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THE KASHMIR IMPASSE

As we get closer to the eagerly awaited elections in Jammu and Kashmir our minds are filled with both hope and anxiety, the former because of the elaborate and careful preparations being made by the Election Commission and also due to the firm commitment of the Union Government to make the exercise free and fair and the latter caused by sabre rattling of extremist outfits and unwarranted meddlesomeness by outside powers in India's internal affairs. Strange and absurd it is that Pakistan's General Musharaff who appointed himself to the highest office, choked democratic institutions and silenced dissent talks of fair elections and the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir!

Let us first try to put the record straight. It all began with the invasion by Pakistani tribals of Kashmir in 1947 and occupation of a part of it by force which was an act of aggression. That Jammu and Kashmir without POK acceded to India as per the Instrument of Accession which was later ratified by the elected government and Constituent Assembly of the state is also an undisputed fact. Pakistan's invasion of India in 1965 and proxy war during the last two decades provide enough proof, if proof were needed, of the ulterior motives and designs of Pakistan. Pakistan's claim to Kashmir on grounds of religious affinity is dubious and untenable. It need not be repeated here that India has the second highest Muslim population in the world and that there are more number of Muslims in India than in Pakistan. Only recently a poll conducted by foreign media revealed that the majority of the people of Jammu and Kashmir prefer to remain in India.

The question why things began to deteriorate in Jammu and Kashmir is not easy to answer and experts offer different reasons for the deteriorating situation resulting in brutal killings of civilians, innocent people and military personnel. That mercenaries and terrorists flooded into the valley at the behest of Pakistan is also being realized by all countries. Pakistan has succeeded in 'internationalising the Kashmir dispute' after causing considerable damage to India politically, economically and psychologically. Now Pakistan talks, not of the freedom of its own people, but of the rights of Kashmiris!

What hurts India most is the role and attitude of Western powers. In 1947 Britain persuaded America to treat the issue as 'a dispute between India and Pakistan' because of cold war compulsions. They feared the rise of Soviet hegemony in South Asia. Their calculation was that Islamic countries would neutralize the influence of Communism led by the Soviet Union. Now, after the end of cold war, the same western powers perceive a serious threat to their position in the region from the same Islamic states. They want to keep Pakistan in good humour without hurting India. For strategic and military reasons they need Pakistan. For political and moral reasons they support India. So they try to do the balancing act, equating Pakistan with India in word and deed and treating the aggressor and victim alike. It is as hard for Indians to accept that Pakistan acquired nuclear capability without American nod as it is for the world to ignore the fact Taliban and Osama Bin Laden, the main source of Afghan misery and international terrorism, were sponsored by the United States.

The road to peace in Kashmir is full of landmines, not only the traps set by the mindless terrorists but also the diplomatic and political mines laid by vested interests and outside powers. There is no point in putting the entire blame on the erstwhile Congress governments and the present NDA establishment at the center for all the mess that has been created. Those with ideas were not in power and those in power had no vision. At the time of Independence high expectations were aroused that democracy, in spirit and practice, would permeate among all sections of the people and regions of the country. Unfortunately it did not percolate from the top to the lower rungs of the system.

Now is the time for all leaders and parties to come together and strive for peace in Kashmir not only through elections but by means of decentralization and devolution of powers. Decentralization of governance and acceptance of plurality of cultures are vital to the stability and success of our democracy and the only solution to the problems of unrest whether it is Punjab or Nagaland or Kashmir. The coming weeks are a severely testing time for all - the leaders, the people and the entire system.

- The Editor

Kashmir is legally speaking, historically speaking, constitutionally speaking, a part of India, a part of the Union of India. There has been no case of clearer and more flagrant aggression than that of Pakistan over Kashmir. - Jawaharlal Nehru

THE INDO - PAK STAND - OFF

I

Cmde L. GOMES

Ever since the dawn and the creation of the Islamic State of Pakistan, - Pakistan has always looked to its neighbour India with mistrust, suspicion and hate. For a greater part of its history, the two countries have long been looking at each other through the barrel of the gun. India and Pakistan have gone to an all out War on three occasions. The last War in 1971 dismembered Pakistan. But an Indo Pak War in 2002 would be a different game altogether. It would not be just a War on Pakistan - The Terror Merchant, but as much a War against the most critical ally of U.S. against Osama Bin Laden.

After the September 11 th terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, the geographic contiguity of Pakistan to Afghanistan became critical to US. Therefore the US - Pak conveyance meant more to the US than the Indo - Pak relationship. But two Terrorist strikes by Jihadis unsettled this quick fix US Pak axis. The first was a Terrorist attack on the Parliament in December 2001. The way India responded and moved its forces to the border in days and its unprecedented diplomatic pressure soon undermined the US - Pak axis.

The US was tested on its own noble profession it had built a global alliance to fight terrorism anywhere. To fight terror everywhere and to condone it against India was already exposing the double talk of the US. The US establishment had earlier shut its eyes to the terror operating from Pakistan. After the December attack India's diplomacy forced them to declare the Jihadis in Kashmir as Terrorists. It also pressured the US to coerce Pakistan to act against these outfits. Pakistan complied, however, clumsily.

But the second attack did far more, when the Jihadis hit the families of the Indian armed forces on May 14th 2002. India virtually declared open War, even a final War on Pakistan. This rattled the US and also Pakistan. The terrified Pakistanis openly talked of a Nuclear War. This was its undoing. The US could no more condone Pakistan at least openly. Forced to tow the Indian line on cross border terrorism, it coerced Pakistan to accept and stop cross border terrorism. Pakistan has always been hailing cross border terrorism as the Kashmir Liberation struggle. Now it had been

forced to own its complicity in it. And its Mentor the US forced to declare its ally guilty of cross border terror against India.

After the terrorist attack on Kaluchak, May 14th, India's patience was fast running out. How long can India tolerate these terrorist attacks? How long can India tolerate Pakistan's proxy war? How long can India tolerate the export of Pak sponsored terrorism across the Line of Control? India was faced with a grave decision, 'Should India go to War'. Strangely in the Past, War has been a rallying cry uniting one and all. And today this very prime question seems to tear apart consensus. It is an issue that keeps opinion so widely divided. The Doves protest only because the prospect of War between two rivals is so frightening, that only those who are reckless and completely devoid of imagination can advocate it. But there are many hard liners who strongly advocate that a swift and quick surgical strike would be the most realistic option. Defeat Pakistan and root out Terrorism.

Going to War with Pakistan in the present times, there is a major factor and that is, the presence of the American forces in Pakistan. Before the 11th September attack, the US was gradually conceding a role to India as a bulwark against emerging strategic posture of China especially on the maritime front. It looked as if India was emerging as a frontline State in the West endeavour for democratic stability in Asia. But with the September 11th attack while India immediately offered full support and help to the United States, General Musharaff jumped straight into the American lap. Pakistan's offer had three major advantages, first of all its geographic proximity to Afghanistan, secondly air strips and launching grounds and finally and most crucially intelligence about the Taliban, the Taliban country and the terrain. Even a conventional War between India and Pakistan at this stage was the very last thing that the Americans wanted. Because if India and Pakistan went to War, their operation "Enduring Freedom" would go for a toss and if the War went Nuclear, the catastrophe would be unthinkable.

General Musharraf is walking on an extremely tight rope today. He is facing political opposition over his policy on Terrorism and acceding to America's every demand. He has a bad border situation, and the international community pressure. Almost all known Jihadis have gone underground following a crack down by the authorities. They are bitter about Pakistan's

military helping the foreigners to kill their own Muslim bretheren. And they are bitter over the government's decision to join the coalition against Terrorism. They even went to the extent of calling Musharraf a Non - Muslim and a Coward. And even threatened to launch a Jihad against him. Fazul Rehman a Harkdul Ansar activist said, "A Coward has left us at the mercy of the Indian Forces, but we never forget people who betray us".

Taking all factors into consideration, the equation of forces, the balance of power, the nuclear arsenal, the people's will, as also the cost ratio, many even some of the hard - liners who earlier advocated an all out War, are veering around to the opinion that an all out War would not be the best option. Swift, sharp, severe and direct strikes would contain the Terrorists better. An all our War may settle the India Pak issue, but not the Kashmir problem.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto once threatened to carry out a thousand years War with India. But Pakistan today, with the flare up of the anti - government demonstration in Pak occupied Kashmir, with the growing unrest in the North and North - West regions of Pakistan, the mounting ethnic problem in Karachi and in the Sind area, Bhutto's Thousand Years War may well be a Thousand Years War with themselves.

There is an old dictum which still holds good. It says that, "Those who cannot learn from their own mistakes and those who repeat their mistakes are often doomed to suffer and perish by them". Pakistan should know this far better than any nation in the world, and realise that for longstanding Peace, Progress and Prosperity for her land and her people, Pakistan would be far better off to live - IN PEACE WITH INDIA.

II

Cmde T. Rajaram

Since the end of World War II, two major issues defying acceptable solutions are the Palestine - Israel problem and the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. Both are clouded by emotion. The dismemberment of Pakistan, and the ignominy of getting nearly 90,000 P.O.W.S. released from India forced Pakistan to sign the Simla Agreement in 1972 agreeing to solve all mutual problems bilaterally. But the desire to avenge the loss of East Pakistan was so compelling that Pakistan tried to internationalise the Kashmir issue at every available opportunity. Having failed to annex

Kashmir in three conventional wars Pakistan, from the early 1980s, resorted to indirect means of war by proxy, to achieve its ends.

TERRORISM AS MEANS

Though terrorism, in different forms, was known to mankind for long, it was the PLO, under Yasser Arafat's leadership, which resorted to it in a big way as a means of achieving political ends. It all started with the plane hijacking and holding of hostages at Entebbe, assassination of athletes at the Munich Olympics and developed into the present - day suicide attacks of various types. To overthrow Russian troops occupying Afghanistan the USA obtained the assistance of Pakistan in staging an armed rebellion against the Soviets. With liberal supply of arms and money from the USA, Pakistan's ISI and army created the Taliban and the Al - Qaeda. With manpower recruited and trained in the numerous madarsas and terrorist camps specifically set up for the purpose, Pakistan directed the military operations in Afghanistan. In view of Pakistan's role in evicting the Soviets the USA acquiesced in the infiltration of some of those terrorists into Kashmir for targeting security forces, civilians etc. Meanwhile, the ISI spread its network into India's mainland. Repeated requests to rein in Pakistan's export of cross - border terrorism were not heeded by the USA till Pokhran II 1998, when sanctions were imposed on both countries.

Between India / Pakistan / Bangladesh / Sri Lanka, it is easy to infiltrate undetected across borders because of common language, culture, physical features, food habits etc. Illegal immigrants are roughly estimated as 10,000 in Hyderabad and 50,000 each in the major slums of Bombay and Delhi. About 32,000 madarsas are functioning, at last count, and an appreciable number of these are located in the border districts of India with Nepal, Bangladesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. Since the early 1980s, there has been a planned infiltration of operatives from Pakistan to India. With such effective network in position, Pakistan has been fighting a proxy war with India with the avowed objective of "bleeding it through a thousand cuts". To date, the loss of life is approximately 65,000, services and civilian personnel included. Terrorist attacks on the Red Fort, Delhi, and serial bomb blasts in Bombay, hijack of an IAC plane to Kandahar, the sensational attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December, 2001 (which was the last straw) finally forced India to move its armed forces to forward position.

CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS

Up to 1993 US properties and citizens were usually attacked by terrorists, outside its territorial limits. But in February 1993 Americans experienced a terrorist attack on their soil, for the first time. It was a bomb attack in the underground car park of WTC's South Tower in New York. Subsequently, the FBI foiled a plot to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel and the UN secretariat. The American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the missile destroyer USS COLE in Aden were also attacked, causing considerable loss of life and property. The famous 9/11 attack on the WTC, New York and the Pentagon, Washington DC totally shook the Americans. It was a defining moment in the world's war against terrorism. President Bush declared war against the unseen enemy, and resolved to go any length to end the menace. Pakistan's co-operation was needed by the USA. Thus, monetary incentives by way of settling long-standing debt of \$12.5 Bn and lifting of economic sanctions of 1998 brought forth land and airbases in Pakistan for use by the USA troops operating in Afghanistan. Gen. Musharraf boldly switched sides from the Taliban to the Western Alliance against terrorism (much against popular sentiment in Pakistan). The USA welcomed this by 'eagerly' lover looking the presence of terrorist training camps in Pakistan, from where militants were being launched into India. Recently, Jehadi elements inimical to Musharraf's policy shift assassinated several foreigners in Pakistan. It was only at this stage that the USA and UK acknowledged the complicity of Pakistan in the cross-border infiltration into India, and the active links of the ISI with three terrorist groups in Kashmir. They now want to liquidate the Al-Qaeda activists who escaped from Afghanistan into the NWFP and POK. Nearly nine months after the start of military operations in Afghanistan and much loss of life and property, a convergence of interests has emerged between India and the USA / UK on the immediate need to round up the Al-Qaeda activists and demolish their training camps from the NWFP and POK, which is now the epicentre of terrorism in the world. This is an encouraging development for India and its coercive diplomacy in the fight against terrorism.

OPTIONS AND ACTIONS

Under prevailing circumstances, there are three major categories of options against Pakistan viz.,

Economic, Diplomatic, and Military. The economic sanctions will not hurt either country very much. The diplomatic options have already been exercised and were effective. The USA / UK have acknowledged that Pakistan has been exporting terrorism to India. Diplomacy is an on-going process. Since both countries are nuclear powers with missile-launching capabilities, the military options are limited and complicated.

The Indian Army has been moved to the LOC in Kashmir and to the international border in the West. Approximately one million men in uniform are deployed along the 700 km LOC stretch in Kashmir. The situation is explosive and any recurrence of Kaluchak-type incidents will lead to hostilities. The Air Force is at full alert on the forward airfields and ready for all eventualities including surgical attacks on terrorist camps, in conjunction with commando raids by the army. Even if we desire to keep it as a limited action, the enemy could escalate it into a full-scale war, and we are prepared for such contingency. The three-dimensional Navy with aircraft carrier, submarines and surface ships was deployed in the north Arabian Sea to close the enemy's sea-lanes, keep ours open, and defend offshore installations. Naval forces have since been withdrawn, in deference to the wishes of the USA / UK, but can be re-deployed at very short notice. It is a situation of uneasy calm.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

India and Pakistan are estimated to be in possession of approximately 100 and 50 nuclear warheads, respectively. Pakistan is also suspected to have been supplied about 50 tactical nuclear weapons by China, which are capable of destroying armour and troop concentrations. These have minimal radiation effect and are in the 5K - 10K ton range capacity. Unscrupulous militants could use them as weapons of mass destruction in their pursuit of nuclear terrorism. The chain of command in regard to nuclear weapons is vague in Pakistan. Their doctrine appears to be "Take the war through terrorism deep into Indian territory but defend yourself against conventional superiority with the threat of Nukes. They then become the cutting edge of an aggressive posture and not merely a deterrent". This probably explains Gen. Musharraf's nuclear sabre-rattling before he was calmed down by THE USA. India is a large country with adequate scope for the safe dispersal of nuclear weapons to be launched

as a second strike. If attacked, there is enough capability to wipe out the adversary totally. We should, therefore, be prepared to deliver the retaliatory attack almost instantaneously, without giving any time for the Western powers to intervene and prevail upon India to exercise patience and compassion. The international community must be told well in advance of the devastating consequences of any misadventure by Pakistan. Enough is enough, and it is time India called Pakistan's bluff.

LONG - TERM ACTION PLAN

Irrespective of the outcome of the present stand-off, India should be prepared for nuclear attack, be it from Pakistan or China, and should prevent terrorist attacks internally. Military action has never eliminated terrorism totally; merely contained it within reasonable limits. It is suggested that action, as given below, be initiated (not necessarily in that order):

- 1) Closely monitor activities of madaras and their sources of funds. Ensure that they are not misused for arms storage. Complacency will be dangerous (The Golden Temple, Amritsar, episode of 1984 is a good warning)
- 2) Identify and deport illegal immigrants and foreigners overstaying their visas
- 3) Set up a separate Dept. of "Homeland Security" like in the USA after the 9 /11 attacks, to exclusively counter foreign - inspired terrorist and subversive activities within the country.
- 4) Convene an all - Party conference to seek overall co - operation for actions at (1) and (2) above, so that a religious colouring is not given to these actions. False alarms of 'religious freedom in danger' and 'anti - secularism' are not to be raised or allowed to deflect government's efforts. Some political parties have been encouraging illegal immigrants and arranging false identification papers for them, with ulterior motives. National security cannot be compromised by transnational loyalty on political, ideological, racial, religious, or ethnic grounds. This should be made clear to one and all holding Indian citizenship.
- 5) Share intelligence information with the USA / UK etc. regarding terrorist camps and movements, particularly in our neighbouring countries.
- 6) Instal and operate a 'Ground Monitoring System' along the LOC, and watch out for terrorist infiltration

- 7) Develop an effective 'Satellite Reconnaissance System' over the LOC and our international border, to detect suspicious movements
- 8) A 'Missile Defence Shield' with US assistance to be positioned around vital targets, as protection against missile attacks
- 9) Tactical nuclear weapons may fall into wrong hands in Pakistan and may eventually lead to 'nuclear terrorism'. It should be suggested to the USA that the nuclear arsenal of Pakistan is to be brought under the purview of Weapons Inspectors as with Iraq.
- 10) Pakistan's proposal to denuclearise South Asia is to be rejected. For India, nuclear weapons are deterrents against China also
- 11) Build nuclear shelters in major cities and carry out civil defence exercises periodically
- 12) Set up a 'Nuclear Hot Line' Communication with Pakistan

(Summaries of the lectures delivered at CPS on June 15, 2002)

Post Sept. 11 Situation relevant to J&K policy

Comde C. Uday Bhaskar
Dy. Director, IDSA, Delhi

The attack on the World Trade Center on September 11 last year, caused by misplaced Islamic zealotry, had violently churned international relations giving rise to a "turbulent and angry world with the denouement remaining unpredictable", the deputy director of the Delhi - based Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses, C. Uday Bhaskar, said here on Wednesday. The Defence analyst was speaking on the theme, "World after September 11", at a meeting organised by the Centre for Policy Studies.

Commodore Uday Bhaskar described the event as "a puncturing of the socio - religious ozone layer" and said that unfortunately it had led to Islam becoming rebellious and militant. He pointed out the "streak of unilateralism" in the US policies after the tragedy and attributed it to the deep sense of insecurity in that country though the President, George Bush declared: "We are down but not out." The huge sum that the US was spending on home security since September 11 was an indicator of its sense of insecurity, besides the perceptible fear of weapons of mass destruction, germ warfare and the anthrax threat, he said.

Posing the question whether the US achieved its objectives in its war against terrorism, he said that notwithstanding the success in throwing out the Taliban regime and Al Queda, the situation in Afghanistan "is far from stable". Beyond Kabul, faction on fighting between various groups was continuing on a big scale. At the outset, Cmde. Uday Bhaskar said that the US had been successfully shaping what he called the global security discourse whether it was after Pearl Harbour bombing or after the September 11 attack "strategically, intellectually or spiritually". He, however, said that the US had occupied the centre stage in Central Asia, perhaps, only after Alexander.

Answering questions on the post - September 11 impact on India, particularly on the Kashmir dispute, he said that the development "is very relevant to us" and wanted the Indian policy makers to note the geo-political changes that had taken place since then.

(Summary of a lecture delivered at CPS on July 17, 2002) Courtesy: The Hindu, July 18, 2002

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - A PIPE DREAM

Prof. M.N. Sastri

Humanity has inherited a basketful of good and bad from the century that has passed out. The 20th century was a time of exponential scientific and technological advances that improved the quality of life. The arts were freed by an "exuberant modernism". Democracy and human rights secured a firm footing throughout the world. At the same time the century was a dark and savage age of world wars, genocide and totalitarian ideologies. While preoccupied with all this tumult, the human society managed collaterally to decimate the natural environment. The non-reversible resources of the planet were exploited with cheerful abandon resulting in an accelerated erasure of entire ecosystems and the extinction of thousands of plant and animal species.

A group known as *The Club of Rome* was the first to undertake a systematic study of the environmental effects of unchecked technological activities. This group numbering 31, comprised scientists, educationists, economists, industrialists and government officials. After analyzing the data for the period 1900 - 2000 through computer models, the group published its conclusions in 1968 in the form of a book entitled *The Limits to Growth*. According to the group, if the present growth trends in world

population, industrialization, food production and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on the planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The group expressed the view that it is possible to alter these growth trends and establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into future by designing a state of global equilibrium in which the basic material needs of each person on the earth are satisfied and each person has an equal opportunity to realize his individual human potential. An appraisal undertaken two decades later showed that the world has generally been following the same consumption pattern.

The involvement of the United Nations on problems of environment began with the holding of an international conference in 1972 in Stockholm leading to the recognition of environment as a subject of international concern. The UN constituted the World Commission on Environment and Development with Ms. G.H. Brundtland as the chairperson to study the problems. After an exhaustive study the Commission presented a report entitled *Our Common Future* in which it invoked the concept of "sustainable development" defined as "an approach towards meeting the needs and aspirations of the present and future generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs". As a follow-up, the UN convened the Conference on Environment and Development (known as the Earth Summit) in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). After lengthy deliberations, the Summit adopted Agenda 21 for a sustainable development that aims at altering the unchecked growth trends and establishing a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future. The Second UN World Summit will be held during August - September, 2002 in Johannesburg (South Africa). This Summit (Rio + 10 = 2002), after assessing the achievements of Agenda 21, will focus the world's attention and direct action toward meeting difficult challenges, including people's lives and conserving our natural resources in a world that is growing in population with ever-increasing demands for food, shelter, sanitation, energy, health services and economic security.

Meanwhile a study published in June 2002 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (USA) concludes that humans continue to exercise little or no restraint in their use of the earth's supplies and services.

People have been taking more from the planet than it can consistently restock, and have cumulatively produced so much waste that complete assimilation is impossible. The study took into consideration and estimated the productivity of the earth's land and oceans. On comparing the supply and demand, it was observed that as late as 1999, the human world consumed 120 per cent of the earth's sustainable (i.e. consistently replenishable) resource capacity. In other words, the global population exhausted a supply of natural replenishable resources equivalent to that produced by 1.2 earths each year, thus eroding nature's ability to regenerate. The study does not also foresee the possibility of this trend leveling out in the immediate future. Compare this with world's use of 70 per cent of the earth's sustainable productivity in 1961. The consumption level has been consistently rising since the 1980s.

Let us hope that the collective wisdom of Johannesburg Summit will spell out drastic and enforceable strategies that will arrest this rising trend in the consumption of replenishable resources.

THE EXPLOSIVE NUMBERS

Shri T. Hanumantha Rao, Retd. Lecturer,
AMAL College, Anaparthi

Aldous Huxley is nearer truth when he said, "the human race is passing through a time of crisis and that crisis exists so to speak, on two levels — an upper level of political and economic crisis and a lower level of demographic and ecological crisis. The Big Threes and Big Fours raise a hue and cry against the upper level crisis and do not deign to discuss the lower one and devote their entire energies to the question of who shall bully whom. And yet, the low level crisis is at least as serious as the crisis in the political and economic field."

The period of very rapid increase of world population which is known to have begun in 1750 — the period that H.G. Wells called "breeding storm" is not over yet. It looks as though the shadow of Malthus (population growing in geometrical progression and food production in arithmetical progression) still falls over the world and man has been demonstrating the validity of the Malthusian prediction by his tireless performance in procreation. According to the recent World Population Report of the U.N., global population crossed six billion mark and like "mice in a barn", it was growing at 78 million a year and would hit 10 billion in the near future.

Unfortunately, most of the growth, about 95 per cent has taken place in the poorest and least prepared countries. Of the 4.8 billion people living in the developing countries, three fifths lack basic sanitation, a third have no access to clean water, a quarter do not have adequate housing and a fifth have no access to modern health services. If the under developed countries continue to increase their populations at this rate, then the problem of improving standards of living seems likely in many cases to be beyond human power. Therefore, for developing and under developed countries, there is a crying need for rationalisation of the increasing human numbers.

Until recently, it was fashionable for the communists to say that the population problem could cause concern only in capitalist countries. But now Russia and China are also seized of the problem. In China, it has become so massive that the Peking Government shed its bias against the family planning programme and introduced it. In fact China has outpaced India in the success of her family planning programme due to the political commitment of the Government.

In any case, there is a need for a planned effort at limiting population in India. The population problem in India has become so formidable that the need for checking the surging tide of population growth is no longer a matter for debate. In fact, on the demographic map of the world, India is one of the major areas of crisis. In the world today, India ranks second in population numbers with her 1.027 billion, next to China. Unless the highest priority is given to slowing the growth in population in India, the dismaying possibility is that it will soon match and exceed that of China.

An increasing population does not augur well for a developing country like India. It has retarded the progress of the schemes of social, cultural and economic advancement and thwarted all attempts to improve the standard of living of the people since independence. Unless the growth of numbers sharing the cake is kept down, the standard of living of the people cannot be raised from the present dismal level.

The question is often asked, whether India is overpopulated. There are people who think that India is not overpopulated because the density of population is much lower than most of the advanced European countries and her natural resources are immense. This

inference is fallacious. Our potential resources are no doubt vast, but considering the extent to which they have been developed, there is not the least doubt that even the present numbers are a burden. It has to be conceded that India is overpopulated beyond doubt.

The Government was seized of the problem during the First Five Year Plan period and introduced the Family Planning Programme in 1952. In fact, India has the distinction of being the first country in the world that has adopted family planning as an official policy. Until 1976, the family planning was entirely voluntary and the Government role was restricted to motivating the people to accept the family planning and to providing clinical facilities and other services to its acceptors. But sadly enough, in 1976, the Government went headlong and announced the new National Population Policy which introduced the coercive element of sterilisation for all males who have sired three children. The State Governments indulged in all kinds of high - handed practices and ultimately the policy has turned out to be a boomerang. Later, even the "two - child norm" adumbrated in the policy of 2000 was also assailed by many, especially the women's groups as they are apprehensive that it would lead to female foeticide and an imbalance in sex - ratio with severe social problems. Recently the Union Ministry of Health has made it clear through its policy of 2002 that Government did not endorse coercive methods or a two - child norm and it talked of small family only.

However, it is disheartening to note that in spite of so many preventive measures taken in the country, it was losing the battle for limiting the population growth and the problem is staring still in our face. Apart from motivating the people to accept and practise the "small family norm" they must be made to realise through mass literacy especially female literacy and education drives that it would cause less strain on their purse. Social scientists over the world accept today that literacy backed by welfare programme is the best and the only socially effective method of population control. Kerala State bears an ample testimony to it. According to the report on "Human Development in South Asia -- 1998", India has the largest illiterate population in the world - 424 million which exceeds the total combined population of the North American continent and Japan. It is tragic to note that if we take the Centre and States together, India spends 6 to 8 per cent of its GDP on the social sector.

The world Population Day celebrated on July 11 every year should serve as an occasion for the Indian political leaders, planners and demographers to take stock of the situation and to make an assessment of the reasons for the unimpressive performance of the family planning programme in relation to cost, effort and time invested in it. It is in the interest of India, as a signatory of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development of 1994 (ICPD) that it would implement the programme enunciated at it such as empowering women and meeting people's needs for education and reproductive child health care (RCH) earnestly for good results. The Government would do well to pick up considerable political will in this regard. The need of the hour is a change in the Indian mindset and we can ignore the problem only at our peril. To conclude in the words of Mr. M. S. Swaminathan, Chairman of the Expert Group on National Population Policy, "If the population policy goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right."

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT RELEVANCE

Shri D. Dakshina Murthy
Principal, GVP College of Post Graduate Studies

There is tremendous growth in the field of higher education in respect of number of institutions that came up and the number of students that are enrolled. According to the information of UGC 1995 there are 214 university level institutions (Central - 13, State Universities - 151, Deemed to be Universities - 36, Institutions of national importance - 14), 8210 colleges with about 2,86,000 teachers and 5 million plus students. The enrollment goes up every year by 45%. In contrast to the quantitative increase, there is a general observation that the quality of education has come down. When we introspect from certain aspects like the defeat of the very purpose of higher education, disastrous performance of Government run and aided institutions, commercialisation by private institutions, the various types of malpractices at different levels, irrelevance of the courses offered to the needs of society etc., the picture appears to be discouraging. Unless we take bold steps to rectify the situation, it amounts to colossal waste of Government's money, and parents' money, and unnecessary diversion of energies and time of young students in their prime age for about 5 to 6 years. Since the word private implies commercialisation, late prof. Rami Reddy renamed the

private managements as Non - Government organisations and emphasised the role of N.G.O's in Higher Education.

And, of course, it should be borne in mind that education cannot exist in isolation and the impact of good and bad existing in the community are definite to fall on this field also. The corruption in different forms, absence of accountability etc are as a result of degeneration of values in the society. The necessity of establishing good traditions through education is much more, as on such process of man making education depends on the future of the society.

Education should be related to the life, needs and aspirations of the people. The present education system is too academic. It is not of material help in increasing the national wealth. The key to rapid national development is dedication and hard work. Educational institutions should give a lead to the society in this matter and create the required climate in the educational system itself.

Dr. Koushik, Director, Institute of Astro Physics said that Science in general and physics in particular is an experimental science. But in India, science is predominantly theory. That is a serious handicap. In the US and Europe, it is more balanced in favour of both theory and experimentation.

Presently the degree level courses are serving as passports for post graduate studies. They are not designed to be terminal courses meant for preparing the pupils to take up jobs related to their fields. The utility of these courses is highly questioned. The course should be terminal for enabling one to settle in a vocation or job and at the same time should enable him to go vertically upwards in the educational field.

The present degree courses do not satisfy these requirements. Such study of subjects of academic interest should be limited to certain centres of excellence and the universities are meant for this purpose and they should maintain the excellence by strengthening such courses in all the ways.

Establishment of colleges, with degree courses with subjects which have no application in the area, in the name of encouraging education even in small tehsil places indiscriminately resulted in poor quality of college education and the unemployment of the educated. Many experts stress on the need - based education. We have to examine whether the present higher education meets

the needs of our community or on the other side whether the present degree holders find applicability to their knowledge in the society. The answer to these points is in the negative. So we have to reorient our higher education so that it is meaningful, purposive and relevant to the needs of the society.

The Government has been showing concern in this regard for a long time. The following are some promises made in the National Policy of Education - 1986, which emphasised on several improvements in higher education. Some of them are

1. To provide increasing flexibility in the combination of courses.
2. Redesigning the courses to meet the demands of specialisation better.
3. Participation of University and parents in designing the course structure to have need- based and meaningful education.
4. Special emphasis on linguistic competence.
5. Orientation programmes for newly appointed teachers, and systematic assessment of teachers' performance.
6. National evaluation Organisation should be set up to Review the course content periodically and changes should be recommended if necessary to meet the needs of the users.
7. Rural universities to be developed and institutions with grass root level programmes Gandhian basic education will be developed.

Much has been said and less is being concretized. It is time that every one concerned with this became aware of the necessity of bringing out the changes necessary in the existing pattern of curriculum and start working on them.

THE GAYATRI - II

Shri C. Sivasankaram

The mystic syllable *Aum* that denotes Paramatman is Gayatri. Savita is Savitri that brings the singer of Gayatri face to face with the Divine Being. Gayatri bears two more names - Savitri and Saraswati. Brahma means Veda and Veda is the product of Gayatri. Her crucial role in the vast manifold drama of the world is undisputed. She purifies the believers in Veda by sprinkling the Saraswati water which is composed of Vedic hymns. Her essential nature is akin to Paramatman.

Gayatri consists of 24 syllables. The *Valmiki Ramayana* is an epic of 24 thousand verses. She is the personification of all sacred letters and she is the Paragon of piety and source of life energy. She is wealth, riches, prosperity, good fortune, beauty, luster, splendor and glory and what not. All metres, all the sages, all the gods and all scriptures are her progeny. Gayatri metre is the sixth of the 26 metres. Viswamitra, the forefather of Andhras is the sage of the Gayatri. Agni is her mouth. She is the root of all creation as is the earth.

Her head is Brahma, her heart is Vishnu and her summit is Rudra. Sankhyayana is her primeval kinsman. Her six stomachs are:

- 1) Siksha (deals with the art of pronunciation)
- 2) Vyakaranam (the science of grammar)
- 3) Chandassu (Prosody or metrical arrangement)
- 4) Niruktam ((A glossary of obscure phrases used in the Vedas)
- 5) Jyotishamu (Astronomy / Astrology) and
- 6) Kalpasutra (a religious rule - cum - precept in grammar)

The *Vedas* are under her benign hold and within her domain. Her complexion being snow - white, her inward and outward are not only pure but wholly holy. When she thus prayed ceremonially the prayer becomes comprehensive and vivid and tantamount to individual worship of the gods (Agni to Rudra). Profound meditation on Gayatri inspires powerful intelligence and spontaneous spiritual speculation. It permits the meditator to draw closer and closer to That which is Gayatri leading him to identification with the one without a second; realization of Truth, widening of

sympathy and breaking down of barriers that divide man from man.

The finding of the famous Theosophist Lead Beater after prolonged research into the cadence and intonation of Gayatri lays down that a slight departure from the conventional rule of pronunciation will fail to get the boon of light for which the prayer prays. If the prayer is done in strict consonance with correct cadence the rays of the SAVITUR (the Sun) will get into the body of the prayer through the pores in the skin getting diffused to all parts of the body, causing effective cure of all sorts of diseases.

In conclusion, I quote a telling passage from Rabindranath Tagore's biography. It reveals vividly the glory and spiritual efficacy and practical possibility of the Gayatri. "*Although Tagore was not of an age (at the time of initiation 12 years old) when he could comprehend the meaning of the words, something in them moved him deeply and made him experience an expansion of Consciousness.* He continued to recite the Gayatri verses and to meditate on their significance whenever he felt an urge to withdraw into himself and often when he did so his eyes would overflow with tears. Gayatri remained his life long companion and he continued to find in it a source of strength and joy long after he had discarded the sacred thread, the symbol of twice - born."

(Concluded)

"While one honest and sincere man can create millions and billions of rupees, no millions and billions of rupees can create an honest and sincere worker."

- Durgabai Deshmukh

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