now taken more seriously as a global economic power and its potential as a global player, expected to play a major role in the global economy.

*(to be continued)*

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## **THE MILLENNIUM ECO SYSTEM ASSESSMENT (Part V)**

*Prof. M.N. Sastri*  
(A.U. Retd.)

### **BIODIVERSITY CRISIS**

Earth has an enormous variety of living species. About two million species of plants and animals have been

identified so far while several times more have yet to be identified. Their incredible variety in shape, size, and their habitats is really astounding. They vary from the very minute forms such as bacteria less than 10<sup>-4</sup> cm across to the blue whales 30 metres in length and 150 tonnes in weight, from the bacteria living in the Yellowstone Hotsprings (USA) at temperatures near the boiling point of water to the algae thriving on the ice mass of Antarctica and in the saline pools at - 23°C. They form integral components of the ecosystems, performing their functions in the biosphere. Each and every species, including the humans, is an important component of ecosystems that comprise the web of life, providing some kind of function to an ecosystem. They can capture and store energy, produce organic materials, decompose organic materials, help recycle water and nutrients throughout an ecosystem, control erosion or pests, fix atmospheric gases or help regulate climate. Brazil contains 25 percent of the recorded species followed by India with 8 percent, comprising 47,000 plants and 81,000 animals. India is home to two of the 33 global biodiversity hotspots - the Western Ghats and the Himalayas.

From the dawn of time, mass extinctions of species have occurred through natural factors. Five such mass extinctions have been recorded - about 438 million years ago, about 360 million years ago, about 245 million years ago, about 208 million years ago and about 65 million years ago. Many scientists believe that the human population, which has doubled in the last half century, is currently grabbing the living room of all other living species to grow its own food, their food to feed itself and squeezing them to the margins of existence in this process. In 2003 the World Conservation Union's Red list said more than 12,000 species (out of 40,000 assessed) faced some extinction risk from human activities.

A variety of species (biodiversity) can be found in individual areas, and on the planet as a whole. Biodiversity represents a measure of the relative diversity among organisms present in different ecosystems. We know that biodiversity has value but we are not yet in a position to assess what that value is. Converting rain forests into cropland, riverbanks into reservoirs, or marshes into human settlements, may not end the natural processes but will tend to produce landscape with decreased biodiversity, edging out many of the species previously occupying the space. An ecosystem decreases in its stability as its biodiversity decreases. As a consequence humans are putting their own existence at risk.

While it is not possible to be precise about the overall scale of change, it can be stated that the majority of species across a range of different categories such as insects, amphibians, farmland birds and Caribbean corals are

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"It takes centuries to make history and it takes centuries of history to make a tradition" - RADHAKRISHNAN 7

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declining in abundance or in the areas occupied by them. Some 12% of birds, 25% of mammals and at least 32% of amphibians are threatened with extinction over the next century. Wildlife is threatened from human poaching. As many as 1,500 tigers have vanished from forests across India during the last decade, mostly through poaching. Not a single tiger is left in the Sariska Reserve. It is estimated that humans may have increased the rate of global extinctions by as much as 1,000 times the natural rate typical of Earth's long-term history. Projections suggest that this rate will take a bigger leap due to changes over the next 50 years. Some scientists even consider this as the sixth mass extinction of species. Humans have failed to protect the entire gamut of life, including themselves.

It is the little living things that run the life processes - things like the microbes and insects and birds. There are signs that damage to natural ecosystems has reduced the numbers of insects and birds available to carry the pollen needed for flowering plants to reproduce and act as predators of agricultural products. This has serious implications for many crops. The value of such services often exceeds the gross product of our planet. Some years ago, when the global annual gross product was about \$ 18 trillion, US researchers calculated the value of the goods and services provided by the ecosystems to the world economy as \$ 33 trillion.

Invasion of species into new areas, either by accident or intention, is another major cause of threat to species and ecosystems. In the distant past Earth's mountains and oceans acted as formidable natural barriers to all but the toughest species. But with phenomenal rise in transport systems such invasions operate now on a global scale and will undergo more rapid increase in this century due to interactions with other global changes such as increasing globalization of markets, explosive rises in global trade, travel, tourism, and exchange of goods. The Irish potato famine (1845-49) is a classic example of species invasion. The fungus, which caused the staple food of the Irish people to rot in the ground, arrived on the ships from North America. The brown tree snake, a native of Australia, is believed to have hitchhiked to the Guam Island on military aircraft in 1940s and wiped out the island's native birds. Ocean-going freight ships carry a large number of sea creatures in their ballast tanks, which are flushed out at their destination. The species thus introduced from outside can dramatically change the local ecosystem and the services it provides. For example, the arrival of the American comb jelly fish in the Black Sea led to the destruction of 26 commercially valuable stocks of fish. Philippine rice farmers lost their rice crops to the invasive golden apple snail. Alien waterweeds are a global problem. The water hyacinth, a native of the Amazon Basin, infests

numerous tropical lakes, estuaries, streams, and rivers. Its eventual death and decomposition devastates numerous aquatic ecosystems. International trade has introduced the Asian tiger mosquito, the carrier of dengue fever, to the Americas and Africa. Trade has also spread life-threatening bacteria (e.g. mad cow disease) in meat exports. The strawberry guava, introduced from Brazil to Hawaii for its edible fruit, is now one of the state's worst pests, invading natural areas and shading out other vegetation. The weed *Parthenium hysterophorus*, native to subtropics of South and North America was introduced into India through the wheat imported under the PL 480 Aid Programme in the 50s. It spread extensively all over the country and earned the sobriquet "Congress Grass" for its profuse white flower top. The Asian deadly varroa mite imported into the USA in 1987 decimated wild bee colonies in some parts of the USA.

Fears are also expressed that genetically modified (GM) crops now coming into the market could in course of time spread like weeds wiping out the genetic resources of thousands of traditional crops grown in small communities across the world.

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## **HAROLD PINTER – AN APPRAISAL**

*Prof. M.S. RAMA MURTY  
(A.U. Retd.)*

The Nobel Prize for literature in 2005 has been awarded to Pinter. He joins O'Neill and Beckett, as one of the significant and powerful voices in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Drama. The Swedish Academy pointed out that his work "... uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms" and "Pinter restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue, where people are at the mercy of each other and pretence crumbles". The reaction to his award has been both warm and incisive: "Champagne is in the fridge. I am so delighted for Harold and what a wonderful birthday present for Thatcher! ...." (Sara Masson, London), "Wonderful! Long overdue. Let's have a birthday party". (Dennis Marshall, USA), "Pinter's plays have always reflected modern life – people talking at cross purposes and no-one knowing what the hell is going on". (Ian, Newark, UK), "A richly deserved honour. Pinter's plays are funny, poetic, enigmatic and tragic all at the same time". (Richard, Brighton, UK,) "His plays are murder to read and act – brilliant, absorbing to watch. Well done HP." (Matt Worrell, London, England), "He writes with clarity and accuracy of observation..." (Anne Ramsay, Texas, USA), "Totally well – deserved Pinter is high up there with Beckett as one of the most distinctive and powerful voices in theatre of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A huge influence on other playwrights.” (Tim Rhys, Cardiff) “An excellent choice. Harold Pinter deserves this prize not only for his writing but his campaigning. Both are intertwined in a life of amazing achievement.” (Reymond Rudaizky, London, U.K.), “Moreover, in these most distressful times, it is critical that people with strong voices speak out; Pinter has and continuous to do this. And those of us who share his (correct!) political views have been affirmed ... “( Barbara Bachur, USA)” Finally, a worthy winner with a huge body of work that entered public consciousness decades ago and has continued to make us better and wiser...” (Heather Mallick, Toronto, Canada).

Pinter has been an innovator in drama, mainly for developing what is called the comedy of menace and a dialogue which has earned the adjective after his name *Pinteresque*. Almost all his plays have employed the theme of an outsider or force that is menacing and ever present in our lives. One of his earliest plays “*The Birthday Party*” (1960) proclaimed his presence and is presented as a comedy of menace. The protagonist of the play, Stanley, is in a sort of hiding in a dingy, obscure seaside resort. There is the suggestion of some menace that he is expecting. He recalls the happy days of his youth as a pianist, a time of carefree abandon and youthful exuberance. Soon two strangers, Goldberg and Mc Cann, arrive and he is forcibly removed. The typical Pinter note of the yearning for the lost Eden’ versus the tension and uncertainty of the present and future are reflected. The play that followed *The Caretaker* (1960) earned for Pinter fame and commercial success. The play is about a tramp who is given shelter by a half-crazy benefactor and his smarter brother. One of the highlights of this play is the use of dialogue. The language that is used is demotic, that spoken by the common man in the bus-queue or what we term vulgar. However, this use of language with its meaningful pauses, the musical repetitions, the projection of hidden desires – is raised by Pinter to a poetic level and now bears the stamp as Pinteresque.

The play as a critic put it is about power and pipe dreams about the desire for domination and about the human need for illusion which is precisely why it is still performed all over the world. “The success in the use of dialogue, perhaps, led to his impressive trio of the 1960 films – *The Servant*, *Accident* and *The Go-Between*. However it was the play *The Homecoming* (1965) that confirmed his stature as a leading dramatist of his generation. The play deals with the dubious moral stature of Ruth, the wife of an academic, in her apparent complicity in the family’s desire of supporting them through prostitution and the absence of any moral framework. What makes Pinter distinctive is his refusal to moralise as a dramatist. It is left

to the audience or the reader to interpret and judge. The language used again is that of the man on the street raised to a poetic level.

After *The Homecoming*, Pinter’s work underwent a change. The plays that followed, *Old Times* (1971), *No Man’s Land* (1975), *Betrayal* (1978), present a more craftsmanlike Pinter. The themes of time, memory, the power of the past over the present, recur in them, as one character in the play *Old Times*, Anna says, “There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened, but as I recall them so they take place.”

After the mid – 1980’s Pinter has expressed his moral outrage at the political events that have abused human rights. His play *One for the Road* (1984) shows how political torturers invoke God and patriotism to justify their deeds, *Mountain Language* (1988) deals with the suppression and victimization while *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) deals with the Holocaust. Pinter’s recent play *Celebration* (2000) presents a unity of his thematic concerns and his poetic sensibility. It is set in a posh restaurant and reflects the eavesdropping of a waiter on the conversation of the elite. It is coincidental that one of his earliest plays *The Birthday Party* is also set in a restaurant – the earlier one a gloomy, dingy one, the latest a swank restaurant. The context of the play changes radically. Yet, as one critic put it, ‘Pinter’s obsessions remain very much what they always were, the hidden poetry of vernacular speech, the unfathomable mystery of human existence and the power of memory, however fallible, to convey the paradise we have all lost.’

Pinter has been equally vociferous and outspoken about his views on the political situation. He, significantly, entitled his Nobel Lecture as *Art, Truth and Politics*. He makes a distinction between art and politics. The language used in art may be ambiguous and not necessarily true as it would carry many echoes and reverberations. As he pointed out “... language in art remains a highly ambiguous transaction, a quicksand, a trampoline, a frozen pool which might give way under you, the author, at any time”. On the other hand “political language as used by politicians does not venture into any of this territory since the majority of politicians, on the evidence available to us, are interested not in truth but in power and the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives.

(to be continued)

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## FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE

*Prof. U. Murali Krishna*  
(A.U. Retd.)

The peace and prosperity of a nation and society is primarily dependent on the education and training received by the children and youth at different stages of learning and education. Developments in constructive knowledge encompass both freedom of inquisitive questioning and discipline to inculcate the spirit of tolerance to differences and to immediate inadequacies of clear answers. But of late there were news reports of students going haywire for things they were not sure of what they want. The dress code stipulation by the Anna University, Chennai, the contemplated structural modifications at the first degree level by the Andhra Pradesh Universities, the blurring of a celebrity of Tamil tinsel world about a practice corresponding to that of permissive Western Society are a few recent examples to be considered in this regard. It, therefore, becomes relevant to ponder over some aspects of freedom and discipline.

Ever since India became independent students are drawn away from their primary objective of developing constructive knowledge and the disciplined control of emotions which form the basic components of learning and education to that of participating in agitations, usually raised by politicians under the mask of social upliftment and advantages. In a democratic system freedom is a right of citizenship. But what is citizenship? Should it pertain to human areas or to wild jungle areas? Any person with a good sense of citizenship would obviously be in favour of the former. This being the case one should not go astray from the real significance and true meanings of freedom and discipline.

One of the meanings of freedom as read from The Readers Digest English Dictionary is "The condition of being free of restraints", while for discipline, it reads as "training that is expected to produce a particular character or pattern of behavior, especially, that which is expected to produce moral or mental improvement". It is obvious, therefore, that while freedom is a right, discipline needs regulation or inculcation either by self-control or aided control. Youth, more particularly the educated youth at the post - matriculation first degree and the postgraduate level, need to be made more fully aware of the real and true meanings of these two important characteristics of human beings. Future health, well-being and welfare of the society depend on their definite impressions about freedom and discipline. Any system works smoothly under certain regulations and stipulations. For example, and

employee has to attend to the assigned duties in the stipulated time schedule. Similarly, every teacher has to attend to his class work as per the prescribed timetable. Should these be considered as curtailing the freedom of the individual? Should a surveillance, watch and regulatory directions be construed as discipline infestation? It may be any body's guess as to what would happen by ignoring discipline and allowing for unchecked overabundant freedom of the individual. Even ants have a built in device to follow a strict army type discipline in that they line up one after another in their movement.

Students should realize by themselves or should be made to realize that they have a responsibility to develop a spirit of rule mindedness in general. Of course, this does not mean that they should bend to mere slavery, gross oppression and utter subjugation. It will be a highly welcome feature if everyone controls himself by self-discipline consistent with the surroundings. It is here that the institutions get in to render help to infuse this sort of self-discipline in the students at all levels, especially at the post matriculation level. After all it is the students of today that become tomorrow's discipline enforcers. From this it is quite simple to draw the conclusion that unless the students of today are discipline oriented, how can they be tomorrow's managers of discipline. Gandhi is revered by the entire world community not for his philosophy of non-violence alone but because of his self-disciplined character. It may be easy to transgress rules and move away from discipline but it will be very difficult to inculcate the spirit of discipline later on. It is relevant to recall a Telugu saying whose meaning in English is "can a plant unbendable at the tender stage be bondable after it grows into a big tree?" Students should realize that they should give priority to discipline on the campuses of their institutions so as to conform to the self- disciplined characteristic thereby contributing to the trait of civility in behavior.

The meaning of freedom seems to be stretched too far to the extent that corresponds very nearly to indiscipline. Let us not misread the meanings of freedom and discipline.

Freedom and discipline are two important and significant characteristics of every individual. Both of them are of equal importance and prominent for the individual. An overdose of either of them is not conducive for a smooth, effective and meaningful democracy. Freedom without discipline is sauce without salt and discipline devoid of permissible freedom amounts to an overdose of the remedy for a malady. If freedom of the individual overwhelms discipline of an institution how can education be considered to correspond to "teach wisdom and not trade, character and not characteristics" (Winston

Churchill), to “morality primarily and intellectuality secondarily” (Ruskin), to prevent “decay from within and not conquest from without” (Arnold Toynbee). After getting Independence we marched forward to such an extent that.

- (a) Judicial courts should not give judgments against the individual’s right to freedom of speech and
- (b) The schools and colleges should not move towards uniformity of behavior.

The two aspects have to be viewed as due to over emphasis of freedom and scant regard to discipline. “Shun too much everywhere”! It is prudent to ponder over this dictum (taken from Sanskrit) and adjust our outlook and behaviour accordingly so that everybody will be happy and society will be healthy.

## **SRI SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA-II**

(Dec 15<sup>th</sup> 1908 – April 25<sup>th</sup> 2005)

- Sri Challa Sivasankaram

The swami who himself passed through the travail and horrors of war gave a vivid and harrowing account of the sufferings of the war-devasted country’s people who were forced to vacate their hearth and home built over years of sweat and blood as brick and mortar. Tens of hundreds of evacuees, poor and rich, men and women, few months-old babies were moving, enduring unprecedented hardships-over mountainous track with no food, and no water. They negotiated a hundred mile long hilly track on bullock carts hired at exorbitant rate for five and a half days. Cholera, exhaustion, hunger and thirst worked havoc with the forlorn, desolate evacuees. Most of the deaths occurred among the labourers from the Andhra region who constituted the main labour force of British Burma. Men and carts had to pass over festering bodies and the stench of rotting corpses was unbearable. I stayed altogether for 12 days in Prome, and, left for Tungup after all the refugees in the town were dispatched and camps closed by the government. The narration did not yet end there. The woes, the travails, the heartrending casualties of cholera, squalor, hunger and thirst, untold human misery, human callousness and greed to make money on the part of fellow man in comparatively safe position. A literal odyssey of cruelty of man played on man in desolation. How asuric man could be! An Aurobindo may lament. 1942 goes down in the history of the world as the most heinous and monstrous year to caution man in testing times against the asura in human guise.

The Swami bypassing his personal safety lived with the suffering brethren forsaken by God in heaven. He felt the beat of their pain stricken hearts looking forward for a

word of love, touch of humanity. He filled with heartening doses of sublime sympathy the voids of the moaning mass of human beings to make them regain self-confidence and confidence in those who were working for their early rehabilitation. Wherever the Swami went God manifested in the required form to convince him that God was alert and appointed him as his emissary to dress the wounds and redress the plight of the forlorn. He was the lamp, the effulgent light, the pillar of strength and faith and a personification of all that God meant to confer on the afflicted and ailing mankind in the hour of protracted human agony and tragedy.

I should like to draw a sketch of similar nature between Mahatma Gandhi in Boer war in South Africa and the Swami in the bizarre theatre of man’s helplessness in the wake of asuric 2<sup>nd</sup> World War perpetrated unprovoked by the Axis Powers – Germany, Japan and Italy.

Mahatma led an Indian Ambulance corps in the Boer war. Its strength was 1,100. It fulfilled a brilliant task in the war on the side of British Empire. Moral authority swayed Mahatma Gandhi for his resolve to side with the cause of the Empire. The corps was disbanded after six weeks of service.

Certain historic forces warrant certain persons to shoulder certain responsibilities of which they had never dreamt. The Swami’s services in the rehabilitation work of the un fortunate refugees was never dreamt of and never foreseen. Great men’s great deeds history records to be example for men to come. The Mahatma and the Swami were near about of the same age at the time of doing humanitain services in different circumstances. The Mahātmā and the Swami must have been moved by their inner voice. The voice was infallible and the service rendered was invaluable:

The Swami was president of the Ramakrishna Mission and Math in Karachi from 1942 – 48. As Bengal was stricken by famine, torn by fellow man’s rapacity and itch for illgotten money, there arose a need to raise funds to combat the crisis (chronicles of the times bespeak of the truth that it was largely manmade). The Swami as ever before rose to the occasion and it fell in his lot to raise large funds from public contributions. He sent over 1.250 tons of rice by special steamers to Kolkatta for the mission’s famine relief work and civil strife victims in Bengal and Bihar. The Upanisad said that renunciation does not insist on indifference to world’s pressing needs. The Swami possessed the heart of Buddha and the head of Vivekananda. Both of the worthy sons of India sought refuge in Swami’s frame on and off raising to move and

act through him. The Government of India of the day looked for his hand of help in the hour of man's incapacity to deal with the enormity of the situation in the wake of the inflow of refugees from Burma. His insight and (foresight) foresight helped him to meet triumphantly any hazardous situation. His stately personality reflecting the glow of concentrated vigour amassed as a result of life of ceaseless austerity and sublimated passion could win laurels in any theatre of world drama. Brahmacharya results in youth and handsome and winsome appearance.

The Swami was able to raise Rs. 1,50,000/- as the President of Ramakrishna Mission in Karachi. The amount was forwarded to Kolkatta to apportion part of it for civilstrife victims in Bengal and Bihar and the rest of it for cholera victims in Kerala. Direct action of Jinnah and failure of Cripps Mission infuriated the people which led to chaotic condition in Bengal and Bihar. The time to prove the dormant spiritual mettle of the Swami arrived. Karachi the strong-hold of Congress party and the home of the Aryan became part and parcel of Pakistan. India's most lustrous history was woven round the Sindh. Hindu is the travesty of Sindh. As Muslims of Pakistan created condition inimical to stay there any further the mission at Karachi was closed The Swami from 1949 March - 1962 was the secretary of the New Delhi branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. From 1962 to November 67 he

was secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture at Kolkatta and Director of its School of Humanistic and Cultural studies, and editor of its monthly journal.

The Swami a towering monk of matchless versatility, massive knowledge encompassing all schools of thought, master of wit and repartee and the knower of kinship between Prakriti and Purusha, devoid of pride and prejudice bearing the torch of India's Sanatana Dharma embarked on teaching the world thirsting for the Swati (Arcturus) rain that might drizzle from his mouth. The Government of India grasped the traces of World Teacher in the Swami emitting light within and invited him year after year to address its trainees at the National Academy of Administration, Mussouri and National Defence College, New Delhi. He was one of the trustees of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, a member of the Governing body of Ramakrishna Mission and a member of the Indian National Commission for cooperation with the UNESCO. It seems that the mantle of India's ancient sages safely settled on the Swami to speak, to enlighten the eternal theme of Sanatana Dharma in the manner that a novice too could understand and endeavour to translate into action. The world wanted him to know from his noble tongue as to what it had to practise, to realize and live in peace and plenty.

(to be continued)

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*-Editor*

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