

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

June 2021



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”
– The Mother

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email: sadlecjn@gmail.com, info@resurgentindia.org,
URL : www.resurgentindia.org

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Editor : Ms. Garima Sharma, B-45, Batra Colony, Village Bharatpur, P.O. Kaushal Ganj, Bilaspur Distt. Rampur (U.P)

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Successful Future

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Contents

A Declaration	5
The Truth About Modern Polity - 4	6
India's Independence and the Story of the Socialist Economic Planning and Its Aftermath	6
A. The Socialistic Economic Planning	6
B. The Green and the White Revolutions ..	7
C. The Economic Liberalisation – Adoption of the Western Open Market Capitalistic Model ..	9
D. The Spreading of the Octopus of Corruption in India During the First Seven Decades of Independence	12
E. The Growth and the Working of the Commercial and the Utilitarian Spirit in India	26
HIGHLIGHTS	31
India-Taliban Communications	31
Attack on IAF Airbase	32
A New Political Beginning in Jammu and Kashmir	33
Elections in Iran	34
The New Atlantic Charter, G7 Meet and Biden- Putin Summit	35
The Mother and Sri Aurobindo on Vaccines.....	37

A DECLARATION

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

THE TRUTH ABOUT MODERN POLITY - 4

INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE STORY OF THE SOCIALIST ECONOMIC PLANNING AND ITS AFTERMATH

When the British fully took over India, they set upon establishing an intermediary race of Indians whom they could entrust with their work at middle and lower levels of government and administration. In the words of Macaulay: "We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellects." (François Gautier, *India's Self-Denial*, page 43)

Most of our pre-independence leaders belonged to this class and at Independence not only the British education system, but the whole of their constitutional, judicial, legal and administrative system was blindly adopted and remains in effect even today virtually unchanged. Our post-independence leaders too, having been educated and groomed under this system, show little or no true appreciation or even understanding of the genius of India – its great culture, its Sanatana – because eternally true – Dharma and its soul.

A. THE SOCIALISTIC ECONOMIC PLANNING

In 1951, our country, with its leaders drawing inspiration from the Russian economic model, embarked upon a course of planned economic development which took the form of five year plans. Our leaders of the time believed that with the help of Science, Socialism and Economic Planning

and the Indian people's own government – after seven centuries of most painful subjection to foreign rule – they will be able to take the country to an ideal state superior to anything that might have been achieved in the ancient past. The initial concentration of the economic planning was on the construction of big multipurpose hydroelectric power projects, steel plants, a network of roads, etc. The big steel plants and huge hydroelectric power projects like Bhakhara-Nangal dam were declared to be the true and fitting places of worship for all forward looking spirits in the new India.

The concentration on infrastructure and heavy industries coupled with stiff exchange controls, Licence Raj and other **ill conceived and misdirected efforts at detailed “regulation”** – which it may be more apt to call **“strangulation”** – of the economic system stifled all initiative and resulted in a stagnant economy. In fact, the economic system was saved from complete collapse only because of the significant leakages that developed in the application of rigorous economic regulations due to the interaction between the **robust built-in survival instinct of an economic system and an inefficient and corrupt (or always corruptible for a price) government machinery.** The supply of consumer goods, especially of the consumer durables, was restricted and with the stagnant agriculture of those days, the supply of food grains was proving inadequate to feed the growing population. The situation on the food front became especially acute in the mid-sixties.

B. THE GREEN AND THE WHITE REVOLUTIONS

The Green revolution brought about a significant increase in the production of food grains in the late sixties and early seventies of the last century. The “begging bowl” country

soon became self-sufficient in food which freed it from the necessity of seeking degrading foreign handouts. Improved hybrid seeds, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides were the main elements of this sudden turnaround in agricultural production. Later on, the introduction of improved breed of cows from West brought about the so called “White Revolution” which quickly led to a breakthrough in the supply of milk and milk-products in the country. The quality of the milk and the dung and urine of the superior breed cows from the West has been found to be inferior in quality as compared to the domestic breed and a good number of people are switching back to superior domestic brands such as the Gir from Gujarat. With the knowledge and the popularization of simple procedures for making chemical milk and mixing it with the cow or buffalo milk, it has become dangerous to use milk and other dairy products available in the open market or supplied by most government dairies which procure milk from the individual milk producers spread out in the rural areas.

The “green revolution” too has been far from being – what it initially looked like – an unmixed blessing. It is now increasingly beginning to be realised that the increased volume has come not only at the expense of the quality which has been declining all along but also has a hidden and ever growing price tag attached to it which is fast reaching levels which will be too high for us to pay. The underground water-table is running dangerously low, the surface water sources are drying out and the land – which has been ruthlessly raped using chemicals – is so fast losing its fertility that even our increasing doses of fertilizers and pesticides will not be able to keep the production from going down and that

too even if, and only if, we can continue to pour sufficient water out of the fast depleting stock that was accumulated over thousands of years. Not only this, but in addition to all the above the chemical food is playing havoc with the health of our people because now, not only the taste and nutritive value of our food grains, fruits and vegetables and milk is nothing compared to what it was even two-three decades ago, but the level of harmful chemical substances present in these food items is, at times, dozens of times more than what is considered safe for human consumption. In short, the indiscriminate use of chemicals in various products which is playing havoc with the health of humans and cattle in particular and flora and fauna in general, is leading us towards an ecological disaster. Here also with the introduction and the beginning of the supply of purely chemical vegetables and rice in the market, matters have taken a more sinister turn.

C. THE ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION – ADOPTION OF THE WESTERN OPEN MARKET CAPITALISTIC MODEL

As discussed earlier, by the late seventies our big neighbour Communist China started moving towards a gradual privatization and liberalization of its economy. Still, we continued with our restrictive economic policies and kept talking about socialism and removal of poverty through its agency. It was only the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 that fully brought home – at least to a leading section of the policy makers – the foolishness of the restrictive economic policies which we had stubbornly continued to follow even though the country had been reeling under the suffocating and utterly corrupt bureaucratic machine

that had been growing in size and crookedness as a result of our elected government's efforts directed at a more and more detailed regulation of the economy. It was plain that the Asian countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore who had subscribed to open market model had grown very fast and the other Asian and East European countries who followed the socialistic model simply stagnated and some even collapsed under the weight of a corrupt government machinery. To hold back was impossible in the face of these facts. Shri Narshimha Rao's government took the first step towards economic liberalization by initiating a cautious and gradual but progressive deregulation of the economy. The non-congress governments that followed continued this policy and our economy was increasingly opened to foreign goods and capital. Our domestic industries which were known for their poor quality products were now getting increasingly exposed to competition from abroad. This has led to a lot of changes in the structure of private sector industries which are now getting increasingly better equipped to meet the challenges of globalization under which an increasing number of MNC's are entering the Indian markets on their own or in collaboration with Indian companies.

During the past decade a reverse movement has also started – an increasing penetration of world markets by the Indian entrepreneurs and a partial inflow of the Indian talent back to India, especially due to the recent novel phenomenon of outsourcing. Although India still continues to supply an increasing number of technically trained young talent to Europe and North America, there are signs that, as the salaries here are getting better and even competitive (in real terms) to those in the West – specially due to Outsourcing by the

MNC's – more and more Indians are staying home. Our cities, especially those housing the newly built huge Western style Shopping Malls and the offices of the MNC's are increasingly beginning to look like their counterparts in the West. The upshot of all this and the increasing penetration of Western science & technology in the lives of Indian people due to the IT revolution is that we are getting increasingly exposed to Western modes of thinking, living and acting.

Where has all this been leading us to? We are clearly moving towards becoming a modern socio-economic machine which will be geared towards meeting, primarily, only the vital and physical needs of man, for the material perfection and well-being seems to be fast becoming the sole recognised Dharma of Indian society, all else being considered either a pretentious falsity or a thing of minor and dependent consequence. **The overriding concern that the modern societies show for the fulfilment of physical desires of man, and the prominent part that money plays in the fulfilment of such desires has brought in such a short-sighted spirit of utilitarianism that everything is judged from the monetary angle and success has become synonymous with greater command over resources. In other words, money has become the supreme lord in fact, if not in name.**

The gospel of utilitarianism which seems to permeate modern societies has debased by its touch all that has opened to it. Virtually nothing seems to have escaped completely its distorting influence. Politics, education, medicine, art, music, religion, friendships, relations, love, etc., all seem to have come under its sway. The spirit of duty, commitment, service seems to be fast losing ground to it even in areas

such as education, medicine, social service, etc., which have traditionally been its strongholds.

D. THE SPREADING OF THE OCTOPUS OF CORRUPTION IN INDIA DURING THE FIRST SEVEN DECADES OF INDEPENDENCE

(I) DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW

Violations of one or more of the established legal, aesthetic, ethical and religious codes of a society are often termed corruption. It is important to know what is behind the sense of corruption and how it is related to the other notions or labels such as that of Legal and Illegal, True and False, Right and Wrong, Beautiful and Ugly, Virtue and Sin, and Dharma and Adharma which are commonly used to characterize the actions of individuals and societies. All these concepts or notions are overlapping, invariably run into each other's territories and have their common source or origin in the legal, aesthetic, moral or ethical and religious codes of a society or collectivity which again in their turn, have their source in the fundamental Truths of the Spirit or the highest approachable Reality. The exact form that these codes take depends on the times and the culture or society to which they belong, even though the Truths of the Spirit are independent of these and the forms – always more or less inadequate – in which they get expressed. They are the one source of all the ultimate standards of the race.

An overwhelming proportion of humanity has always – through all the ages – been living, predominantly, in the egoism of their physical being (includes the physical vital and the physical mind) – with their consciousness dominated by the pursuit of its interests. The extent of this domination

or the colour of the pursuit depends on the degree of the psychological development of the individual and the colour of the age prevailing in the collective atmosphere. For example, in the Satya or Krita Yuga of the traditional Indian division of the human cycle in the four ages or Yugas (the Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas), the men who dominate and govern the collectivity by the power of their consciousness and determine the colour of the age are men centered and living in their intuitive being and hence full of love, wisdom and power. The governing idea in such a golden age is that of self-exceeding (Aryanism) and perfection by the practice of Yajna – termed sacrifice in English but which is more like self-consecration (or giving) or “making sacred” rather than self-annulment or suffering – which enables the ardent practitioners to attain to ever deeper and higher (truer and mightier) levels of their being and which, once attained, tends to percolate into the outer life and nature and colour the collective consciousness by the Adhyatmo-Sattwic qualities of this age. The next age – the Silver Age – is Treta, the age of Dharma where the divine preserver and sustainer (Vishnu – who had descended as Yajna in the Satya) now descends as the Chakravarti Raja – the sustainer of society’s righteousness, its sword of justice and defence and the preserver of the Dharma. The Sattwic qualities colour this age. In the next age – the Bronze Age – the age of Dwapara, there is a further decline in man’s character, power and capacities and as a result intellectual regulation becomes necessary and substitutes for the rule of Dharma. Men begin to live, primarily, in ideas, thoughts and emotions which assume much greater prominence and doubt makes a home in man’s heart and mind and he has to seek the aid of written word or Shastra to properly direct his actions. In

this age Vishnu takes the form of King or Ruler who begins to take the help of written word – but only help, there is no mechanical subjection to it like in the present, rather he uses his understanding and intelligence freely along with the highest available recorded wisdom of the race – the Shastra, to guide his actions. The Sattwo-Rajasic qualities are predominant in this age. In the Kaliyuga or the Iron Age, there is a further diminution in man’s capacities and powers and he begins to be increasingly subject to his instincts, impulses and desires. The written word is not sufficient to maintain order in collective life and, subjection to some kind of outer machinery or system – which still remained very simple in Oriental societies – becomes necessary. In the modern Western materialistic cultures – which India is at present trying hard to emulate and welcome – system, organization, machinery seem to have attained a stranglehold. Bondage to these has been carried almost to its highest degree and man’s inner spiritual freedom is getting increasingly massacred in modern societies. Their increasing passion for organizing external liberty and equality is proving to be such a futile endeavour that more they try, the worse it gets because when the inner freedom is gone, external liberty follows it.

The Age or the Yuga prevailing in the collectivity exercises a powerful shaping influence on the individuals, pulling them towards its own characteristic working. The less developed the individual, the more powerful is the pull exercised on him by the collectivity. The nature of the various collectivities that have developed in different parts of the globe during the past one hundred years have two things in common – (i) they all suffer from a common utilitarian stain and (ii) they all owe their emergence to the persistent and futile efforts

of modern (European) man to organize collective economic and political life on the basis of – and with varying stress on – equality and liberty but without any real basis for fraternity which is the base of the triangle of liberty, equality and fraternity brought into prominence by the historic French Revolution. A review of the modern man's efforts in the above direction and their results is necessary to understand the origin of the utilitarian spirit at its roots.

Europe's attempts in this direction began in an organized form in the early years of the twentieth century and produced fruits in the form of Capitalism, Socialism, Communism, Fascism, and Nazism. Capitalism, keeping a moderate appearance, persisted throughout the century while all the others either passed away or became inconsequential by the end of the century. But recently, especially after the final collapse of communism in Russia in 1990 and the evaporation of its potential military and political threat, Capitalism has begun showing its true colours. Its vital organ, the modern industrial machine is beginning to be recognized by an increasing number of perceptive people around the world as nothing but an organized force of human selfishness, cruelty and greed which is significantly contributing to the forces leading humanity towards an ecological and moral disaster. It has given rise, around the world, to a ruthless exploitation of all (living or non-living) at the hands of a league of an utterly corrupt political and business leadership. This has been successful, so far, in camouflaging its true objects and thereby persuading the common masses that they are being led swiftly towards the goal of an increasing freedom, equality and progress resulting in an increasing comfort, synonymous, according to this barbarian mentality, with

the well-being of the people at large. These latest flowers of modern man's efforts – Democracy and Capitalism – have been successful in cultivating a more and more acute and shortsighted spirit of utilitarianism among the masses. This is perhaps one of the grossest expressions of man's egoism and selfishness. In this age, most people have come to predominantly live in their physical being and nature and its satisfaction and protection is their principal preoccupation. For a person with this kind of outlook, money becomes supremely important because it seems to him to go a long way in meeting the basic needs of his physical being. Besides this, money has a key role in enabling one to satisfy not only the animal appetites and crude vanities of the lower vital nature but also – if one is sufficiently developed in these parts – the cravings of one's middle and higher vital nature for status, name and fame and for the crude satisfaction it gets from the respect, awe and deference shown towards one's being by others. The importance of these things does not get diluted but may even become greater in the case of persons who, in addition to a developed vital nature, have also a developed sattwic and even a religious and spiritual nature. Often, only the appearances are different and one, even with a developed higher nature, continues to harbour an unchanged physical-vital nature and its characteristic action behind the frontal appearances. Only when there has been a significant growth of the higher parts of nature at the expense of or accompanied by a sublimation of the lower parts that money begins to lose much of its importance for the person so evolved. But such cases are very rare and, given the degree of monetization of the collective physical and psychological infrastructure, even for such persons money becomes important whenever they are moved to seek an

outer and wider expression of their truth and experience. In the light of the above, one can, not only understand, but may even begin to have a sympathetic attitude towards people suffering from this (utilitarian) malady or increasingly falling prey to it under the pressure of the collective atmosphere in whose creation one may have also made one's own little contribution. It is with such understanding and sympathetic attitude that we attempt to look into the actual working of the utilitarian spirit in various spheres of individual and collective action and living in India.

(II) CONTROL OF CORRUPTION – DIFFERENT EQUATIONS IN INDIA AND THE WEST

When the acts that are violations of the legal code and termed corruption are such as to imply also a breach of the aesthetic, moral and / or religious code of the society then it is easier to tackle the problem of corruption because the measures to counter such corrupt acts have, in addition to the force of law, also the full forces of the aesthetic, moral and religious standards or codes of the society behind them. When some acts are deemed corrupt solely on the ground that they constitute a violation of the legal code then it is very difficult to control them and practically impossible to abolish them altogether. The above is one of the fundamental reasons behind an increasing failure of the elected governments in India to contain solely legal corruption.

In the West there is a strong and well developed civic sense (pleasing to the eye and other senses) accompanied by the almost universally accepted standards of collective and national ethics or morality which few can ignore without getting into serious trouble. But there is little or no social or collective pressure or curb on an individual's hedonistic

tendencies whose naked and unabashed pursuit – often shocking to Oriental sensibilities – characterises the life of individuals in the West. The opposite is the case in India where there are very strong curbs exercised by family, caste and community on an individual's behavior but, although growing, there is still very little of developed civic sense or a sense of collective and national ethics to regulate the conduct of individuals in matters of common interest or concern. In the West the lawmakers and the administrators share with the common people a strong sense of collective ethics inculcated through education and training conducted under the shadow of a strong and supportive collective suggestion. This enables the elected governments to achieve a strict and rigorous enforcement of laws and rules made by them.

In India the situation is just the opposite. Here the political and bureaucratic machinery – like the masses or perhaps even more than them – is entirely devoid of any civic sense or sense of collective morality or any sense of obligation to the common people who alone ultimately bear the burden of maintaining it. Therefore, it is not only useless for any collective good but is being seen by an increasing number of people as a growing monster – in size and depravity – and threatening the very existence of the race.

In order to understand the above mentioned juxtaposition between India and the West, we have to widen our perspective by looking at the whole scenario of the division of humanity in two complementary parts of the divine Whole. Reason plays an overwhelming and important part in Western societies and people find it easier to overcome the pull of lower tendencies when they are in contradiction with those canons of reason that have come

to be commonly accepted by the collectivity as reasonable. Thus, the Western Semitic races can and have undergone a considerable amount of rationalization for which they are suited. But the Indians are, by their very nature, not suited for such a high degree of rationalization and governance of life primarily by reason. They are, by their very Aryan constitution, intuitional either directly or through and by the heart and mind. An overwhelming majority of Indians spontaneously use their intuition to guide their action and behavior and to find their way out of a difficulty or to solve a problem. The constructions of reason carry little weight – at least for action – for most of them and this is true even for those who may have gone through a considerable degree of rationalization during their education and training. This is the basic reason why the present educational, economic, political, administrative, legal and judicial systems which have their origin in the Western mentality and cult of reason are found wanting and unsuitable for the temperament of the Indian people who, wherever possible, spontaneously tend to bypass such systems – which not unoften appears to them like a jungle of blind rules and laws – either by means of some subtle arrangement or personal relationship and approach or by the use of money. As things stand, the latter means are increasingly replacing the former ones as they are getting increasingly blunted under the pressure of a growing utilitarian spirit.

(III) THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION IN INDIA DURING THE YEARS 1950 TO 2014: THE ROLE OF THE ELECTED GOVERNMENTS

The laws made and enacted out of an inordinate desire to control and direct the socio-economic system on desired

course have been, in general, most ill-conceived and enacted in a hurry without understanding or giving due consideration to the innate Dharma of the health and functioning of these systems. Drawing inspiration from the Soviet model of development and planning, the first few five year plans envisaged the necessity of an increasing governmental intervention leading to a systematic control and regulation of the economic system by the state because this was deemed essential for a rapid economic development along socially preferred tracks. This attitude continued unabated till the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early nineties after which the government policy gradually took a diametrically opposite turn in this respect and started to liberalize and privatize the economic system by progressively dismantling the machinery of detailed governmental controls and regulations put in place during the first four decades or the first phase of economic planning in India. By the end of this phase, the dense net of the vast arrays of ill-conceived, inept and misapplied government laws, rules and regulations had become very suffocating for the people and gave the impression of being an unconscious attempt, not so much at regulation but at a “strangulation” of the whole living economic system. The saving grace was that a good number of really fatal laws and rules neither were, nor really could have been rigorously enforced, for, had it been possible to do so, the whole economic system would have at once come to a standstill and would have swiftly moved towards a complete collapse bringing home to everyone the real nature and true worth of a good deal of governmental intervention in the economic system. In the nature of the functioning of things, ineffective governance invariably attempts to make up for its incompetence by enacting more and more elaborate laws

and regulations and devising novel schemes.

When a living system is subjected to very dumb and paralyzing restrictions and regulations, its natural and virtually invincible survival instinct sets out to discover and develop further necessary means and ways for bypassing these – a thing easily done in India whose people are well known – the world over – for their genius in such things. All this results in a tremendous pressure on all the participants – but more so on those at the receiving end – to at once find a way out taking all possible advantage of the new situation by some kind of manipulation or arrangement or simply by bribing the regulators. The regulators and the newly sprung class of intermediaries also undergo a similar process and attempt to optimize their gains. By a strictly legal criterion, all these things are illegal and often even criminal. However, when such a network of laws not only remains intact over a long period of time but even grows in perversity and pervasiveness, an understanding and tolerance gradually develops among the masses for whom it becomes a habitual thing and any element of moral disapprobation that might have been there initially, completely evaporates from the psychology of the participants and spectators in this tragic – tragic for the moral and emotional health of the people – and seemingly never ending drama which keeps on growing ever more tragic. The obstinate and increasingly shameless attempts of the elected government to burden the governmental machinery with this kind of background with the task of administering ever more elaborate and expensive programmes and schemes for the upliftment of the masses are like someone shamelessly spending huge amount of precious resources and energy for developing a

stage and elaborately planning a series of intricate dance performances – with an avowed object of entertaining the people – for someone who, with a long history of affliction from cerebral palsy, cannot even walk few steps straight without help. One can easily understand that initially, in the absence of any sufficient and concrete experience of the workings of modern governmental machinery on the part of the post independence leaders, the whole approach may have been adopted due to its then popular intellectual appeal, but to understand its continuation even after its true colours have been vividly revealed to the gaze of all, one needs to look deeply into the motive of the political leadership. If it is continuing even at present then it can only be because the present day politicians allow themselves to believe that Indian people are still so shortsighted and foolish that they can be manipulated by the promises and announcements of ingenious schemes, plans to be carried out for their benefit and outright handouts to be delivered to them by the same government machinery which has been ever busy designing and inflicting more and more unspeakable forms of privations on them. If such political leaders do not get thrown out of power even after such blatantly shameless acts, then it cannot be because most people are taken in by their cunning designs but simply because the people may not have any really less unpalatable choice available to them under the workings of our democratic system. The democratic system which has, of late, become so wonderful that when a new political party or an alliance of political parties comes to power, it is not because people expect anything good from them but simply because they had gotten so sickened by the previous ones that they couldn't do anything but throw them out and replace them by these whose earlier misdeeds

have gotten somewhat dimmed in their short memory. If we are ever going to come out of this futile circle, we have to realize, once for all, that no outer machinery, however ingenious, can make our life blessed for us unless we change from within. What one is within that one shall enjoy outside.

Now, coming back to the issue under consideration, it is obvious from the discussion above that a good deal of the so-called corruption in the financial and business field has its origin in the survival instinct of the socio-economic system. In dealing with such corruption, when further attempts are made to check it by filling the loopholes etc. then, ultimately, things do not improve but often get worse. Most of the laws, rules and regulations aimed at controlling, regulating and improving the functioning of social, political and economic systems have often been contrary to the dharma of the functioning of these systems and have been instrumental in spreading the contagion of corruption to most other areas of the system including the judiciary. Government's further legislations and other attempts in this direction – without any truer or deeper understanding and even a feeling for the necessity or utility of such an understanding – makes the whole governmental machinery even more cumbersome and an extra burden, not to those who have learned their lessons and have become adept at profiting, or at least buying their way out of it, but to those who are either not in a position to participate in the above profitable (corrupt) activity or are incapable of stooping to such low level of functioning due to the peculiarity of their psychological constitution. The end result, witnessed no matter where one looks at present, is that life becomes progressively more difficult and the whole atmosphere thoroughly suffocating for the heart, mind and

soul of the people at large who end up bearing the burden of supporting an ever growing and more and more corrupt and expensive government machinery.

The various governmental laws and rules and actions which have their origin in an unabashed demagoguery of the politicians are deprived of even the remnants of sanctity or validity that they might still have had for some gullible people. The process has been going on for quite some time now and at present things have reached such a state that politicians are, almost universally, held in a very low esteem by the people. So widespread has become the utilitarian spirit that even when the common people know – as most of them seem to – they quite routinely put up with the demagogic acts of the politicians because they are themselves no less infected with this spirit and, therefore, rather than oppose such acts – which they vociferously do only when they feel that they stand to lose by it – they invariably look for and are ever busy discovering and devising more and more ingenious ways and means of taking advantage of these. A record of such progressive discoveries made – the process is still going on and is likely to continue in the near future – by the actors in various fields of activities constitutes the substance of the details of the working of the utilitarian spirit in India.

In its culmination in the political field, the utilitarian spirit has brought things to such a state that, at present, most politicians have either consciously (very rare) or subconsciously – coupled with a spontaneous and unsuspecting belief in the critical importance of their staying in office for the good of the country, – reached such a psychological state that they have, behind all their apparent solemn professions; only a one point program – to acquire

power or stay in power, if they already have it, by using all and whatever means that are at their disposal. Among countless acts and schemes enacted in this spirit, two have stood out persistently, openly and blatantly to the gaze of all. First, it has been found expedient by those in power to profess love and sympathy and pander to the prejudices and weaknesses of the organized communal, caste or regional groups while almost completely disregarding those that are not so well organized. A plethora of special laws, agencies, rules and quotas have been designed with solely this end in view. The second important thing that has found common favour with politicians is the practice of using all the money that can possibly be siphoned out of the public purse to pursue their one point agenda. The practice has become so popular with governments that in an attempt to outdo their competitors they, in a spirit of self-praise, unashamedly flout the list of programs and schemes and handouts enacted by them before the eyes of the common people – whose dear money they are thus misusing – by advertising these (so called achievements) in various newspapers and magazines at a huge cost to the public purse. All such things are aimed at buying the support (votes) of all the groups who may be labeled poor, oppressed or underprivileged. The latest trend in this field is to attempt to progressively widen this net by bringing as many groups as possible under it. This has become possible because in a fast growing economy the government's revenues tend to grow even faster. Now, what is this whole thing all about? Isn't it an outright pick-pocketing of the people? – especially when in their own statements politicians admit that they are aware of the fact that only a very very small and progressively declining fraction of the money thus spent (mostly on paper) ever reaches those for

whom it was intended. This trend continued unabated till the coming of the Modi government in 2014 which has been trying, with some success at the central government level, to reverse this trend with the help of the latest advancements in IT.

E. THE GROWTH AND THE WORKING OF THE COMMERCIAL AND THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT IN INDIA

(I) THE WORLD IS VERY ILL

Things are much worse today than when the Mother said in 1955, “The latest scientific discoveries, applied to life, have put within the reach of everyone all kinds of things which formerly were reserved only for the intellectual and artistic elite; and to justify their effort and profit by their work, they have made things which can sell most, that is, the lowest, most ordinary, most vulgar things, the easiest to understand because they require no effort and no education. And the whole world is drowned under these things, to such an extent that when there’s someone who has written a good book or a fine play, there is no longer any place for him anywhere, because the whole place has been taken up by these things.

Naturally there are sensible people who try to react; but it is very difficult. First of all the commercial mentality should be driven out from the world. This will take some time.... there is yet the golden calf, there, reigning over the world; before it is pulled down some time will yet go by, I am afraid. This has so perverted men’s mind, that it is for them the criterion. You see, in America when someone is spoken about, it is said: “He, oh, he is worth a million dollars!” This indeed is the greatest compliment one can pay. And it is

this: someone asks, “Do you know this person? What is he worth?” – “He is worth a hundred thousand dollars”, “He is worth five hundred dollars.” So this means that he has a position which brings him this. “Is he intelligent, is he stupid? Is he...” This is not at all important. “Is he a good man or a bad one?” That makes no difference at all! “Is he a rich man or a poor one?” If he is rich, ah, ah! “I would like to know him very much! If he is poor, I have nothing to do with him.” There! Naturally America is a young country, so its ways are those of a child, but of a fairly ill-bred child. But the older countries have become too old and can no longer react, they shake their heads and wonder if after all this youth is not right. Everything is like that. The world is very ill.” (CWM 7: 311-12)

(II) THE ACTION OF THE HOSTILE POWERS

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have repeatedly told us that in our surface human nature we are usually the unconscious slaves of many undivine and anti-divine powers of the vital and mental worlds whose very purpose is to block the descent of Divine Love, Light and Force so that they can continue to keep this evolving earth-nature subject to their yoke of falsehood, suffering and death. A person or a society which blindly pursues – as we have been doing ever since we have been in a position of doing so – a surface vital-mental objective comes increasingly under the influence of these powers with predictable consequences. This has always been well understood and recognized in India, but under the influence of Western materialistic and utilitarian spirit we have nationally forgotten it and as a result have gotten ourselves into the present precarious and dangerous situation. The hostile powers not only invade and try to

bring under their sway the life of the individuals but also the psychological infrastructure of the collectivity which under such an influence progressively loses its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong or true and false. A successful possession of the collective infrastructure makes them virtually irresistible for individuals – even for such individuals who have a developed inner being and who, in a normal collective atmosphere, would have been successful in countering the evil influence of these beings to a large extent. Fear, Desire, Greed and Envy are the powerful levers that the hostile powers use to take increasing possession of individuals in a utilitarian society.

(III) THE ACTION OF THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT IN APPEARANCE

In appearance the action of the utilitarian spirit is like that of a canker which leaves the outside appearance of a fruit practically unscathed even while eating the core. But, in reality the action of this spirit is much more like the rust which not only spreads or expands laterally but also digs into ever deeper and deeper layers of the metal and stops only when it has turned it to dust. All this becomes very clear when we take practical examples of its twofold action in individuals and collectivities.

(IV) PERCOLATION OF THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT TO EVER DEEPER LEVELS

At present the famous dictum “a bad coin drives the good coin out of circulation” is becoming true in practically all walks of life due to the relentless action of the utilitarian spirit. More and more individuals are increasingly finding that the situation in their life and the field of work has

become such that they must consent to the use of more and more unethical and degrading means to succeed or even to survive. For example, let us assume that A and B are two competitors in a business and A resorts to the practice of avoiding paying of government taxes (whenever he can get away with it) and starts selling his articles a little cheaper. Even if B is a man of scruples, when he finds it increasingly difficult to stay in business he copies A. Now, to do better A decides to undercut his competitor by taking out of the product, in quality and substance, all that could be taken out 'safely' – without affecting the appearance, i.e. without the risk of the consumer finding out. This lowers the costs and enables A to further reduce his price. Now B must do something similar or if through his experience of so called 'realities of life', he gets exceedingly groomed in the commercial spirit and he may even do better and discover more novel ways of cheating customers and undercutting his competitors. Thus the disease percolates to deeper and deeper levels. Even people who begin with good intentions in any business or profession are either thrown out or begin sinking to ever lower levels in ethics and morality.

(V) THE LATERAL EXPANSION AND SPREAD OF THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT

The utilitarian spirit not only digs deeper, it also expands laterally and quickly spreads and has not remained confined to the area of business and finance. It has already made deep inroads in the area of services that practically must remain – as they traditionally have been – free from the commercial spirit if they are at all going to be able to perform their sacred task. Education, health and medicine, justice and not even philanthropy and religion are any longer immune from

the corrosive action of this rust of the human soul. Politics and Government has become so thoroughly contaminated with this spirit that modern politicians and leaders have only a one point program – to somehow or anyhow acquire power and to keep it at any cost. People have become so cynical that they cannot believe that a person in politics could be really honest even though what they call honest is far from the way honesty has traditionally been understood. So low have become the standards of honesty in public life that a politician who manipulates his office (or status) and uses it exclusively for the sole object of staying in power, but refrains from indulging in glaring financial irregularities for pecuniary gain, will easily pass the test of public ethics and will be considered honest. In all the areas where the utilitarian octopus spreads its tentacles, it starts digging deeper and deeper and consequently more and more ingenious discoveries are made in ways to cheat others for one's personal gain. Close family ties and intimate personal relations have so far remained largely free from the grosser forms of this commercialism because India has strong family ties and a spiritual tradition. However, a turn towards it has already been made – particularly in the urban areas – and it may not be long before it spreads and India begins to catch up with the Western gospel of each man for himself.

HIGHLIGHTS

INDIA-TALIBAN COMMUNICATIONS

India has, in a major shift, opened channels of communication with the Taliban. Without specifically confirming this communication, India has also not denied that it is in touch with select 'nationalist' factions of Taliban. These include leaders such as Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who is a part of the leadership council.

With US withdrawal from Afghanistan certain, Taliban has acquired major bargaining power. As a result, intra-governmental talks in, both, Qatar and Turkey have reached a stand-still, although in appearance, they have not been completely aborted. Taliban now controls 105 out of 398 districts in Afghanistan. In 201 other districts, Taliban claims control, while in 92 districts most are Taliban-controlled, while some are under the Afghan government.

Regional countries such as India, China, Pakistan and Iran are adjusting to the new reality in Afghanistan. While China, Pakistan and Iran have actively courted the Taliban, India has begun to do so now out of strategic and security compulsions. Outside of the region, Russia and Turkey have established a major presence in Afghanistan, especially Turkey, which is jostling to occupy the vacuum left by the US.

India's major concern will be checking the cross-border terrorism, in the event of Pakistan getting emboldened by change of guard in Afghanistan. It is in view of this that India has begun to talk to a section of 'nationalist' Taliban leadership, which is generally anti-Pakistan. Interestingly,

the immediate fallout of the Taliban's rapid ascendance to power has been the activation of terrorist organizations like anti-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the activation of Baloch separatism – developments which have complicated the security scenario for Pakistan.

The overall situation in Afghanistan – with the US withdrawal set to be complete by September 11, 2021 – portends a grim scenario for action against terrorism. It is an indictment of the failed US war against terrorist groups waged for over 20 years, which are more active than before and spread across Middle-east and Africa. The US – which had entered Afghanistan to destroy terrorism and stayed back to supposedly establish 'democracy' there – is now at the mercy of assurances from a stronger-than-ever Taliban. The US had counted on Pakistan's support for its 'war against terror', overlooking the fact that Pakistan's support was just a charade and that it was helping Taliban regroup in the Afghan hinterlands, even as the US went from one misadventure to another in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

India, by revoking Kashmir's special status in 2019 and adopting a security approach to control terrorism in Kashmir, has effectively secured itself to a great extent, in anticipation of US's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Now, in engaging with a section of a divided Taliban leadership, India is further hedging against Pakistan and trying to close potential channels of anti-India terrorism.

ATTACK ON IAF AIRBASE

An attack on an airbase of Indian Air Force occurred on June 26-27, when a drone dropped two explosive devices

on an airfield in Jammu. The explosions were linked to LeT and JeM – Pakistan-based terrorist outfits. While there were no casualties, yet, the incident has caused a stir within the security establishment, as it portends a new form of technological warfare using drones. It was also an audacious attempt to target India’s strategic military assets and infrastructure.

The incident has served as an urgent call for security establishment to engage with new technologies of warfare – such as drones, in which DRDO is considerably lagging in development. In recent years, drone technology has greatly evolved, making them difficult to detect and much lower in cost, available for deployment for civil as well as military purposes. Their range and payload have improved, and they can easily be bought in the market and can be built using kits. Being made of composite plastic and fabric, they cannot be easily detected by radar, and can fly at very low heights of below 100 feet.

According to Indian government, 167 drone sightings in 2019 and 77 in 2020 were recorded along the India-Pakistan border. Currently, India does not have sophisticated infrastructure to detect and target drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). It expedited the process of drone regulation in the wake of drone attacks on two major oil installations in Saudi Arabia in 2019. In the wake of the Jammu attack, the efforts to devise regulation – especially for small drones – has again picked up pace.

A NEW POLITICAL BEGINNING IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The all-party meeting between PM Modi, HM Amit

Shah and the parties from Jammu & Kashmir, portended the beginning of the political process in J&K. The agenda of the meeting was delimitation, holding of elections and the restoration of statehood to J&K. The demands for restoration of Article 370 were not raised at the meeting. It was decided that delimitation would be executed and after that the demand for full statehood would be implemented.

Delimitation would result in the redrawing of boundaries of assembly and Lok Sabha seats to represent the changes in population. After the 2001 census, no delimitation commission was setup as the J&K Assembly passed a law – upheld by the Supreme Court – putting a freeze fresh delimitation of seats till 2026. This froze the J&K seats at 87 viz. 46 in Kashmir, 37 in Jammu and 4 in Ladakh, while 24 seats are reserved for PoK, thereby creating a perception of inequity for the Jammu region.

The all-party meeting not only inaugurated the start of a political process in the form of delimitation, but also handed a tactical victory to the central government and the BJP vis-à-vis Kashmiri politicians and Pakistan. The Indian government has effectively ensured that the issue of Article 370 revocation will be buried permanently and that the goalpost of, both, Kashmiri politicians and of Pakistan has shifted to a much more diluted and nuanced demand for the restoration of statehood for J&K.

ELECTIONS IN IRAN

Iran's Presidential elections, witnessing the lowest ever turnout, handed a victory to the country's former judiciary chief, Ibrahim Raisi. Raisi is a hardliner, and has already been sanctioned by the US over his involvement in mass execution

of political prisoners in 1988. He was among the 7 contenders – including 5 conservatives – to fight the elections. Many other prominent faces were disqualified and barred from contesting elections, on flimsy grounds, by Iran’s Guardian Council.

The elections portend a new beginning for Iran. While the broad contours of policymaking will not be overhauled by the new President – as the main seat of power has always been the Guardian Council. Yet, the hardliner faction in Iran is likely to consolidate and become stronger, as Raisi has deep linkages within the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The marginalization of moderates will portend a change in Iran’s domestic politics, and have an impact on how the country’s deals with the outer world.

THE NEW ATLANTIC CHARTER, G7 MEET AND BIDEN-PUTIN SUMMIT

Visible patterns of western consolidation were witnessed through a series of international meetings. The ‘New Atlantic Charter’ signed by UK’s Johnson and US’s Biden was an attempt to consolidate the West to rise to new global challenges, in the form of the rise of China, spread of COVID19 and climate change. The Charter reaffirmed their faith in ‘democratic values’.

At the G7 meeting, the developed countries reached a landmark decision to implement the uniform minimum corporate tax, aimed at closing cross-border tax loopholes by the big corporates. The global uniform corporate tax rate of at least 15% was agreed upon. This will ensure that big corporates are not able to shift their profits and tax revenues to low tax jurisdictions.

Besides this, the rhetoric of the G7 meeting was aimed at emphasizing that America and the rest of the West are back in form and will seek to promote 'democracy'. In a message to China, they also called for investigating the origins of COVID19 virus. India's participation at this year's G7 as a 'fellow democracy' was a subtle framing of India's engagement with the West as an important ally, which the US hopes to use for countering China.

The US's bid to contain China was also subtly reflected in the Biden-Putin summit, which was held in Geneva. While nothing conclusive came out of the meeting, yet it set incipient rules of engagement which were much needed by, both, the US and Russia. The summit heralded a return of basic civility in relations. The US is closing most fronts in order to keep focus on China, while Putin hopes to benefit from basic civility with the US in order to pursue his agenda more smoothly in Ukraine, Middle-east etc.

THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO ON VACCINES

In 1978, an Indian doctor (who graduated in medicine in England, from the University of Edinburgh), published a book entitled “Memorable Contacts with The Mother”. His name is Nirodbaran (1903-2006), better known by the diminutive Nirod; starting from 1933 he took up residence in the city of Puducherry (then it was called Pondichéry and was a French colony), in Tamil Nadu (South India); in the 1940s, Nirod was one of Sri Aurobindo’s personal secretaries. In the aforementioned book he transcribes his memoirs regarding his relationship with Mère. We report a passage in which Nirod pauses to briefly describe what happened in the Thirties on the occasion of a wave of smallpox that prompted the French government to put pressure on the entire citizenship vaccinated.

“The last medical episode about which I had a long lively discussion ostensibly with Sri Aurobindo but really with the Mother prompting him from behind, was regarding vaccination. Vaccination invaded, like the plague, the calm atmosphere of the Ashram at the behest of the French Government. Sri Aurobindo wrote: “There is an official order from the Government department and we can’t contemptuously waive it aside — we can only minimise its incidence”. It appeared to be a greater evil than the smallpox itself which it was supposed to prevent and we had to face a lot of trouble, inconvenience, difficulties in order to meet the Government’s demand. Sri Aurobindo’s opinion about vaccination was that “it is a very nasty affair, this vaccination”. When I asked him, “You seem to be G.B. Shaw in matters

of vaccination, Sir. Do you deny its benefits?" He replied, "Have not denied partial effectivity though complete it is not, since it has to be renewed every year, as you say. The whole Pasteurian affair is to me antipathetic — it is a dark and dangerous principle however effective..."

And this "dark and dangerous" practice was foisted upon us by the authorities asking the whole institution of about 200 members, as well as servants, to undergo vaccination! The Mother and Sri Aurobindo had to apply all their supramental ingenuity to sacrifice as few victims as possible "on the sacred altar of science, so that Valle (French doctor) can say with satisfaction "Ah, ha! The Ashram has been vaccinated!". The entire long correspondence on this affair, when published, will show with what minute care the Mother considered the health of all the members and how thorough she was in all the details. As a piece of writing, these letters are brilliant with wit, satire and at the same time perspicacity as regards practical directions. It was a wonder that there were minimum possible reactions compared to the number of people subjected to vaccination. That was because of the Mother's force that acted as a bulwark against untoward consequences. Sri Aurobindo wrote to me, "Whom are you vaccinating? Mother wants to have the report everyday". It meant that the Mother would put her force on the eve of the vaccination in order that the reaction could be reduced to a minimum."

Since Nirod has called into question the writer George Bernard Shaw (1856-1959), we insert a few quotes. We remind that G.B. Shaw (Nobel Laureate 1925) had a degree in medicine.

"Vaccination is nothing more than attempted murder."

“If we could know all the cases of deaths caused by vaccinations in the whole world, their number would make Herod himself tremble.”

“Vaccination is a particularly abject witchcraft operation.”

“At the moment [1944], intelligent people do not have their children vaccinated, nor does the law oblige them to do so. The result is not, as the Jennerians prophesied, the extermination of the human species by smallpox; on the contrary, today more people are killed by vaccination than by smallpox.”

– G. B. Shaw

*[The Article is reproduced from
<https://www.arianuova.org/en/mere-and-sri-aurobindo-on-vaccines>]*

“At one time it was thought that the mind could grasp the whole Truth and solve all problems that face humanity. The mind had its full play and we find that it is not able to solve the problems. Now, we find that it is possible to go beyond mind and there is the Supermind which is the organisation of the Infinite consciousness. There you find the Truth of all that is in mind and life.

For instance, you find that Democracy, Socialism and Communism have each some truth behind it, but it is not the whole Truth. What you have to do is to find out the forces that are at work and understand what it is of which all these mental ideas and ‘isms’ are a mere indication. You have to know the mistakes which people commit in dealing with the truth of these forces and the truth that is behind the mistakes also. I am, at present, speaking against democracy. That does not mean that there is no truth behind it – and I know it, yet I speak against democracy, because that mentality is at present against the Truth that is trying to come down.”

– Sri Aurobindo

Purani, A.B.: Talks with Sri Aurobindo, Page 343