

Cover Story of the Month



Economic consequences of Covid19

In This Issue

- P3** Editorial –
Do Political Parties
Follow Democratic
Norms?
- P5** Cover Story:
Economic
Consequences of
Covid-19
- P9** Environment:
Ozone Layer –
Saviour of Life on
Earth
- P11** Anecdote:
Dynasty vs
Athmagauravam
- P13** Health –
Alzheimer’s
Disease
- P16** Reports:
Saturday Talks;
Sangamam
- P18** Princeton

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Shri S.P.Balasubramaniam (fondly known as SPB), who sang over 40,000 songs in multiple languages and genres during his 5-decade career, died last week, leaving behind a sound of silence. He was laid to rest with full State honours.

PreSense pays homage to him and his undying music.



From the Desk of Editor-in-Chief



Greetings from all of us @ The Editorial Team to all our readers.

The Parliament met recently and conducted business, with much ado as Bills were passed during much opposition and ruckus about them. The Editorial writes about this state of affairs that is causing concern to the citizens of the country.

As the country tries to get back to normal life as it was pre-Covid, we take a look at the economy of the country, which impacts our lives directly or indirectly. Our Cover Story this month is titled 'The Economic Consequences of Covid-19'.

We have selected the subjects of two commemorative days in September, for coverage in this issue, both of which are relevant in our lives. Under Environment, we have an article about the important Ozone layer around our Earth. Under Health, the ever-rising incidence of Alzheimer's Disease has been covered, to inform and educate our readers.

Please do not miss our regular sections under Anecdote and Reports. Our Mascot, Prince makes his regular appearance.

I hope you will enjoy reading this edition. Please share your feedback with us at editor@corpezine.com. Your feedback is important to us.

Susan

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Editorial

Do Political Parties Follow Democratic Norms in the Parliament?

The Monsoon session of the Parliament was held for 10 days from 14th September 2020 to 23rd September 2020 even though it was originally scheduled for 18 days. Around 68% of the Members of Parliament (MPs) participated in the session. Both the Houses (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) made appropriate arrangements for the MPs, to ensure maintenance of physical distancing protocols due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

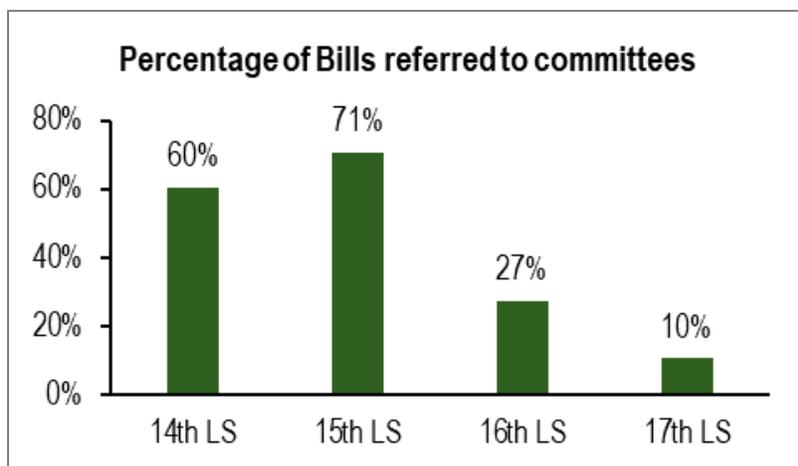
During the session, the Parliament functioned in two parts, with one House sitting in the morning and the other, in the afternoon. However, the session was curtailed because of a public health emergency when several MPs were diagnosed with Covid-19. The Parliament adjourned *sine die* on 23rd September 2020, after functioning for 10 days. Lok Sabha worked 145% of the scheduled time of the sitting days; Rajya Sabha, 99%. Both the Houses of Parliament met after a gap of 175 days – six days ahead of the constitutional requirement of a maximum gap of six months between sessions.

Legislative Business

In the Monsoon session, 20 new Bills were introduced (excluding the Appropriation Bills). Of these, eleven Bills were to replace Ordinances. These include three Bills related to agriculture trade and contract farming, one to expand RBI's regulation of cooperative banks, and three relating to Labour Codes on Social Security, Industrial Relations, and Occupational Safety.

Twenty-five Bills were passed by the Parliament (excluding the Appropriation Bills). On an average, Lok Sabha discussed a Bill for 1.5 hours, and Rajya Sabha discussed a Bill for about an hour, before passing it. Lok Sabha discussed and passed the three Labour Codes within three hours, and Rajya Sabha passed them after 1 hour 45 minutes of discussion. Rajya Sabha passed 13 Bills within 7.5 hours in the last two days.

Allegations Against the Government



Political observers and Opposition parties blame the Government for hurriedly passing the Bills without detailed discussions in the Houses. Rajya Sabha passed 13 Bills within 7.5 hours in the last two days.

In spite of the negative growth of GDP, there was no discussion on the current economic situation, in both the Houses.





Ruckus in the Parliament
(Photo courtesy: indianexpress.com)

There is also a general feeling amongst experts that the present Government does not give enough importance to the Standing Committees as they do not refer the Bills to the Committees for scrutiny. In earlier years, Bills were referred to the Committees, where they get fine-tuned to the best interest of the public. In the current 17th Lok Sabha, only 10% of the Bills introduced so far have been referred to Committees. It is much lower than the 14th (60%), 15th (71%) and 16th (27%) Lok Sabha.

Another criticism against the ruling Government is that they take unduly long time to elect the Deputy Speaker. In the current 17th Lok Sabha, even after 464 days after the commencement of the first session, the Deputy Speaker is not yet elected. This is the longest period in the history of Lok Sabha, to go without a Deputy Speaker. In the 16th Lok Sabha, the Government took 70 days to elect the Deputy Speaker. Previously, this period was highest in the 12th Lok Sabha (269 days). Otherwise, the Deputy Speaker is normally elected within a short time of less than a month.

Criticism against Opposition

While the Opposition blames the Government for not following the Parliamentary norms, they are guilty of creating ruckus in the House and misbehaving before the Chair in the Rajya Sabha, leading to suspension of 8 Members. They boycotted the sessions too. This enabled the Government to pass the Bills without serious discussions. Creating a ruckus in the House, and stalling the proceedings have become a trend in the past 15 years. Stalling the proceedings is against the principles of democracy.

The Opposition may have genuine reasons for drawing the attention of the nation on any issue. But creating a ruckus and stalling the proceedings are against the interests of the people. They have to adopt different methods, like the mature democracies in UK and USA.

The people elect the Members to the Parliament to take care of the interest of the people and the nation and to frame suitable policies. Unless the ruling and opposition parties respect and value the traditions of the Parliamentary practices, our democracy cannot be successful. The ruling and the Opposition parties should instil confidence among the citizens by respecting and adhering to democratic and Parliamentary norms.

After over 70 years of Independence, the least the citizens can expect from the Government and the Opposition is a high level of maturity by following the democratic and defined norms in the Parliament.

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By K. Srinivasan, Publisher and Managing Editor
(Data and graphics courtesy: PRS Legislative Research)



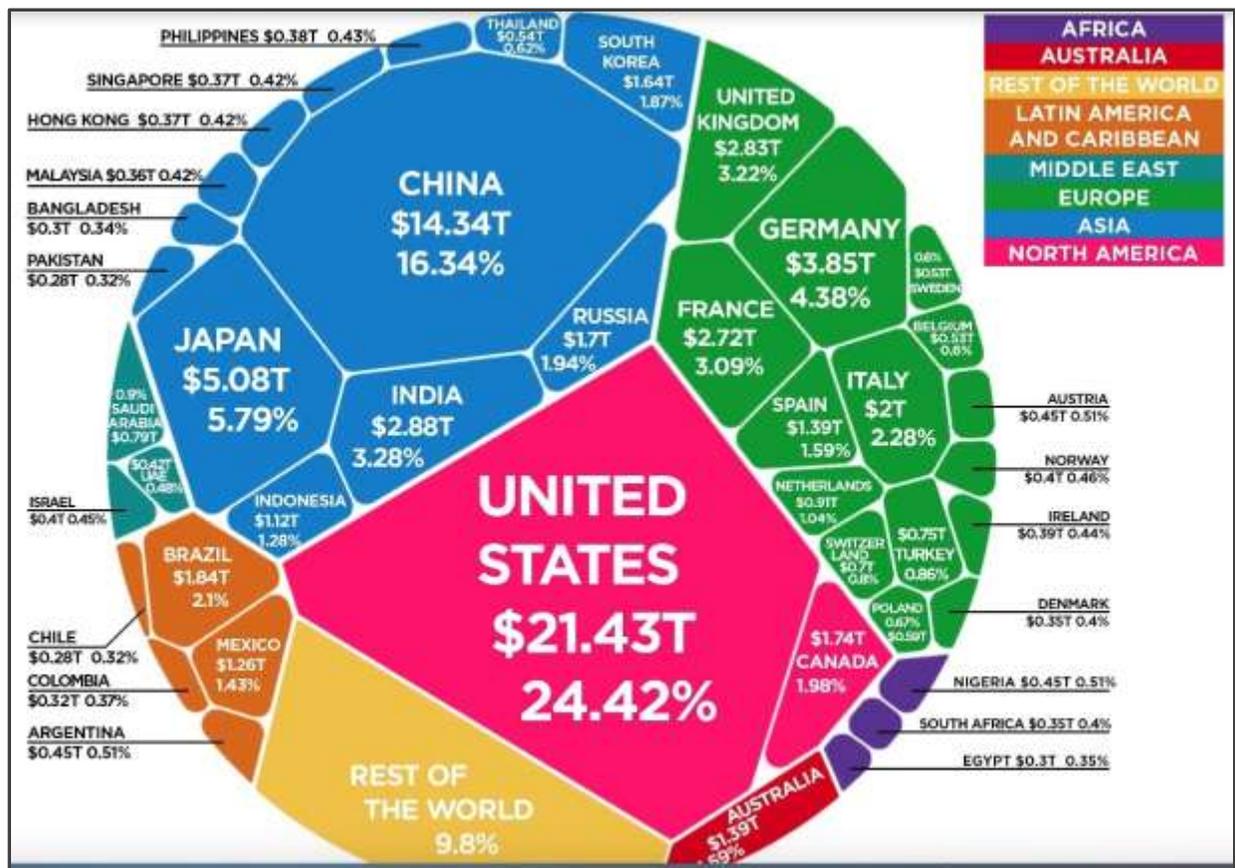
Cover Story

The Economic Consequences of Covid-19

Introduction

The pandemic has economic consequences. Lockdown means complete stoppage of work except for essential services. What kind of an impact will it have on the country's economy? Will it be temporary such that as soon as the lockdown is lifted, it will be business as usual? Economists argue that short-term impacts will affect long-term economic growth. What are the short-term impacts? What are the economic responses by way of monetary and fiscal responses? Where does India stand concerning these responses in comparison to other countries? As a civil society, what do its people need to do? These are some of the questions to be addressed here.

The Indian Economy



Relative GDPs of the World

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represents the money value of the total goods and services produced in a country during a particular period, generally a year. It is assumed that the higher the GDP, the better the country's economy, although this is debated by some economists. Let us assume that it is a rough indicator. The four major components of GDP are:



- Private consumption, expenditure or purchase of goods and services by households;
- Investment expenditure;
- Government purchases of goods and services such as salaries paid by the government and purchase of services by the government.
- Net exports, *ie.* exports minus imports.

Therefore,

1. If households spend more money on goods such as durables (refrigerators, cooking equipment and others) and non-durables, the GDP will increase.
2. If more investment takes place, it will increase the productive capacity of the economy and more growth.
3. The higher the government expenditure, the higher the GDP. (That does not mean it can spend any amount).
4. The higher the exports and the lower the imports, the higher the GDP.

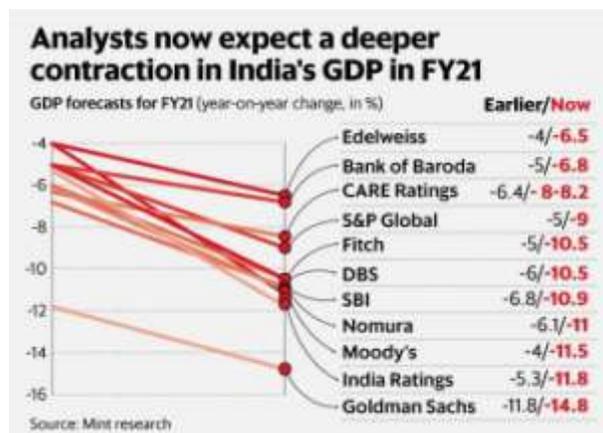
India's share of the world GDP is 3.28%, which is higher than that of Russia, Brazil, France, and Italy. However, it is thinly distributed among a population of 1.3 billion, giving rise to low per capita income. Analysts across rating organisations posit top position in the emerging markets space to the fifth position. This is not unexpected as India had gone for a total lockdown. The natural consequence is a contraction in its economy.

Government's Response

During the pandemic, the GDP in India shrunk by 23.9%. These figures are for the formal sector and do not include the informal sector which represents 85% to 92% of the people who are employed, for which the impact will be more severe. The shrinking of the GDP has led to unemployment.

Robust social and physical infrastructure and the public health system are likely to address the issues of pandemics. The social divisions in India hinder, and the physical infrastructure is inadequate. The public health system in India is yet to achieve any significant milestones. The public health system is a conglomeration of all organised activities that prevent disease, prolong life, and promote the health and efficiency of its people. Some of the highlights of the inadequate public healthcare are that 11.9% of all maternal deaths and 18% of all infant mortality in the world occur in India, ranking it as the highest in the world. Out of every 1000 children born, 36.6 of them are dead by the time they reach the age of five. Besides, the quality of the healthcare by way of wrong diagnosis and corruption in treating patients also played a role in creating an inadequate healthcare system in India.

The Indian economy was showing fault lines with its growth shrinking to 3.5%. The banking system in India is driven by Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC). For quick understanding, NBFCs do everything that a bank does but does not accept deposits from individuals. The failure of IL&FS and a slew of NBFCs plagued by frauds, financial imprudence, and corruption led to mounting Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). It is estimated that the NPAs of Public Sector Banks and NBFCs peaked at 10.36 lakh crore as of 31st March 2018. They have fallen to 9.4 lakh crore for the year 31st March 2020. (The latest figure up to August 2020 is not available.) Having large



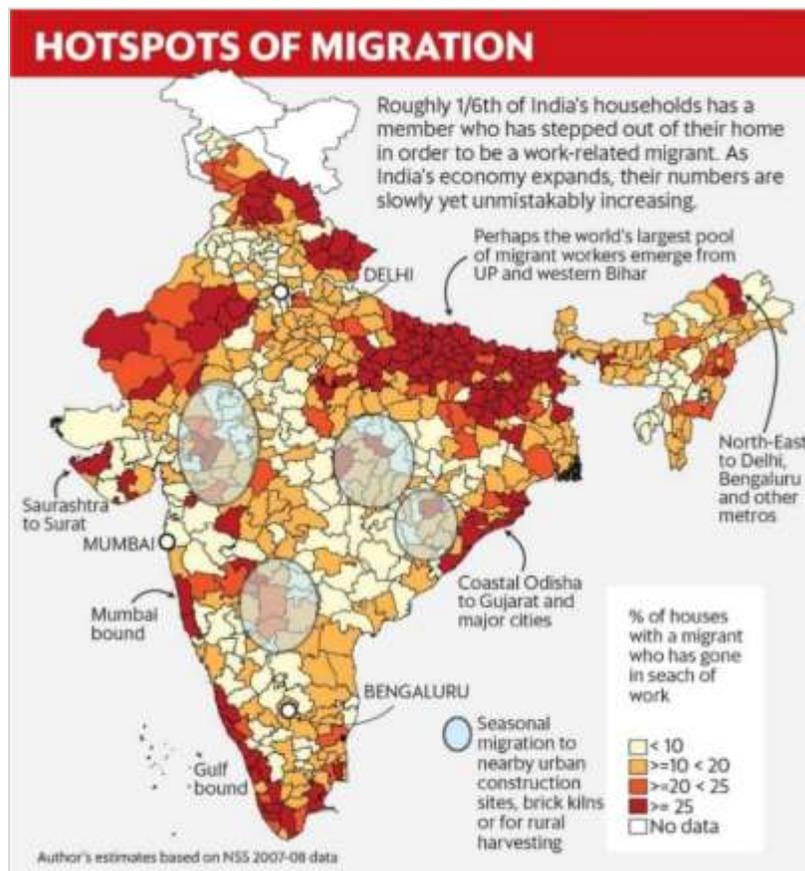
NPAs in their asset portfolio, the banks are not willing to take risks to fund any more business. The profits are used more for provisioning against NPAs. Transmission of interest cuts is yet to be implemented.

Employment Scenario During Pandemic (March-August 2020)

During the pandemic, Government of India came out with additional loan guarantee to MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) to the tune of 3 lakh crore. These measures may have impacts on the medium-term for which data is yet to be made public. Another initiative is 'PM Cares'. The total stimulus amounted to 2% of the GDP. The United States of America spent 10% and Japan has spent 15% of GDP on Covid-19 response. If the public debt (currently 70% of GDP) is increased in India, the macroeconomic stability may get threatened.

While official data is yet to be made available, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data reveals that salaried jobs in India to the tune of 2.1 million out of 8.6 million (24.5%) were lost in August 2020. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR, the number of persons employed, willing to work or actively seeking work in the working-age group of 16 years to 64 years) is 49.5%.

Agriculture and Covid-19



At a time when the Indian economy is facing its worst crisis due to the coronavirus-led lockdown, the 'above normal' monsoon is likely to provide some respite to the agriculture sector, which contributes nearly 17% of India's GDP and provides jobs to around 50% of the population. The monsoon rains were 7% above average this year, leading to a 7% increase in the crop sowing. The agricultural sector showed a growth of 3.4% during the pandemic, and is the only sector to have growth (CRISIL Report). The rains are a true act of God.

Migration and Covid-19

According to Chinmay Tumbay, author of 'India Moving', and an expert in migration, approximately 16.67% of the Indian households have one member belonging to the

work-related migrant segment (see image). The migrants are more circular. The majority of them migrate, not to settle there, as it happens in the case of migration to a country like



the USA. In India, the male members move to the other parts of the country, leaving their women and their children back home.

Post-Covid-19

The principle of Hysteresis in economics refers to an event in the economy that persists into the future, even after the factors that led to that event have been removed. Hysteresis can include the delayed effects of unemployment, whereby the unemployment rate continues to rise even after the economy has recovered.

Once the cause *ie.* Covid-19 and its effects on employment are removed, the economy may not bounce back due to hysteresis. The people who went back to their native places due to the pandemic, may not return. A researcher posited that the workers are willing to be in their hometowns even if the wages are 34% less than the wages they would get in urban areas. If enough opportunities are provided in places like Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar, where a large number of migrant labourers reside, the migration may not happen to the level of the pre-Covid period. The loss of skills of this labour segment may have an impact on the skill inventory of the country. The prolonged lockdown of schools and colleges may also impede skill enhancement.

Expectation from the Society

Considering these challenges, the Covid management in India is exemplary and the credit goes to the visionary leadership of the Prime minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi for limiting the death rates and the spread of the virus by appropriate interventions considering India's huge population. *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, which translates to 'self-reliant India' or 'self-sufficient India' is the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India of making India "a bigger and more important part of the global economy", pursuing policies that are efficient, competitive and resilient, self-sustaining and self-generating. This strategy is likely to help India in the long run.

What the Civil Society Must Do

1. Follow social distancing and all the protocols for a foreseeable future.
2. Pay taxes and enjoy being a law-abiding citizen.
3. Experts suggest the economy may not come back to the 2018-2019 levels even after three years.
4. Avoid Optimism Bias (or the optimistic bias, which is a cognitive bias that causes someone to believe that they are less likely to experience a negative event. It is also known as unrealistic optimism or comparative optimism – *"I have not seen people whom I know get it and so, I will also not get it."*)
5. Conservatism in spending should help in trying times.

by Dr.K. Prabhakar, Editorial Advisor (Researcher in Social Forecasting)

(Data and References from the public domain)



Environment

Ozone Layer – Saviour of Life on Earth

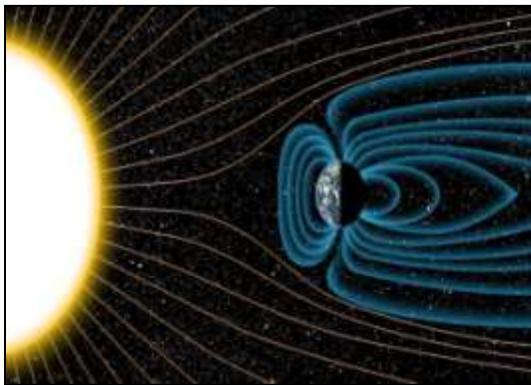
Introduction

Life on earth evolved from some basic chemicals, conducive environment and some definite processes. Earth was formed about 4.5 billion years ago and evidence suggests that life emerged more than 3.7 billion years ago. Approximately one trillion species currently live on Earth!

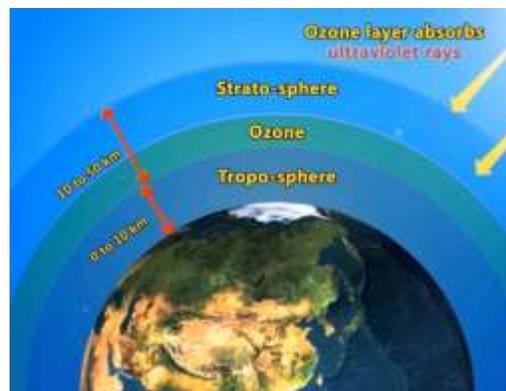
The depletion of the ozone layer, which is present at a height of about 15 to 35 kilometres in the atmosphere, poses a great threat to all life forms on Earth. In a concerted effort to bring about an awareness, 16th September is commemorated as the International Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer.

Constant Threat to All Life Forms on Earth

Although our Earth is at an approximate distance of 150 million kilometres from the sun, the constant radiations emitted by the sun and the entire cosmos on a 24X7X365 basis is sufficient to kill all life forms on Earth within a few days' time. The Earth and its life forms are protected from the danger of radiation by two components. The Earth's magnetic field protects us from the intense stream of charged particles (alpha and beta). The Ozone layer protects us from the dangerous UV-c and most of the UV-b radiations from our sun (see *images below*).



Earth's Magnetic Field



Ozone Layer over Earth

The Ozone Layer and How it Works

Ozone is present in the normal air that all of us breath at our homes and in open air. But its abundance is so low that we do not smell it. It is only about 0.3 parts per million in all our cities. Ozone by itself is a pale blue poisonous gas. But at a height of 15 to 35 kilometres, the concentration of ozone is about 35 times greater. Ozone at this concentration, permits the visible light and overlapping harmless UV-a radiation from sun to reach the Earth. Ozone absorbs 99.7% of the UV-b radiations and permits only about 1/350 times the incident of UV-b radiation to reach Earth so that we are safe, and at the same time are able to synthesise enough Vitamin D without getting sunburned. The Ozone layer completely thus absorbs the harmful UV radiations from the sun and protects all life forms on Earth.



The Ozone molecule absorbs the UV-c radiation and most of the UV-b radiation from the Sun to become an oxygen molecule and a single oxygen atom. They combine again to form the ozone molecule. Thus, the recycling recurs continuously and, in the process, the ozone layer is sustained around the Earth. This process produces some heat, which is passed on to Earth, which re-radiates this heat back to outer space. The net result is that all life forms on Earth are protected from the dangerous effects of solar radiation.

Ozone Hole – Creation and Consequence

The Ozone hole is not really a hole. It is only a reduction in the concentration of Ozone. It is a depletion where chlorine is the main culprit.

Chlorine has many uses. It is used in swimming pools and drinking water to kill bacterial and fungal contaminations. Gaseous chlorine dioxide is used to decontaminate enclosed spaces and equipment. These chlorines are not a threat to ozone layer since they are water-soluble and do not rise to the stratospheric heights.

But researchers have found that the chlorinated species, primarily from manufactured compounds like the Chloro Fluro Carbons (CFCs), carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, and the hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) substitutes for CFCs rise to the stratosphere. Researchers have found that the emissions of the human-produced halocarbons, plus the much smaller contribution from natural sources, could account for all of the stratospheric chlorine. They found that the increase in the total stratospheric chlorine measured, corresponds to the known increases in the concentrations of human-produced halocarbons.

The presence of these man-made chemicals and chlorine in the stratosphere are harmful in two ways. Firstly, they convert the ozone molecules into normal oxygen molecules irreversibly so that the ozone protection to earth is gradually depleted, exposing us all to harmful radiations. Secondly, the presence of these man-made chemicals in the stratosphere forms a greenhouse shield around Earth, which reflects the heat radiated by Earth, back to Earth. This prevents Earth from cooling itself as a natural process. This causes the harmful global warming, polar ice-caps to melt, sea-levels to rise, and endangerment of aquatic life.

India and the Ozone Layer

As per the National Ozone Centre in New Delhi, there is no trend to show total ozone depletion over India. A network of stations that measure total ozone some six times a day, covers Srinagar, New Delhi, Varanasi, Ahmedabad, Pune and Kodaikanal. The incidence of skin cancer across India is also monitored. There are controlled studies to observe the effects of changing UV-b radiation concentrations on crops.

Conclusion

The Ozone layer enveloping our Earth is a life-protecting shield provided by nature. Unfortunately, man-made chlorine-based chemicals are destroying that shield. The reversal of this trend and discovering alternate chemicals for the various uses are the challenges to mankind in the effort to survive well for generations to come. It is hoped that mankind will win the challenge.

by Dr R Jagannathan, Editorial Advisor

Resource Input: International Agency Reports and Research Agencies.



Anecdote

Dynasty vs Atmagauravam 1983 Andhra Election Tour - Remembrances

Background

In 1983, the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh was going through a turmoil. The State-level body of the Congress (I) political party was in a bad shape, with four Chief Ministers in two years. The local *Khamma* community was reasserting itself against the *Reddy* community, which had been dominating the Andhra politics and holding power in a closed circle for years together.

But the rise of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao *aka* NTR, the screen god of 292 Telugu films, on the pedestal of *Atmagauravam* (self-respect), supported strongly by the *Khamma* community, was posing a big challenge to the Congress, rocked by internal dissensions and caste politics. So, the then Prime Minister (PM) Mrs G (Indira Gandhi) chose to campaign herself in the state. I was then a PTI (Press Trust of India) correspondent, stationed in Chennai and I was assigned to cover this historic tour of election campaigning by Mrs G. I joined a convoy of 23 cars that toured the state.



Mrs Gandhi

NTR

The tour covered three districts, culminating in Tirupati, the last in the whistle-stop tour. Wherever I went, I saw large crowds. But the locals told me that in the previous week, NTR had drawn three times the size of the crowds. Drawing crowds and catching votes were two different things I thought. But I was proved wrong. The crowds that NTR pulled did matter. Mrs G's bastion that did not fail her in the 1977 post-Emergency elections was to be stormed by the *Khammas*.

Remembrance

The anecdote I am about to narrate is one of the most memorable moments in my life. The elections campaign itself was the first of its kind for me, for I was mainly into science reporting. Politics was a different ball game altogether. We were all assigned VVIP (premium) bungalows of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) in the Tirumala Hills (3200 feet above mean sea level) to stay in, as part of the PM's entourage. It was around 10 pm when we had finished our dinner at the TTD canteen and had stepped into our rooms.

A Special Protection Group (SPG) guard of Mrs G's close inner security asked for my name and said Mrs G had a message for me. "Sir, she wants you to join her for the early morning *darshan* (seeing the deity) of Tirumala Balaji at 0400 hours in the morning." I knew it was the first *darshan* of the day called the *Tomala Seva*, where the deity, Lord Venkateshwara is given a symbolic brushing of teeth, then bathed and adorned majestically with golden



angavastra (shawl or stole), *dhoti* (wrap-around garment) and diamond jewellery worth millions. For a PM of her stature, it was an extremely gracious gesture to invite a journalist to join her for the *darshan*. I was pleased to discover that at a personal level, Mrs G was practical and down to earth, with no airs about herself.

So, there we were at the sanctum and sanctorum at 0400 hours sharp. Mrs G joined us. The priests were already there. Only Mrs. G, her personal security guard, two priests and I were there. Four of us sat cross-legged on the cold stoned floor before the mighty edifice of Lord Balaji, so close that I could barely believe it was happening. Was I dreaming or was it true? I pinched myself. It hurt. It was true!

The ceremonies began and the Vedic chants followed. After the ceremony, the priests brought the *aarti* (ceremonially lit lamps before the deity) to Mrs G and then me. It was an electrifying moment. Not only was I seated just three feet away from Mrs G facing her, but also so close in the sanctum sanctorum of the famous hill temple, where thousands stand in line to get a *darshan* two three days later. I was one lucky guy indeed.



**Tirupati's Tirumala Venkateswara Temple
(with inset – Sanctum Sanctorum)**

When we came out of the temple, Mrs G asked me if I was happy with the *darshan*. 'Happy? I am ecstatic! Never have I had a *darshan* like this in my life. I will cherish it forever. Madam, you made it possible.', I squealed. She smiled at me and remarked, "I have been observing you. You reporters have such dedication, discipline and devotion to duty, it really amazes me. I wanted you to have the *darshan*." Then, with her

permission, I ventured to confide in her, "Madam, I have been talking to people and they say NTR and his son-in-law Chandra Babu Naidu been drawing larger crowds. The Telugu Desam Party is growing popular on the slogan of self-respect. So, I" Before I could complete, Mr. G cut me short and snapped, "I know! That's why I am here to campaign. We have been going through difficult times. I hope everything goes well". The frown on her face made me suspect that her advisors had already warned her about the impending doom.

Yes, the Congress party was routed and NTR came to power. I was witness to that part of history. The Tirupati *darshan* as well as the brief conversation I was privileged to have with the PM was a memorable experience for me as a reporter covering her election tour. The takeaway from this episode was that when the tide is against you, even the mighty Mrs G cannot stem it.

by T N Ashok, Consulting Editor



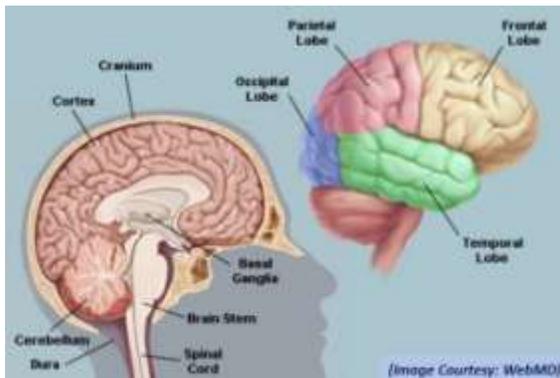
Health

The Alzheimer's Disease, Where One Forgets, and Fails to Remember

The Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is a progressive disease that impairs memory and other important mental functions. The brain cell connections and the cells themselves degenerate and die. The first main symptoms of the disease are memory loss and confusion.

The terms dementia and AD are often used interchangeably. Dementia is a broader term for conditions with symptoms relating to memory loss such as forgetfulness and confusion. Dementia includes specific conditions, such as AD, Parkinson's Disease, traumatic brain injury, and such conditions which display these symptoms. AD is a type of dementia.

How Alzheimer's Occurs



The human brain is one of the largest and most complex organs in the human body. Neurons (also called nerve cells) are the fundamental units of the brain and the nervous system. The healthy human brain contains tens of billions of neurons that process and transmit information trillions of connections called synapses via electrical and chemical signals. Neurons are a major player in the central nervous system. They send messages between different parts of the brain, and from the brain to the muscles and organs of the body.

The normal brain shrinks to some degree in healthy aging but it does not lose neurons in large numbers. In AD, the damage is widespread, as many neurons stop functioning, lose connections with other neurons, and die. In AD, processes vital to neurons and their networks, including communication, metabolism, and repair are disrupted.

According to world renowned neurologist, Dr A V Srinivasan (Dr AVS), who spoke exclusively to PreSense, our brain has millions of neurons and neurotransmitters. In the pre-AD condition, plaques are formed when protein pieces called Amyloid-Beta clump together. Amyloid-Beta is derived from a large protein found in the fatty membrane surrounding the nerve cells. It is chemically sticky and therefore tends to build up into plaques or small clumps. These clumps can block cell-to-cell signalling at the synapses (junction connecting two neurons, and through which electric nerve impulse is transmitted). This condition can roughly be compared with the formation of arterial plaques that restrict free flow of blood through the blood vessels, causing cardiac arrest.



Progressive Stages in Alzheimer's Disease

Dr AVS explains the stages leading to the onset of the symptoms in Alzheimer's with ABCD – initial Anxiety followed by Behavioural and Cognitive change, leading to dementia. The symptoms will occur only after 15-20 years. He says that our memory is a web of thoughts.



In Alzheimer's, the web diminishes in time. A person with AD gradually loses his or her ability to live and function independently. The disease is fatal.

- In the pre-clinical or early stage of AD, the common symptoms are forgetfulness, losing track of the time and becoming lost in familiar places. Dementia displayed during this stage is often overlooked as the onset is gradual.
- In the middle stage of AD, dementia progresses and the symptoms become marked. The patient becomes forgetful of recent events and people's names. They tend to repeat their questions without registering the responses they get. They become lost even at home. They face increasing difficulty with communication. They begin to require help with their personal care.
- The extreme or late stage is especially challenging for the patient as well as the carer or family. The patient fails to identify himself in the mirror (called mirror sign). There are serious memory disturbances and the symptoms are pronounced. The patient becomes unaware of the time and the place, fails to recognise relatives and friends, needs help for walking and self-care. The behavioural change can include aggressiveness,

Dr AVS observed that there is a growing number of Alzheimer's patients in India because of the increasing longevity of the population, where over 8 crore people are over 70 years of age. The occurrence of AD among the Indian population is one out of every 1000 in the 40-65 years age bracket, one out of 50 in the 65-70, one out of 20 in the 70-80, and one out of 5 in the above 80 years' age bracket. AD cuts across caste, creed, race and gender.

The Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is the umbrella organisation of over 100 Alzheimer associations around the globe, established to raise awareness about AD and other causes of dementia. In India, the Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI) been in operation since 1992, providing specialised care services for people with dementia. September 21st is commemorated as Alzheimer's Day.

Treatment – A Brighter Era Ahead?

More than a hundred new medications, some of them preventive, are currently being explored. Even if the damage in the late stages of AD is irreversible and incurable, investigations show hope of slowing the disease's effects.

Dr AVS said that so far, the drugs for AD could help in deferring the deterioration of the condition. This positive effect should override the side effects of the drug as headache, nausea, hallucination. Drugs are also available as patch on the back. Anti-inflammatory drugs can delay the onset of AD as it treats the inflammation that occurs in the neurons. Medical research is currently going on, for vaccination and nasal spray. However, Dr Srinivasan cautions that it takes 10-12 years for any researched medicine to reach the market.

Prevention of AD

AD is a complex disease where factors like age and genetics are beyond one's control. But a brain-healthy lifestyle is believed to help deter its onset.

- regular exercise – at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week, like walking and swimming – ideally a combination of cardio exercise and strength training.



- social engagement – engage in social networking as this provides emotional strengthening. Guard against personal isolation as a lifestyle.
- healthy diet – regulate the diet so that there is plenty of vegetables and fruits and nuts. Eat in moderation and cut down on sugar content.
- mental stimulation – engaging in brain-stimulating activities is exercise for the brain. Learn new languages, skills, art forms, musical instruments and work on puzzles and board games.
- quality sleep – good quality sleep is essential for flushing out toxins from the brain. Poor sleep has been linked with build-up of amyloid-beta in the brain, leading to disruption of memory formation and to AD. It is therefore essential to maintain a regular sleep schedule.
- stress management – stress takes a toll on the health of the brain. Relaxation techniques and yoga and pranayama, meditation and prayers are help deal with stress. Remember to laugh often in life. It is a mood booster.
- vascular health (controlling hypertension, cholesterol level, weight and obesity, life style for healthy living and controlled pleasure habits as smoking and drinking alcohol.) – maintain cardiovascular health, hypertension, sugar content and cholesterol. Take all prescribed medication to maintain a healthy balance of the body and mind.

Caring by Carers



One must not ignore the family and the carer who take care of the AD patient. It is a very challenging situation physically, emotionally and mentally. Carers out of despair could show impatience with the patient who is unaware of the trauma he is causing his family or carer. Dr Srinivasan shared five points of caution the carer must exercise while attending to the patient:

- Never raise the hand against the patient (never be violent with him).
- Give food when the patient asks for it.
- Never leave the patient alone.
- Never let the patient be undernourished.
- Administer the drugs on time regularly.

The carer needs to empathise with the patient and understand the reason for the patient's behaviour and soothe him. Professionals advise that carers should not take any behaviour of aggressiveness or insensitiveness of the patient personally and know that it is a result of the effects of AD that he is unable to make sense of his environment, not his ability to know and feel the love shown to him.

Concluding on an optimistic note about the scope of finding improved and even preventive treatment for AD based on the ongoing research, Dr AVS said, "*Yesterday's discovery is today's work and tomorrow's promise.*"

**by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief,
with Professional Opinions Contributed by
Dr A V Srinivasan, World Renowned Neurologist**



Reports

Saturday Talk Series with Experts: September 2020



Four episodes of the series, Saturday Talk with Experts was held in the month of September. Four distinguished guests from various professions spoke about the career opportunities in their respective professions. Smt Sukruti Narayanan, actor and communication professional, was the anchor.

On 5th September 2020, Shri Dhanapal Padmanaban, Founder Director of iGene DI & VFX Studio, which is a leading post-production house in South India, talked about 'Career Opportunities in Visual Effects and Computer Graphics'. He elaborated on the importance of creativity in this line and job role. The recording of the event is available in the following link: <https://youtu.be/rVIVzgcRcQw>

On 12th September 2020, Mr Vikram Kharvi, Vice President, Corporate Reputation Practice at AdFactors PR, spoke about 'Public Relations and Integrated Communication'. With his expertise in running various online PR forums, he shared real time examples about how brands communicate with their audience. The recording of the event is available in the following link: <https://youtu.be/rVIVzgcRcQw>.

On 19th September 2020, Dr Santhosh Babu, IAS, Former Principal Secretary and Information Technology Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu, and an authority on eGovernance model, shared his views on 'eGovernance and its Opportunities'. He explained the importance of 'Time Budgeting' and multitasking. The recording of the event is available in the following link: <https://youtu.be/PeuAL16eWjA>.

On 26th September 2020, Dr Srimathy Kesan, Founder and CEO of Space Kids India, which is the only organisation to launch 12 balloon satellites, 2 sub-orbital satellites and 1 orbital satellite, shared her views on 'Satellite Technology and its Opportunities'. She also shared her experience as the only Indian to be decorated with the status of Ambassador to the top three space centres of the world – NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Agency), ESA (European Space Agency) and GCTC (Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center). The recording of the event is available in the following link: <https://youtu.be/SwVkg9-ggK0>.



Sangamam: Fusion of Great Minds – Episode 2

The second episode of 'Sangamam: Fusion of Great Minds' series, organised by Prime Point Foundation, with the support of its initiatives, eMagazine PreSense, NextGen Political Leaders (NGPL) and Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI), was held in the evening of Sunday, 27th September 2020.

The topic was 'Democracy: Citizens' Responsibilities and Rights'.



Shri T S Krishnamurthy, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India, and Dr S K Kharventhan, Former Member of Parliament and Former Chairman, Bar Council of India, were the speakers for the evening. They discussed the various implications and situations concerning the responsibilities of the citizens of India, along with their rights. They also addressed a variety of questions from the viewers.

Shri K Srinivasan welcomed the speakers and introduced them. Smt Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief was the Moderator of the programme. The programme was conducted through Zoom, and was streamed live through YouTube, Face book and Twitter.

The recording of the event is available on <https://youtu.be/JqUHjooHQiE> .

Announcement

Prime Point Foundation with eMagazine PreSense is proud to announce the introduction of another series of expert talks on the various heritages of India to celebrate its past glory. This series titled '**Amutha Surabhi – Ancient Bharatham**' (அமுத சுரபி - பண்டைய பாரதம்) will be conducted in the Tamil language.

The first episode will be held at 11.00am on Sunday, 4th October 2020, when the ancient glory of the Srirangam Temple in Tamil Nadu State, will be discussed. The programme will be broadcast on Youtube, Facebook and Twitter.





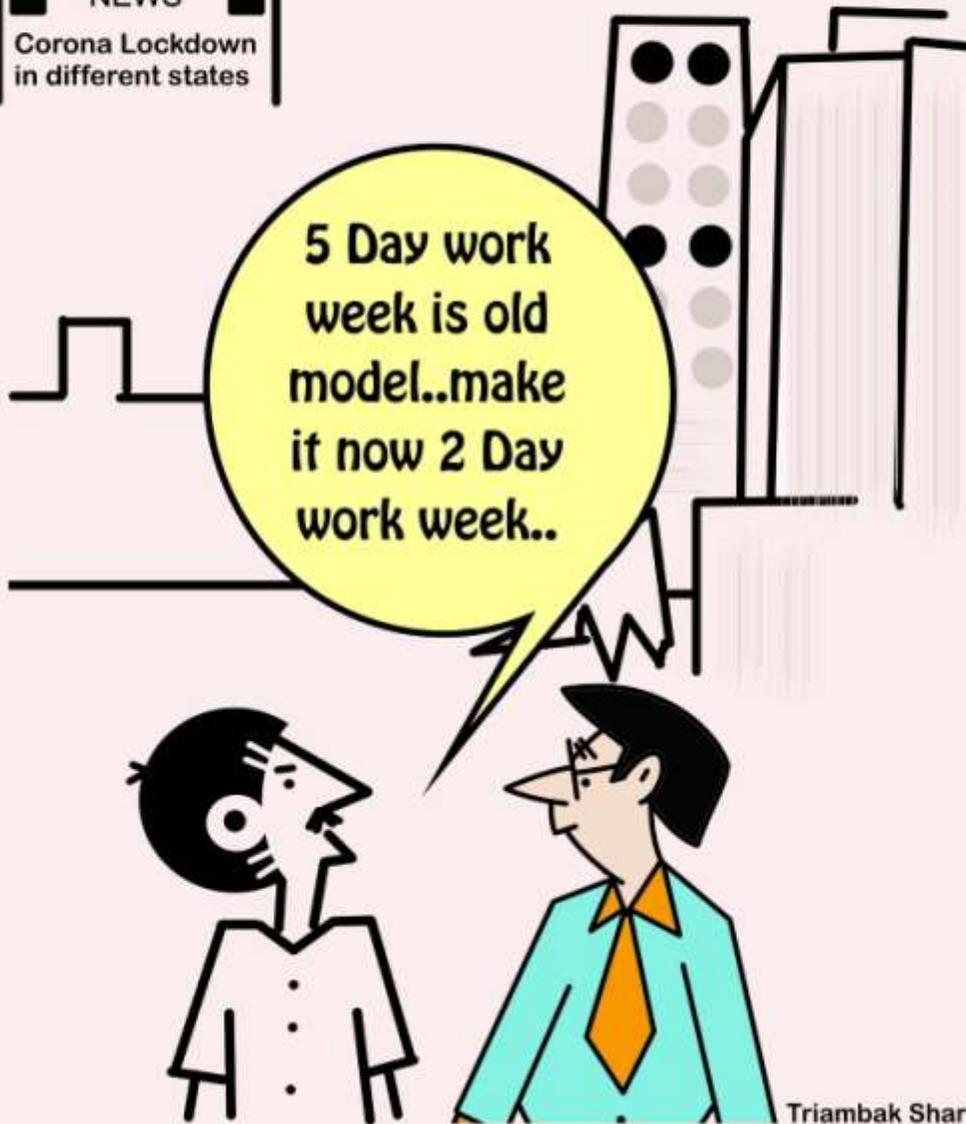
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