



SPEAKS

Editorials 2020 to 2023

**Compiled by
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Priyadharshni Rahul**

**Prime Point Foundation
Chennai**

PreSense Speaks | Editorials 2020 to 2023



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Introduction

Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The First Edition PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Former President of India



10, Rajaji Marg
New Delhi-110011

FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100th Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28th May 2015

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)
C

Journey of eMagazine PreSense - Milestones

Dec 1999	Launch of Prime Point Foundation, Publisher of the ezine.
Feb 2006	Launch of ezine, PreSense online by Dr Y S Rajan.
Aug 2006	Integration of Podcast with the ezine contents.
Aug 2007	Introduction of Guest Editors.
Feb 2008	Second Anniversary Edition with Dr Abdul Kalam's exclusive interview. Masthead changed.
Apr 2008	First ezine to become 'Media Partner' for a global event held at London.
July 2008	Introduction of cartoons – Cartoon Character 'Prince' launched by Dr Abdul Kalam.
Sep 2008	Change in layout, introducing photographs on the cover.
Jan 2010	Ezine's new initiative 'Education Loan Task Force' (ELTF) launched to create awareness among students and parents.
May 2010	Ezine's second initiative to honour top performing Parliamentarians, with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Award launched. Golden Jubilee (50 th) Edition launched.
Feb 2011	Diamond Jubilee (60 th) Edition.

A hiatus after 5 years of uninterrupted journey

Apr 2012	Ezine resumed in a new format of contents. The tag line changed from 'Communicate the Communication' to 'Spreading Positive Vibrations'.
Apr 2013	Tamil Nadu Governor launched a special edition on the Indian Parliament, coinciding with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Awards.

PreSense Speaks | Editorials 2020 to 2023

Jun 2013	Platinum Jubilee (75 th) Edition launched by the youth at three places simultaneously, across the nation.
Jun 2015	100 th Edition - PreSense 100 released in print format.
Mar 2016	Ezine's third initiative 'Digital Journalists Association of India' (DiJAI) launched.
Jun 2016	Second edition of PreSense 100+ released in print format
Dec 2017	Ezine's fourth initiative 'Digital Security Association of India' (DiSAI) launched.
Mar 2018	Third edition of Digest PreSense130 released in print format.
Aug 2019	Fourth edition of Digest PreSense150 launched in pdf format.
May 2021	PreSense Speaks Series – First volume released on Communication (compilation of articles published earlier)
Sep 2021	Fifth edition of Digest PreSense175 in 6 volumes released.
Jul 2022	PreSense Speaks Series – Second volume released compiling the Editorials published between 2020 and 2022
Mar 2023	Two eBooks on Editorials and Cover Stories covering the articles published in 2022 released.

The Journey Continues.....

Editorial Team – Jan 2024

Publisher and Managing Editor	K. Srinivasan (Prime Point Srinivasan)
Editor in Chief	Ramesh Sundaram
Consulting Editors	C Badri R Nurullah Sakthi Prasanna
Cartoon Editor	Triambak Sharma
Editor	Priyadharshni Rahul,
Associate Editors	Dipti Kumar Suparna Gangal
Deputy Editor	Srinivas Gopal
Published by	Prime Point Foundation
Website	<u>www.corpezine.com</u>



Prime Point Foundation and its Initiatives

Prime Point Foundation, a Non-Profit Trust and NGO was founded in December 1999 by Shri K Srinivasan (popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan), a former Senior Banker and a Digital Journalist and Communication Professional, to promote leadership and communication skills among the youth. Very eminent persons are associated with the Foundation.

In the past 24 years, the Foundation has organised several seminars, workshops, training and interactive sessions, both offline and online, on various subjects of national interest. The Foundation manages various online discussion groups and podcasts on communication, and digital journalism.

The Foundation has formed 5 initiatives to create awareness in various domains. All these initiatives are managed independently by passionate experts. These initiatives are non-commercial, and focussed on youth.

The Foundation has published 36 eBooks and some of them are in print also. All the eBooks and printed books are distributed free for the benefit of youth.

Website: www.primepointfoundation.in

PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till Dec 2023, the Foundation has published 202 editions. This is a digital-only magazine. Digests, containing select articles upto 150 editions of the eMagazine, have so far been published. Dr Abdul Kalam has written the foreword for the Digest of articles up to 100 editions. PreSense publishes the cartoon character Prince, which was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam in 2008. PreSense has published a Digest of select articles published up to 175 editions in 8 volumes.



India Book of Records has recognised PreSense for publishing maximum number of digital only eMagazine since 2006 through voluntary efforts.

Website: www.corpezine.com

Sansad Ratna Awards: This is a flagship initiative started in 2010 to honour top performing Parliamentarians every year, based on various performance parameters, and selected by a Jury Committee of eminent Parliamentarians. Dr Abdul Kalam himself inaugurated the first edition of the Awards event in May 2010. Till 2023, the Foundation has conducted 13 editions and presented 106 Awards. IIT Madras was the supporting Partner up to the 9th Edition. 10th Edition was held at Raj Bhavan, Tamil Nadu. 11th, 12th and 13th Editions were held at New Delhi.



India Bank of Records (IBR) has recognised Sansad Ratna Awards for maximum number of Parliamentary Awards (86) given and maximum number of award events (12) by the civil society based on the performance in consecutive years.

Website: www.sansadratna.in

Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) is an off-shoot of Sansad Ratna Awards. This is a registered NGO operating since 2018. NGPL has organised several workshops online and offline, for young political leaders and aspirants. Ministers, parliamentarians, legislators and retired constitutional authorities have participated and shared their views. NGPL will shortly be instituting Awards for young promising politicians.



Website: www.ngpl.org.in

Education Loan Task Force (ELTF) was started in 2010 to create awareness about education loans, among students and parents. More than 30,000 queries have been responded to, through email, and more than 5000 serious complaints have been taken up with the top management of the banks concerned, for redressal. Many policy issues have been taken up by Sansad Ratna Awardee MPs, in the Parliament for solution. ELTF does not facilitate loans.



Website: www.eltf.in

Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI): DiJAI is an independent NGO founded in 2017 to create awareness about digital journalism and its implications, among the public and particularly among the journalists. DiJAI conducts several online and offline workshops and seminars, with panels of domain experts.



Website: www.dijai.in

Preface to the Thirteenth Edition of 'PreSense Speaks' series

On behalf of the Editorial Team of PreSense, we present the 13th edition of 'PreSense Speaks' Series, covering the Editorials published by us during the years from 2020 to 2023. The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, for positive journalism. In the coming March 2024, PreSense will be completing 18 years. We have published 202 editions till Dec 2023.

As readers are aware, we have published digests of select articles up to 100, 110, 130, 150 and 175 editions. We had the unique privilege of carrying Foreword from Dr Abdul Kalam himself for the 100th edition.

The first edition of 'PreSense Speaks' series was released by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble MoS, Parliamentary Affairs in May 2021. The first edition was the compilation of articles on communication. This 13th edition of PreSense Speaks Series contains the Editorials published by us during the years 2020 to 2023. We release this edition, coinciding with the 14th Edition of Sansad Ratna Awards function.

I thank all the Editorial Team members for the excellent support and cooperation provided by them for release of every issue of PreSense. I am confident that this edition will be useful for all our readers.

K. Srinivasan
(Prime Point Srinivasan)
Publisher and Managing Editor, PreSense
www.corpezine.com
February 17, 2024

Editorials Published in 2020

Thunberg and the Climate Change – Is It “Now or Never” or “Much Ado About Nothing”?

By Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief (Jan 2020)

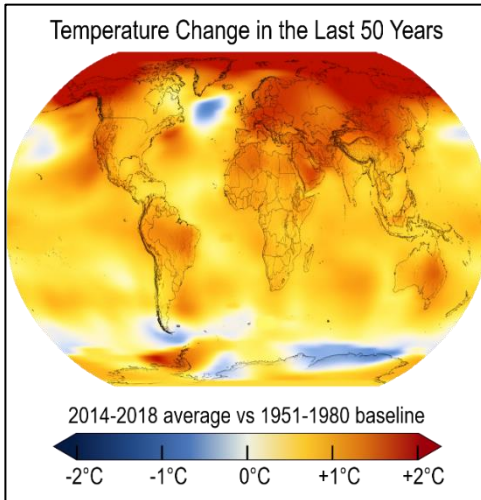
The spotlight on the opening day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on January 21st 2020 at Davos, Switzerland was on a 17-year-old climate activist, Greta Thunberg. She took on the world leaders as she spoke aggressively about the lack of action by the governments over the climatic crisis. Her sharp ‘reprimand’ brought an equally sharp retort from a world leader who had in an earlier response said, “This is not a time for pessimism.....We’re committed to conserving the majesty of God’s creation and the natural beauty of the world.” But Thunberg insists, “Our house is still on fire. Your inaction is fuelling the flames by the hour.”



Greta

Is Thunberg making much ado about nothing....or at least nothing really serious? Or are the world leaders just burying their heads in the sand over the matter? We need to look at the facts and reports about climate change and its impact, if any, on our planet and our lives to decide whether Thunberg is being paranoid or should be taken seriously.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has recorded that 2019 was the second hottest on record, being the sixth consecutive year of highest global temperatures on record –Y2014 through to Y2019! NASA (National Aeronautics & Space Agency), an independent agency under the US Federal Government states on its webpage that global climate change has already affected the environment with loss of sea ice, accelerated sea level rise and more intense heat waves



and more droughts. Earth's average temperature has increased by about 2 degrees Fahrenheit during the 20th century and NASA webpage says this is an unusual event in our planet's recent history, causing enormous changes in the environment. This change means extreme and more violent weather. At this rate, it is expected that the

Arctic will soon have ice-free summer seasons by the mid-century.

The most recent catastrophe was the Australian bushfires which had been raging since last July. Lives – human, wildlife and vegetation – have been destroyed. Even rescuers were not spared. Houses have been gutted. Air became polluted causing health hazards. It was only the recent rains that could put out the fires. The worst drought in decades, swelteringly high temperatures and strong winds have fanned the fires, making firefighting operations difficult.

Elsewhere, the world has been experiencing unusually severe storms that have caused damaging floods. The storms have been recurring once too often that each was being named to identify one from the other. These climatic changes have been affecting agriculture, wildlife and human health. It is feared that these changes will lead to the ultimate death of the planet as it becomes either too cold or too hot to live in.

The reason for this crisis is attributed to humans continuing to burn fossil fuels, and the rising amount of heat-trapping gases entering the atmosphere. The expressed hope is that we still have time to change the trajectory but it has to be right now. Fossil fuel exploration and extraction needs to stop immediately. Several key countries, especially the developed ones with their economies driven by fossil fuels, are mainly responsible for doing this and this is what Thunberg is trying to drive home, in all her protests both inside conference halls and outside on the streets.

Maybe for a change, we should not discard the frantic cries of a teenager climate activist as an anger management problem. It is a fact that we have been plundering our Earth and it is only a matter of time when we will have to pay the penalty for our misdeed, as Nature and Earth will always have the last and final say. And by then, it might be too late to redeem Earth and save our existence.

Violence – The Beginning of the End

By Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief (Feb 2020)



As the fear of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019) epidemic seizes the whole world, another type of fear is seizing India – the fear of an unhealthy mob mentality and its reactions based on mischievous provocation by insensitive radicals in the political and social circles. The result is violent and fatal outbursts in pockets in the country. These violent provocations are taking up a communal complexion, leading to a dangerous trend of mobs taking law into their hands to 'weed out' out specific communities only because of their personal faiths. This is not the India that our freedom fighters had died for. This is not the India that the Constitution of India was drafted for. This is not the India that we dream of as we speak of our technological advancement, outer space pursuits, international harmony, economic progress and social upliftment. This is not the India that every peace-loving and law-abiding citizen dreams of and hopes to wake up to, every morning.

The thing about a virus is that it starts as a microscopic invasion and if it is ignored and not arrested, it grows like a mob, spreading slowly but surely, taking lives as it suffocates the environment. The mob violence that happened in our country recently, has taken innocent lives, destroyed property and livelihoods and ruined the peace and tranquillity of the land in a couple of specific localities in the country's capital city. If not arrested by the strong hand of the law enforcement and public/political restraint, it will threaten to grow like the virus to overtake the whole country, its economy, its peace, its people and its existence. And India has enough, if not too many, enemies with malicious intent, waiting to ignite this dangerous course.

Today's India looks at protests as a matter of right, and under that perception, the protestors resort to aggression, including stone-pelting and attacking the police. This is not democracy. This is violence and anti-nationalism. What is disheartening is that the youth of the country both from colleges (even reputed ones) and outside, are involving themselves in violence and aggression in the name of democracy and citizens' rights. As already emphasised in an earlier editorial carried by this eMagazine, rights always have their corresponding and equally important responsibilities. This is often ignored or slighted by these demanding protestors. Besides, many of the protestors are driven by emotions and provocations rather than intelligence and knowledge. The media is consciously or unconsciously instigating this unhealthy environment by their lop-sided and emotionally charged reporting. Attacking the law – the police or the armed forces – is an offence. The media ignores the violence on the police but points out attacks on the mobs by the police. Both the protestors and the media fail to realise that the police are our fellow citizens, just doing their duties. They too, like our working compatriots, leave home and their families for work and look forward to going back to their homes and families at the end of their shifts. Why is there such insensitivity about the attacks on the policemen? Where

are the human rights' activists and forums in this case? Why are they not reacting?

What is happening in the country today is not right. We need to stop passing the blame on the politicians and the systems. We need to learn to behave ourselves and conduct ourselves appropriately and properly, before we point our finger at the failures of the system and the governance. As the familiar song learnt from school goes,

*"Oh! When I point my finger at my neighbour,
There are three more pointing back at me!"*

We need to stop and take charge of ourselves first. If we are told that something is not right, we must verify for ourselves, using our knowledge, wisdom and reasoning if it is true, and if so, we must use legitimate avenues to protest – not take to the streets, inconveniencing our own fellow citizens, blocking traffic, hoping to catch the media camera and be on television, as is the trend these days – emotional outbursts voiced for the camera and the microphone. This tendency for violent protests must stop or we will soon face the beginning of the end of our democracy.

Every Challenge Comes with an Opportunity – The Coronavirus Challenge Will Make India Stronger

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (March 2020)

The nationwide lockdown to fight against Coronavirus is unprecedented and is 'first of its kind' in known history. During the World Wars, countries fought against each other. But in this war, nearly 200 countries are fighting a battle against an invisible enemy which has affected more than seven lakh (700,000) people and killed more than 33000 people across the world until 31st March 2020. In India, around 1200 people have been affected, with a death toll of 30. According to medical reports, the people have been affected through their contact with people with foreign travel history. So far, community spread is not detected. The Government of India has taken timely steps by imposing a nationwide lockdown to prevent outdoor movement of the people and to reduce social contact and infection. During this challenging time, we, the people, should cooperate with the Government and follow the medical advisory by quarantining ourselves in our homes. We need to put up this inconvenience to save our own and others' lives. Some of the countries like Italy, Spain, and USA which did not heed the restrictions are now facing serious problems.

It is challenging for us to confine within the house for three weeks. This may even cause mental strain. We should learn to convert this challenge into an opportunity to read, practise Yoga and Pranayama, listen to music, watch movies, etc. It is a great opportunity to spend more time with family members as well as learn new skills like cooking, music and such art. One of our team members is using this quarantined time to write an eBook on the Parliamentary procedures. The inconvenience should be converted into positive energy and creativity.

Interestingly, this lockdown seems to have done nature and the environment good. Animals and birds that had disappeared from sight have now re-emerged near the human habitat. Air and noise pollution across India has come down drastically.

Under the pretext of 'freedom of expression', some of the telecasting channels and the social media are spreading negative and wrong information, misleading people and causing panic. Some of the television channels indulge in debates that criticise each and every action of the Government. This is not the time for such armchair criticism. This is the time for cooperation with the authorities. If the people do not cooperate and quarantine themselves voluntarily, it would be difficult to control the pandemic and this may warrant an extension of the lockdown period.

The Coronavirus crisis is bound to create a negative impact on the already strained economy. The Government of India has announced some economic relief packages. The Government of India should now constitute a committee of economic experts, who have handled similar crises in the past, and work out a plan for reviving the economy.

India has overcome several challenges in the past successfully and emerged stronger than what it was before. This Coronavirus challenge can also be converted into an opportunity, but it is possible only with the full cooperation of all the citizens by strictly complying with the Government guidelines.

Suspension of MPLads Will Affect Rural People – An Appeal to the Government to Reconsider Decision

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (April 2020)

Recently, the Indian Government decided to implement a 30% salary cut for all Members of Parliament (MPs), and also to suspend MPLads (Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) for two years. Through suspension of MPLads, the Government of India would get Rs.7900 crores. While the Opposition parties have welcomed the salary cut for MPs, they have objected to the suspension of MPLads.

Coronavirus fight: Cabinet passes ordinance to suspend MPLADS fund till 2022

Union minister Prakash Javadekar said the fund from MPLADS scheme will go to Consolidated Fund of India to address the challenges in fight against COVID-19

[BusinessToday.in](#) New Delhi Last Updated: April 6, 2020 | 17:27 IST

Since many people are not aware of how MPLads works, there are few discussions about it in the mainline media. Some intellectuals have welcomed the Government's move without understanding the concept, due to their misconception about politics and politicians.

Many people are under the wrong impression that the MPs are given Rs.5 crores cash for their expenditure. As per the guidelines of MPLads, the Lok Sabha MPs can utilise the amount only for their parliamentary constituency. The Rajya Sabha MPs can use the funds for the state from where they are elected. The MPs cannot directly spend the money themselves. They can only recommend approved projects to the District Collector / District Magistrate for creation of capital assets against the allocation from MPLads. The District Authorities will implement the projects and claim funds from the Central Government allotment.

Generally, the MPs recommend projects for the construction of toilets, buildings, and water tanks in schools and hospitals owned by the Government. They can also recommend the purchase of ambulances and medical equipment for the government hospitals within their constituency. They can allocate the funds for providing equipment to physically disabled persons. Even link roads connecting villages can be built using this fund. Community centres can be built to benefit cluster villages. By and large, MPLads has so far benefitted the rural people.

In order to gain the goodwill of the public, MPs would follow up with the district officials for speedy implementation of the projects recommended by them. It would be difficult for the District Collector or the State Governments concerned to execute such projects without MPLads or MLALads funds.

Suspension of MPLads for two years will definitely slow down development projects in the rural areas. Besides a slowdown for at least two years in the post lockdown era, this move would further deprive them of development projects for another two years.

Instead of suspending the entire 10 crores (for two years), the Government of India could have taken Rupees one or two crores per year for the health projects, and permitted the utilisation of the balance amount by the MPs for constituency-specific health and education related projects. The existing guidelines could have been modified accordingly for this purpose.

PreSense appeals to the Hon'ble Prime Minister to reconsider this decision.

The Ignored Plight of Our 'Migrant' Workers

By Susan Koshy, Editor in Chief (May 2020)

On 22nd March 2020, when India first went into total lockdown to deal with the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was fear, paranoia, puzzlement, and even ridicule. Soon, reports emerged from the deserted streets across the country. That was when we began to be aware of a section of 4 crore (40 million) of our people who have always been part of our lifeline without our noticing it – the 'migrant' workers who worked in tea shops, restaurants, construction sites, sanitary departments, security of apartments and offices, factories, etc.

These people belong to the unorganised sector and depend on their daily earnings to make their livelihood. These people, when out of work as has happened during lockdown, are immediately deprived of their basic means of survival – '*roti, kapda aur makaan*' (food, clothing and shelter). This migrants' crisis happened because their employers did not pay them their wages during the lockdown period. And the migrants starved.

Towards the conclusion of the initial 21-day lockdown period, there was anticipation by hard-hit companies and entrepreneurs about economic reliefs from the government. But all that these 'migrants' wanted was to go home. Unfortunately, there was no mention about them or any relief for them as the government announced the next phase of the lockdown.

That was when they took matters into their own hands and set out on their long, arduous journey to their hometowns, some homes too far to reach, some travellers too ill-equipped in health, stamina or conveyance to complete their journey. But

grit and the longing for home pushed them to their outer limits of tolerance, some making it, several literally falling short in exhaustion, and some in death. Yet, there was no clear respite from the Government for them.

By the third announcement of lockdown, there were vague hints about getting them home. And then started the vulgar negotiations between the central government and the states, between contractors and state-level administrators, and between transporters and the travellers. The migrants were the hard-hit victims in all these situations. They continued to suffer, walk long miles, fall with hunger and thirst. And India became the butt of insensitivity both to its own society and to the world.

However, considerable relief did come in the form of random Good Samaritans along the way, who brought food and water to these migrant travellers, who facilitated and arranged transportation for them, who pooled money to help them, who coordinated with people in the respective destinations to reach them. These are the people who worked hard but silently, to help these desperate and helpless fellow citizens in their plight. While we applaud their generosity and selfless service, we need to look inward to what we have contributed to make the burden of these hapless people a little lighter.

Has the lockdown really taught us any lesson in humanity? Have we learned to be less selfish? Have we become aware and empathetic towards the people around us, who have so far been invisible but been struggling to stave off starvation and despair? If not, we must. A Biblical verse states: *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"* This challenging question is worth reflection and introspection. We need to be more than human beings. We need to be human.

and innovate products. It is not so. For thousands of years, Indians have been recognised as highly knowledgeable, and have been experts in various domains like mathematics, chemistry, medicine, astronomy, engineering, architecture etc. Where did the knowledge go? Why are Indians not able to bag Nobel Prizes?

Many people are not aware that more than 928 multinational companies (MNCs) have hired nearly four lakh professionals within India to do Research and Development (R&D) Projects. Many leading MNCs like IBM, Microsoft, Google, Oracle, Adobe, etc. hire talents within India and also outsource to Indian companies like Wipro, HCL, Dr Reddy's Lab, etc. These MNCs spend more than 40% of their global spending on R&D within India. This clearly indicates that Indian professionals are highly competent to match the global standards. It is also said that IBM has more than 60% of its employees as Indians. Indians are heading Microsoft and Google. Our Indian professionals develop products for the foreign companies and they market them under their brand name. India is buying these products at high costs.

In spite of Indian professionals creating world class products, India does not have software or hardware products which are marketed globally under an Indian brand. When we interacted with several renowned academicians across the country, they all admitted that notwithstanding the assurance by Prime Minister to increase the scope for innovation, the ecosystem is not conducive to the potential innovators.

It is estimated that around 1 lakh crore of rupees is spent annually on Research and Development in India. Of this, 55% is consumed by the Central and State Governments. 38% is used by the private sector. 4% is used by the higher education institutions. The Government spends the amount on defence, space, and electricity related research projects. The private sector uses it mainly for pharma and transportation projects.

Many academicians feel that the 4% spent by higher educational institutions is poor, when compared to developed nations.

A former Vice Chancellor of a University and scientist said that there was no point in increasing the funds, unless the quality of the teachers and education in higher education institutions is improved. He added that prior to the 1980s, persons passionate about education used to join the teaching job. Nowadays, many of those who cannot get better jobs get into teaching. Indian researchers in educational institutions bring out a large number of articles for journals, but most of them are of poor quality. He added that in order to improve the quality of students, an all-India entrance examination must be initiated for engineering too, like NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) for medical stream, so that future projects of India, in all disciplines are handled by quality people. He hoped that the new education policy planned by the Government would address this issue.

Another senior professor of Indian Institute of Technology said that he had submitted 8 documents for patenting some of his innovations. The authorities took up the examination of one product after four years. The remaining 7 products are pending with the authorities for the past five years. Even the competence of the examiners is highly questionable. Many innovators prefer to file in India for patents as it is cheaper to do so. But the inordinate delay and the incompetent examiners discourage them from filing their documents in India. The professor added that he has advised some of his students who work in USA to file their patent documents there itself even though it is costlier. They get the approval within six months. Unless the Government improves the ecosystem, many of our innovators may not be comfortable about filing their patents in India. Filing them in USA is not practical for most of the innovators.

In 2015, Prime Minister gave a call to all PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings) to collaborate with high-end institutions for innovation. It is not known to what extent this has become successful. The incubation centres in IITs and NITs are successful. This can be doubled to accommodate more innovations.

In India, we are not in the habit of celebrating the great scientists, as we do with film stars and politicians. An Indian scientist, who was not found eligible for a tutor's job by an Indian University, went abroad and became a Nobel Laureate. Today, we laud him as an Indian. Do we have any moral right to take credit for his success? All Indian-born Nobel Laureates were supported by foreign countries to achieve their goal. We have the history of driving them out of our country, citing various rules. It is suggested that we can name or rename some of our Universities after some of the Indian Nobel Laureates and other great Indian scientists, so that present Indian youth are inspired.

PreSense appeals to the Government of India and the Standing Committee on Science and Technology to examine the urgent need for improving our ecosystem in order to motivate young Indian innovators to develop products for India.

Managing Success with Right Attitude to Avoid Failure

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (July 2020)

Over the past ten years, there has been a great change in the attitude of many youngsters who attain small and early success. They behave as if they have achieved a great deal in life. This attitude is reflected in their arrogant and insensitive behaviour. This attitude is especially noticeable in those working in such domains as the Media, Entertainment, IT (Information Technology) and Politics. With the sudden inflow of money, or a spurt of popularity, or proximity to people in power, these youngsters display this unhealthy attitude, failing to realise that this attitude would only distance themselves from their well-wishers, and eventually lead to disaster and failure.

There have been debates about how to counsel these youngsters and mentor them on managing their initial success in a mature manner, for their sustained growth. In July 2020, NGPL (Next Gen Political Leaders), one of the initiatives of PreSense, organised a Webinar on this subject and had invited two young MPs to share their views on the topic.

We also contacted Dr A V Srinivasan, a world-renowned neurologist for his views on why such behaviour happens and how to prevent such unhealthy attitude. He concurred that many youngsters these days are unable to manage their initial success like money, fame, and status in a mature way. They tend to become arrogant and insensitive to others, and then they encounter their own downfall due to their attitude.

He explained that when success occurs, people can choose to experience either pleasure or happiness. Pleasure is emotional and short-lived. When the person relates his

success to his ego, the experience is 'pleasure'. It is like intoxication. This mode puts pressure on the individual to achieve more, like going back for more doses, as success goes to the head. That is why these people behave in an arrogant manner.

When people connect their success to a feeling of selflessness and relate it to the society's benefit (not personal ego), it becomes happiness. The people in the happiness mode have a good attitude, and mature behaviour and character. That makes them achieve more and more but with a selfless yearning. While pleasure is short-lived, happiness is long lasting.

Dr Abdul Kalam always related his success to the society. He is therefore still revered by the people. On the other hand, although Hitler conquered almost the whole of Europe, he resorted to 'pleasure killing' of the Jewish community. That led to his downfall. Had he not resorted to 'pleasure killing', he would have been remembered as one of the celebrated leaders. Similarly, King Alexander wanted to conquer the world for his individual pleasure. But he died due to mental stress at a young age. On the other hand, King Raja Raja Cholan conquered many countries 1000 years ago. But he dedicated his success to his people and built the great monument of 'Tanjore Temple'. He is still celebrated after 1000 years.

Successful youngsters should relate their achievements to happiness and not pleasure. For this, they should develop the right, healthy attitude. They should seek the guidance of mentors, if necessary, to develop and nurture the right attitude. It would be a great loss to the nation, if these youngsters fail to be groomed in the initial stage of success, and then face failure due to their unbecoming attitude.

Ban Political Activism in Educational Institutions

By Susan Koshy, Editor in Chief (August 2020)



Image Courtesy: www.edexlive.com

During India's pre-independence struggle, the extraordinary circumstances in the country lured students to participate as freedom fighters and patriotic protesters against British rule in India. The students joined Indian political parties and groups in their united struggle against the British administration. If we look around in the world and even in India, the student fraternity has been a strong, powerful and influential force to reckon in any nation-wide movement.

During the academic years in college, students vie for positions in student unions and communities. These positions are therefore often fiercely contested by talented and

competent student candidates who display qualities of leadership. Winning and serving in positions in student communities is a bonus credit to the student, fortifying his prospects in the career market. Holding such positions of power also wins power and respect among the students and the teaching fraternity of the institution. Students are also naturally ambitious to seize such privileges, working hard for them.

But an unfortunate trend has crept into the higher educational institutions over the years in post-independent India. Student unions and leaders are affiliated to opposing political parties, thus blemishing the sanctity of student activity in the campus that was intended for holistic development of the student through extracurricular activities, and learning outside the classroom. Political parties exploit the ambitious enthusiasm of the youth and lure them into adorning political flagships to the associations they belong.

According to a former student leader of a renowned city college, who won the college elections purely on the merits of his capability and leadership traits, this trend of political affiliations has become especially pronounced in the past decade. What used to be a battle of talents and skills to win a college election, has turned out in most higher education colleges, including reputed ones, to be a political battle as the contesting student candidates are often backed by political parties. Thus, college elections in the student community become a contest of political might rather than personal competence.

This unhealthy practice has polluted the atmosphere in the corridors of the institutions. Students are misled to believe that political power and affiliation is more important than value-based skills and character development. Such students forget the reason they are in college, which is to learn, be educated and leave the corridors as a young adult ready to

start his life in the working world. Instead, they involve themselves in political activities, shirk their studies, exploit their political contacts in order to continue in the college beyond their eligible tenure, enjoying the subsidised facilities and other perks as a student even though they are not entitled to them. Unfortunately, the administrative authorities of the institutions turn a blind eye to these 'student politicians' because of the bullying influence of the political parties they belong to.

A reputed senior and experienced educationist who had headed leading educational institutions across the world, said that educational institutions in developed countries as USA, UK and those in Europe do not have this trend of political affiliation and interference in their universities and colleges and their student communities. The students and the teaching administration as well as the respective local governments are explicit about the role and objective of the students who join colleges and universities for higher studies. The students' focus there is on completing their academic course on time, earning as many credits as they can, and their extracurricular activities and student unions are opportunities for wholesome development of their personalities. He also said that the trend of political affiliation of student unions was prevalent only in developing countries where the system of governance and administration is flawed and corrupt. Another senior and experienced professor, who used to be leader of students' unions abroad, said, "In Europe and USA, there is activism but the laws hold individuals and organisations responsible."

The recently released National Educational Policy 2020 spells out ways and means for the holistic development of the students to produce responsible, conscientious young citizens of integrity. The Policy recommends value-based education to achieve this objective. The Policy should have strongly recommended a ban on political interference, activity and affiliation in educational institutions and student communities,

thus enabling students to accomplish their main purpose of enrolment – to study, gain knowledge and groom their personalities, and leave the institution promptly after the prescribed academic tenure. As young and individual adults, they are free to pursue their political ambitions – outside the purview of educational institutions, and with their own time and money.

The educational institution is the Temple of Knowledge. It earned that prestigious title from the traditional education system of ancient India. These temples were centres of learning. True patriotism, which is what politicians and political aspirants generally profess, begins with respecting our heritage and respecting our Temple of Knowledge, and not contaminating it with the colours of political fervour and interference.

Do Political Parties Follow Democratic Norms in the Parliament?

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (September 2020)

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.

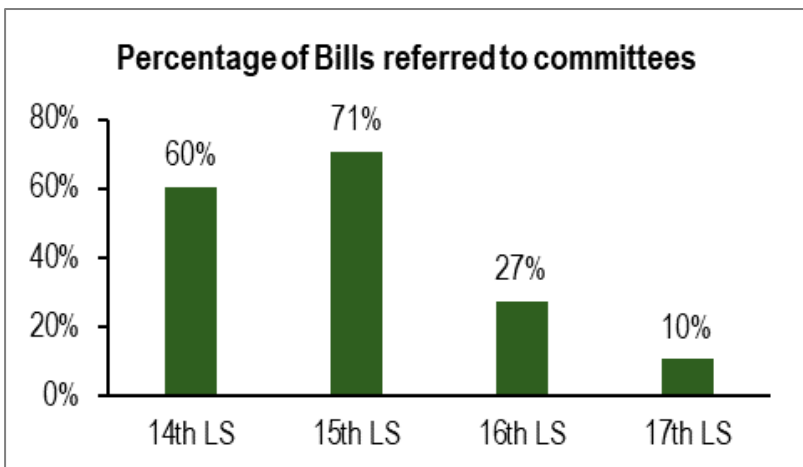
During the session, the Parliament functioned in two parts, with one House sitting in the morning and the other, in the afternoon. However, the session was curtailed because of a public health emergency when several MPs were diagnosed with Covid-19. The Parliament adjourned *sine die* on 23rd September 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.

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.

(Data and graphics courtesy: PRS Legislative Research)

Ban Online Gambling and Related Advertisements to Save Youth

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (October 2020)

Youth commits suicide after losing Rs 15 lakh in online gambling game in Mancherial

 **Roja Mayabrahma**
Hans News Service | 12 July 2020 9:24 AM IST

HIGHLIGHTS

A 24-year-old youngster committed suicide after he lost Rs 15 lakh to the fraudsters in an online gambling game Dafabet.

Chennai: 20-year-old student ends life after losing savings in online gambling; suicide note recovered

 **Mirror Now Digital**
Updated Jul 26, 2020 | 2:55 IST

ANDHRA PRADESH

Gambling addiction on the rise among youth

 **Rajulapudi Srinivas**

VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21, 2020 23:01 IST
UPDATED: JUNE 21, 2020 23:01 IST

Man, 28, loses money in online rummy, ends life

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: The city police are investigating the death of a 28-year-old man who hanged himself in Sembiam allegedly after losing money while playing rummy online.

The deceased was identified as M Kumaresan. A native of Adhanur in Villupattam district, he was working in the city as a collection agent for a private bank.

His roommates found him hanging around 11pm on Tuesday night. Personnel from Sembiam police station rushed to the scene and took Kumaresan to the Government Stanley Hospital, where he was declared 'brought dead'.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the deceased was addicted to online gambling and would stay awake till early hours of the day playing rummy.

His family members told investigators that he never sent any money home. His monthly salary was about Rs 10,000 and he had borrowed Rs 1 lakh from his father recently which he lost while gambling. Sembiam police have registered a case and are investigating, police said.

Shocking recent media reports

The recent shocking reports in the media about the suicide of many youngsters after losing money in online gambling is highly disturbing. The unregulated screaming advertisements on television and other online media inviting people to play rummy add more serious concern. It is reported that many youngsters have become addicted to internet gambling.

Gambling in India is governed by The Public Gaming Act of 1867, The Madras Police Act of 1888 and the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act of 1930 in the state. Gambling is listed in the List

II of the Seventh Schedule of Indian Constitution and the States are empowered to enact laws to regulate gambling. Goa, Sikkim and Nagaland have permitted gambling online and offline. In the majority of the other States, gambling is permitted in specific places which are called 'Gaming Houses', after taking permission from the authorities concerned.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has permitted gaming activities like rummy with stakes, which has been described as a game with "preponderance of skill over chance". When these cases were decided, online gambling was not prevalent. Today, a situation has arisen where online gambling has become popular but has neither been specifically prohibited nor permitted. A grey area exists which needs to be addressed expeditiously. In the online Rummy gambling, a person uses the internet to play the game. Cards are dealt virtually and the player does not know whether he plays with a machine or a real human being. Any fraud committed in the physical domain can be detected, but any fraud committed in the virtual domain is almost impossible to detect. Every game could be a 'fixed match'. 'Match fixing' is illegal in India.

Our ancient scriptures like Rig Veda and Mahabharata describe the evils of gambling. In Arthasastra, Chanakya has laid down some stringent conditions for operating Gaming Houses. If there was any violation, the gaming house owner and players were penalised heavily.

All card games, lotteries, IPL betting, commodity trading by unrecognised exchanges, currency trading by unauthorised people are freely available online in India.

Some of the major challenges arising out of online gambling:

- Unlimited losses will ruin the family of the player.
- It will lead to a rise in crimes on the streets.

PreSense Speaks | Editorials 2020 to 2023

- Most of the money gets transferred outside India through the hawala channel. Technical manipulations seem to be taking place to circumvent the Money Laundering Act by the game operators. It is also reported that the money is used for drug trafficking and terrorism activities.
- Already people are addicted to the internet. Gambling is more addictive. These two reinforce each other. This will lead the player to pick up other addictions like drugs and alcohol.
- It is also reported that several gaming sites use crypto currencies as a medium of transaction and this will damage the nation's economy, because of unregulated currency flow.
- Through TV and online advertisements, children and housewives are targeted and encouraged to play.
- Personal information is taken, mostly in an unauthorised manner, by the game operator and he uses this information to profile the player and to sell the data to others.

PreSense appeals to the Government of India to immediately address this issue without delay and consider the following suggestions:

- To pass laws to ban or at least regulate such online gaming/gambling websites and permit only restricted access to identified persons (KYC regulated) with strict surveillance over the transactions, limiting betting amounts and monitoring operation of such sites;
- To sensitise the public on the dangers of gambling on the same lines and issue statutory warnings in a similar manner as is done for tobacco users;
- To put in place strict guidelines like antecedent verification, player admission screening, profiling etc before granting admission and creating and maintaining databases of such people after granting access; and
- To consider putting in place rules and guidelines for such practitioners including possible issue of licenses to practice the profession.

Shri S N Ravichandran, a Cyber Security Expert and Social Worker from Coimbatore has filed Public Interest Litigation in the Madras High Court seeking the intervention of the Hon'ble High Court to address the issues urgently. The Court has taken up the case for hearing and issued notices to all concerned.

Provide Siddha System of Medicine The Status It Deserves

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor and Susan Koshy, Editor in Chief (November 2020)

The world has been going through a chronic COVID-19 crisis since early 2020. Researchers and scientists have been spending money and time and concerted efforts in finding relief from the new virus that has taken over the world.

While the World Health Organisation (WHO) and similar health organisations have been promoting research in the allopathic system of medicine, back in India, traditional medicine, especially Siddha, has been making inroads in successfully arresting infection by the COVID virus.



Siddha medicine is one of the oldest traditional systems of medicine practised in the southern part of India, mostly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Siddha means 'perfection'. It has a holistic approach and covers the physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of an individual in the medical pursuit of combatting infections in the body.

Siddha is based on the principles relating to the elements and humours (*Vaadham, Pitham* and *Kapham*) of the human body, which when imbalanced, result in diseases and adverse medical conditions.

To understand the role of Siddha medicine in dealing with the current medical crisis, your eMagazine's Editorial Team talked to various Siddha doctors and researchers.

In the 2015 Chennai floods that threatened an epidemic of water-borne diseases, '*Nilavembu Kudineer*', a *Siddha* polyherbal formulation, was widely distributed and administered among the local people, and this move successfully averted any threat of an epidemic. PreSense understands that hospitals in Tamil Nadu state had co-administered Siddha medicine to COVID patients, and about 800 of them were taken up for research to find out the effectiveness of Siddha medication. These selected patients had shown moderate/severe symptoms of the COVID infection. Post-Siddha medication to them, the mortality, symptomatic severity and recovery time were relatively lower in these cases than in those who were not given Siddha medication. Further 30,000 COVID patients were treated in exclusive Siddha care centres and 98% of the patients recovered fully, while 2% of the patients were referred to a modern medical facility for oxygen support.

In the Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu, a closed group of 40,000 people were administered Siddha medicine as a preventive measure, and the results were successful with no case of COVID infection reported in the group. This experience has been documented by the medical team.

With the experiences and the results so encouraging, it is puzzling why Siddha has not found due recognition and status it deserves. The Editorial Team ascertained the following reasons for this lacuna:

- Siddha originated in Tamil Nadu. Siddhar Agasthiyar is considered the founding father of this medical system. Therefore, all the literature relating to this system of medicine is documented in Tamil. Little effort in translation is done to promote it among the people in other parts of India, such as North India.

- The local and national-level administrators and governments have not been giving due recognition to the traditional medicines, including Siddha. Therefore, Siddha researchers and practitioners have little motivation and incentive to promote its virtues, especially as preventive medicine and supplement.

PreSense proposes the following immediate steps be taken by AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) Ministry of the Government of India to deal with these inhibitors, and promote Siddha to the status and utility it deserves in the field of preventive medicine and treatment:

- Translate the literature and texts relating to Siddha, which are currently in Tamil, to other Indian languages, especially Hindi to reach North India, and English to promote it abroad.
- Provide Central Government funding for state-level development of Siddha welfare centres and research.
- Introduce Siddha welfare centres at all state capitals and metropolitan cities of the country, including the Parliament House.
- Initiate MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the government of those countries where the South Indian population (which is generally familiar with the Siddha system of medicine) is predominant, to enable the diaspora to avail Siddha medication and treatment.
- Initiate scientific validation of Siddha System, to make the system acceptable globally. It may be recalled that it was only after Johns Hopkins Hospital in the USA and Stanford Hospital under Stanford University validated some Yoga exercises scientifically, that Yoga became internationally acceptable. The AYUSH Ministry should

encourage the National Institute of Siddha (NIS) to undertake 'original' research (*ie.* identifying the problem and finding a solution to it) on Siddha system, and publish research papers in internationally reputed journals with good 'Impact Factor' (a measure of the importance of a journal).

- From our conversation with various Siddha Practitioners and Faculty members of NIS, we observed that they are not aware of the methods of scientific validation of the system and submission of Research Papers to Journals with good 'Impact Factor'. An immediate awareness programme is to be undertaken by National Institute of Siddha.

It is understood that six research papers under Siddha are expected to be published within the next three months. This is a good initiative in the way forward to develop and promote Siddha which is a holistic and wholesome alternative for healthy living and treatment of medical conditions. But much more needs to be done. Incidentally, the High Court of Madras, in a case filed by a Siddha doctor, had raised questions on why Siddha medicine was not being given due allocation of funds by the Central Government.

The Editorial Team appeals to the Central Government and the AYUSH Ministry to provide specified budgetary allocation and promote initiatives to develop and recognise Siddha, just as it did to promote our indigenous Yoga to the world.

The Year Gone By. The Year Ahead

By Susan Koshy, Editor in Chief (December 2020)

The Year Gone By



The year 2020 has passed. We hear sighs of relief. Are these sighs too soon? Time will tell.

The year 2020 began like almost any other year. Along with the New Year greetings, we were

informed about an uncommon occurrence in an unfamiliar place called Wuhan in China, where a local virus was infecting the people and taking their lives in an epidemic. That news was treated as a localised incident and life continued normally, for the rest of the country and the world.

Within three months, the virus crossed the borders, to infect the whole world like a wild forest fire. People began dying within days of infection. The spread of the virus was speedy and highly contagious. Doctors, scientists, governments were at a loss about how to deal with, and arrest this pandemic. The mask, what Michael Jackson adorned in the 2000s as a fashion statement, became a symbol of protection against the infection.

Life and lifestyle changed for the whole world. We have lost loved ones and known people untimely, because of the virus. People who were gainfully employed, were suddenly threatened with debts and no income because of the impact of

the virus on business and the economy. We know enough about the changes without having to go into the details.

We are yet to see the last of the pandemic, as a new wave of a mutant virus takes over the European continent, and is spreading.

There were strong speculations about the depletion of natural habitat being the reason for the bizarre occurrence. In the last week of December 2020, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that *"history tells us that this will not be the last pandemic, and epidemics are a fact of life."* But more importantly, he said, *"The pandemic has highlighted the intimate links between the health of humans, animals and the planet. Any efforts to improve human health are doomed unless they address the critical interface between humans and animals and the threat of climate change that is making our earth less habitable."* Food for serious thought and resolved action?

Lessons to Learn from 2020

Therefore, what must the lessons be, to be learned from this traumatic experience, as we step into the new year? To enumerate them, let us look at the positives among a series of negatives in the year.

- The pandemic forced families to stay together, giving the opportunity to connect, revive relationships and understand one another. Those who failed to leverage on this God-sent opportunity, lost out in divorces and intolerance. Their loss.
- The lockdown taught us that every challenge is an opening for a new opportunity through an invention or a discovery – in this case, virtual connect in place of

physical. We learnt to work, live and manage, using man's latest greatest invention, Technology.

- We exercised new flexibility in work-home time management.
- We realised that there is life beyond fast cars, traffic, multiplexes and late-night parties.
- We learnt to look around, notice, and be aware of other lives – of other people, animals, vegetation. An invisible but vital segment and lifeline in our working society – the unorganised migrant working community who were worst hit by the lockdowns, emerged in the visibility of the society.
- People, who were so far, content to be ordinary people, became Good Samaritans. People learnt to be more generous, more sensitised, more aware of the importance of the Universe, eco-balance and care, as critical elements for our own survival and health.
- For a change, we were able to enlist things to be grateful for, rather than be unhappy about shortfalls. We were thankful to be alive and healthy, as also for our loved ones.

The Year Ahead

The new year comes with hopes and apprehensions about the COVID vaccine. We must not compromise on hygiene and social distancing for a while more. We still have uncertainties about new job opportunities, the new office environment moving from physical to mostly WFH (Work-From-Home), and classes shifting from school buildings to virtual screens, as the new normal. Whatever the change, humans are wired to adapt. So, there is hope.

What we still need to do, is change our inherent attitude and approach as exploiters of Mother Earth, to preservers of Nature, and fellow survivors with the flora and fauna.

When our popular indigenous music group, the Shillong Chamber Choir, released their latest album last week, singing carols in local and traditional languages, the founder of the Choir, Neil Nongkynrih explained, *"Most of us have a very westernised way of viewing the festival. We associate it with Santa, reindeers and Christmas trees. But actually, it is all about Jesus Christ's humble birth in a desert in the Middle East. We want to share that spirit through our songs."* And so, the music album was aptly titled, "Come Home Christmas".

Similarly, we need to take a break, if we have not done it yet, and make a refreshed New Year resolution (for sincere implementation), to look beyond a dog-eat-dog lifestyle, beyond workaholism, beyond selfish indulgence. Instead, we need to regard Mother Earth and our natural co-inhabitants with care, preserve our familial relationships, and reinforce our core value system to promote cooperative co-existence.

Are we asking too much of ourselves? Only we ourselves have the answer. If there is a will, there is a way. We are in dire need of peace and goodwill, health and well-being on Earth. Let's make it happen, working together!

Editorials Published in 2021

nsung Heroes, Like Sung Heroes, Are Heroes

By Susan Koshy, Editor in Chief (January 2021)

Recently, the Indian Cricket Team won the Test Series 2-1, against Australia in Australia, in a 4-match series.

This is not the first time that India has won a Test Series, and again not the first time India has won against Australia, and in Australia. Even then, the latest win stirred much emotion, passion and patriotism, both within the team and within India. What drew these emotions was the way the victory was clinched. After winning a match each, India drew the third match, which seemed almost sure to go Australia's way. The final deciding match was won at the Brisbane Cricket



Ground called Gabba – the Fortress because no foreign team had won a match there in over three decades. India broke that spell by winning convincingly, to take the Trophy back home. The highlight – the win was steered by six debutantes, for whom playing in an international test match was a new experience. They became overnight icons, national idols and success stories.

Sung Heroes

This article is not about their successes, but what went into making them success stories, against all odds. For example, we have among them, a player who grew up in a village in Tamil Nadu State, to parents who were from a low economic

background. Even though he enjoyed playing cricket and showed promise, he had to discontinue as his family could not afford his classes. Fortunately, a mentor who could convince his family, got him into a city school for better coaching opportunities. He made the best of the opportunities, relying on his commitment and personal efforts, even as he could not afford suitable kits and shoes for the game. At a relatively old age of 29 years for a debut, he was immediately acknowledged as a legend, even by the Australian team.

Another player hailed from a remote locality in North India, where again his father earned a low income and life was a struggle for him. Here again, passion and commitment helped him strive against all odds to make it to the national playing team. And when his father died at the beginning of the Australian tour, he prioritised his father's dream of seeing him win, over quitting the tour to attend the funeral. When he visited his father's grave after his return, he had a proud moment to share in his father's memory, at his grave.

During the Australian tour, key players were rested for injuries and no one expected India to win, only draw, if possible. But these debutantes relied on their commitment, self-belief and team motivation, to face the aggressiveness of the opposing team. They lived up to the famous motto, 'Yes, We Can!', and proved it, inspiring aspiring young sportspersons across India. And the entire nation now basks in ecstasy over the landmark win.

Unsung Heroes

But success stories do not always come gift-wrapped, with rich rewards and overwhelming home-coming receptions back home. Success stories also come in little acts that make a difference, silently but surely, to someone who needs it, or for the world or the Universe. There is no dearth of ideas and opportunities to make a difference in life, and it is possible

once one realises that there is wealth, not just in physical assets, but also in virtuous deeds, including random acts of care. We have such unsung success stories, right here in India. We have one such success story of a Karnataka State-based 105-year-old woman who planted and nurtured nearly 400 banyan trees over her lifespan, in place of own children she could not have, and thus contributed to creating a greener environment. She converted her disappointment to an opportunity for a better world.

Another success story is that of an 85-year-old woman in Tamil Nadu State. She sells *idlis* for breakfast at just Rupee one (as against the normal price of at least Rupees five or more) for the past three decades, because the customers who visit her little shop, including migrant workers, are from economically backward families, and she did not want to tax them.

We have a transgender lady who adopts abandoned children, and is mother to eight such orphaned children today.

We have innumerable such unsung heroes who make a difference, by comforting a desperate soul, helping someone up, caring for the other species living with us in nature, so that the world becomes a better place to live in. If we look around, we might notice them – coming in different shapes, sizes, economic backgrounds, genders, ages, orientations.

Let us applaud the unsung heroes who silently make a difference. Let us also celebrate the unsung heroes amongst our soldiers who fight the bitter cold, and the enemies at the borders, even as we celebrated the 72nd Republic Day of India on 26th January 2021.

Celebrating Negativity – Quo Vadis?

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (February 2021)

In the recent years, India has been seeing a trend, where a section of the public and the media celebrate negative news, without any reservation. In many states of the country, convicts and criminal offenders who are released from jail after serving their period of imprisonment, are hailed as heroes and received in grandeur. Anti-hero characters who feature in films, social media and television serials, are hero-worshipped. Hanged terrorists are given grand funerals, with large crowds turning up. In the process, genuine heroes of our nation are not recognised, and are often side-lined.

In the recent violence caused by miscreants in the garb of farmers' support, at the time of the Republic Day celebrations at



Delhi, some senior journalists tweeted some fake news against the police. These promoters of the fake news were hailed by a section of media and some intellectuals, in defence of 'freedom of speech and expression'.

Recently, the arrested young girls who were allegedly associated with some international separatist organisations, were hailed, again in defence of 'freedom of speech and expression'. Whatever be the legal position, any association with international groups that work against the sovereignty of India, must not be tolerated and must be condemned. Unfortunately, if anyone dares to condemn these activities, he

is silenced and shamed by a powerful lobby of the social media and the traditional media.

The Silence of Concerned Citizens

People who are concerned about the welfare of their nation, are afraid to speak against the celebration of negativity, for fear of being shamed by its supporters. Even though the supporters of negativity are few in number when compared to the larger number of silent, concerned citizens, these negative people are extremely vocal in the media, especially in the social media, drowning the silence of the people.

The author spoke to a cross section of intellectual people from different professional backgrounds. While they deplored this new trend, they were reluctant to share their views publicly.

Freedom of Speech is Not Absolute

With the emergence of the social media, it is generally assumed that 'freedom of speech and expression' is absolute. This is incorrect. The Indian Constitution provides 'freedom of speech and expression' as a fundamental right under section 19(1)(a). However, under Article 19(2), the Indian Constitution empowers the State to enact laws that impose reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said article 19(1)(a), "in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence". In India, there are enough laws to impose reasonable restrictions. In the United States, even though their Constitution provides for absolute freedom of speech and expression, this freedom is restricted through various judgements. No country in the world enjoys absolute freedom of speech and expression.

Sadly, the people who advocate 'freedom of speech' do not educate the youngsters about the reasonable restrictions. When the author spoke to one of the senior professors of journalism of a reputed university, the professor questioned the right of the police to arrest any person who violated the restrictions. Surprisingly, this professor was ignorant of the reasonable restrictions and even the fundamental duties enshrined in the Constitution. Thousands of students who are taught by this professor, are likely to be misinformed by him, and therefore, they run the risk of breaking the law, out of ignorance.

Why This Trend?

During the conversation with various people about why this trend has emerged in the recent years, many observed that there was polarisation of right and left across the world with extreme views on both sides, and both finding fault with each other. This polarisation has affected India too.

An internationally reputed neurologist opined that some adverse economic developments, rising unemployment and even some of the good but lenient reform measures introduced by the Government, has caused insecurity and fear among the youngsters, and they tend to react with anger. Out of their lack of awareness about the restrictions and the law, they tend to overstep their right of expression, to vent their frustration. This results in such untoward behaviour and trends.

Inadequate communication from the ruling establishment, and lack of concerted efforts to educate the people about the various useful economic initiatives and reforms, coupled with the 'chest-beating' arrogance of some of the followers of the ruling establishment, have infuriated even the politically unbiased and apolitical people of the country.

Role of Political Parties and the Media

It is a dangerous and unhealthy trend to see youngsters violating the law of the land, using the social media, to the embarrassment for our nation. It is also a dangerous trend that political parties, instead of guiding and checking the youngsters, encourage them, in their pursuit of short-term political gains. Tweets against the sovereignty and integrity of the nation are often hailed by some political parties. The traditional media like print and television, instead of playing a positive role, fuel such acts, to up their TRP ratings.

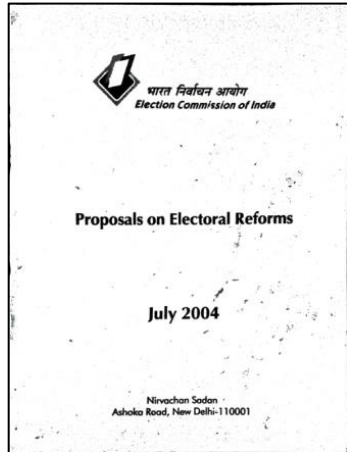
Differentiate between Government and Sovereignty of the Nation

Critics of the ruling establishment should differentiate between the Government and the sovereignty of the nation. In the pretext of opposing the Government, these 'activists' collude with national enemies, to protest against the nation's sovereignty. If the political parties and the media realise the dangers of this trend and act in a responsible manner, we can protect and uphold the sovereignty of the country and its legitimate citizens.

Urgent Need for Electoral Reforms in the 75th Year of Independence

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (March 2021)

In the midst of the State Assembly Elections in five States, Prime Point Foundation and your eMagazine PreSense organised the 11th edition of Sansad Ratna Awards at New Delhi on 20th March 2021. Shri Sunil Arora (Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of India), Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal (Hon'ble MoS, Parliamentary Affairs), and Justice Shri A K Patnaik (Former Judge, Supreme Court of India) were the Chief Guests. Around 20 Hon'ble Members of Parliament were present during the event. On behalf of the civil society, an appeal was made in the welcome address, to all the authorities concerned, to expedite the Electoral Reforms.



Although the first official consolidated proposal for Electoral Reforms was made in June 2004 to the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, by the then Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri T S Krishnamurthy, to date nothing noteworthy has happened. Any major reforms that have taken place like NOTA, declaring criminal cases in election affidavit by candidates, and disqualification of membership for convicted MPs/MLAs, have happened only through judicial orders from Supreme Court of India.

Although the Law Commission and the Parliamentary Standing Committee have suggested reforms, so far, there has been no political will to legislate such reforms. Without the major electoral reforms, our democracy cannot be strengthened.

The Election Commission is one of the 'Pride Institutions' of India. They deserve appreciation for their free, fair and transparent management of the Indian elections, the world's biggest event. They have derived the power to frame some rules only through the issue of judicial orders. They still need more power to disqualify candidates who violate the rules. There have been instances when elections were cancelled, when a candidate was caught distributing money during elections. However, the same candidate contested again and won when the new date of elections was notified. The Election Commission is helpless in such situations, as they do not have the power to disqualify a person who violates the rules.

In the past 20 years, political parties have been spending huge amounts of money, even in Assembly elections, not to speak of Parliamentary elections. In spite of all the checks and controls, money gets distributed to the voters. Surprisingly, in one of the surveys conducted by a media house in Tamil Nadu, when voters were asked about the factors that they considered for selecting a candidate like political party, leader, candidate, manifesto, and so on, nearly 10% of the voters responded saying that they voted for 'money'. This situation prevails in some of the states. This is an alarming signal.

Another important matter of concern is the 'Opinion Polls'. Even though the Election Commission had once wanted to ban opinion polls before the elections, the Supreme Court held that it could not be banned on the grounds of 'freedom of speech and expression'. In India, many of the offenders seek protection under the garb of 'freedom of speech'. Exploiting this privilege, many opinion polls are released with the nexus of political parties and the media and poll agencies. These

surveys are not transparent as they do not indicate the methodology and the sample size of the survey and the results. Since many of the media houses are owned by political parties or are in alliance with some parties, their views are unreliable. In the past elections, none of the surveys has proved right. The Election Commission can impose restrictions like minimum sample size, transparency of methodology, etc. If there is any legal provision, the Election Commission can permit survey results till the announcement of election dates, without infringing on the freedom of speech. Voters should decide based on their own perceptions. We need to draw the line between 'free and fair election' and 'freedom of speech' in the name of opinion polls.

In the current Assembly Elections, some of the prospective parties have released manifestoes promising 'the moon and the heaven'. They have not declared their source of funds to meet their impractical promises. One party has promised 'government jobs' and washing machines to all the ration cardholders. Many parties have promised monthly pensions to all cardholders, free gas cylinders, free houses, writing off of all education and agricultural loans, etc. Although there are guidelines from the Election Commission, they are violated, while misleading the voters. Unfortunately, the Election Commission does not have enough power to control them.

While on one side, the civil society and vibrant youngsters take initiatives to clean up the electoral system, they are unable to enter politics and contest elections due to the dominance of persons with criminal background and great ill-gotten wealth to fund. During the selection of candidates by many political parties, the first question asked is "how much money can you spend". The highest bidder is allotted the seat, and not the person who is loyal and committed to the party and the welfare of the society.

In the past four General Elections, none of the parties has promised in their manifesto to bring about 'Electoral Reforms'. As the nation prepares to celebrate its 75th year of independence, it is time for all political parties to join together to clean up the electoral and societal system and bring in legislation for Electoral Reforms, including Public Funding through National Election Fund for Funding of Elections as proposed by Former Chief Election Commissioner of India Shri T S Krishnamurthy, and provide opportunities to enthusiastic and committed youngsters to be part of the legislature. PreSense appeals to all authorities to enact a separate comprehensive law to regulate all political parties, as recommended by Justice Venkatachaliah Constitution Review Committee.

Cash-for-Votes in Recent Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections –Helpless Election Commission: A Quick Survey

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (April 2021)

While the efficiency of the Indian Election Commission in the smooth conduct of Parliament and Assembly Elections, is widely appreciated, the Commission appears helpless in curbing cash-for-votes. Recently, the Election Commission (EC) had announced State Assembly Elections in five states, including West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. At the time of writing this Editorial, the election process is not completed and results not announced.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections held on 6th April 2021, will go down in the annals of history for the unprecedented distribution of cash-for-votes in most of the constituencies. The Election Commission had appointed a large number of observers, and deployed security forces to seize and curb the movement of cash. They seized around Rs. 428 crores worth of cash, gold and liquor in transit in Tamil Nadu alone. Interestingly, many of the seizures were from vans carrying cash for ATM Machines of banks, gold jewellers moving to their shops, and small businessmen carrying cash for their business purposes. The team that seized them, went on to deposit the cash and the gold in the Treasury, recorded the increase in tally of seizure and announced it proudly on all TV media.

On the other hand, it was an open secret that the major political parties in Tamil Nadu distributed cash ranging from Rs.500 to Rs.5000 per voter, in most of the constituencies, three days before the elections. Strangely, the authorities reportedly did not receive any complaint from anyone, and the

distribution was completed without any hassle. In some constituencies, people staged *dharna* on the highways, for non-receipt of the cash. From the conversation *PreSense* had with several political workers of all major parties, it is speculated that around Rs.5000 to 6000 crores might have been distributed to voters and booth agents before the elections. *PreSense* understands from the political workers that there was a power shutdown in some centres in the midnight, to enable the parties to distribute the cash. A case was reported that one candidate bribed an entire police station of staff openly and when it became big news, the DGP (Director General of Police) ordered a CBCID (Crime-Branch Crime Investigation Department) investigation.

Some of the candidates issued tokens to voters, to avoid being caught in cash disbursement. Interestingly, one candidate issued tokens to voters to collect Rs. 2000 worth of provisions from a store, and people began crowding that shop. The shop had to put up posters, disowning responsibility for the tokens issued by the candidate.



***Tokens
bundled and
kept ready***



***Token to collect
provisions worth
Rs.2000/-***



***Poster put up by
the shop,
disowning
responsibility for
tokens issued by
candidate***

During the entire operation by the political parties, the Election Commission could not do anything as they do not have enough powers to ban the candidate or the political parties, violating

the rules. The authorities and the people will forget these incidents once the results are announced, and discussions about them will be revived during the next General Elections.

PreSense had repeatedly pointed out that Electoral Reforms were urgently needed to be put in place, to curb illegal money flow during the elections. For selection of candidates, some political parties allot seats only to the 'highest bidder', who can spend more for the campaign

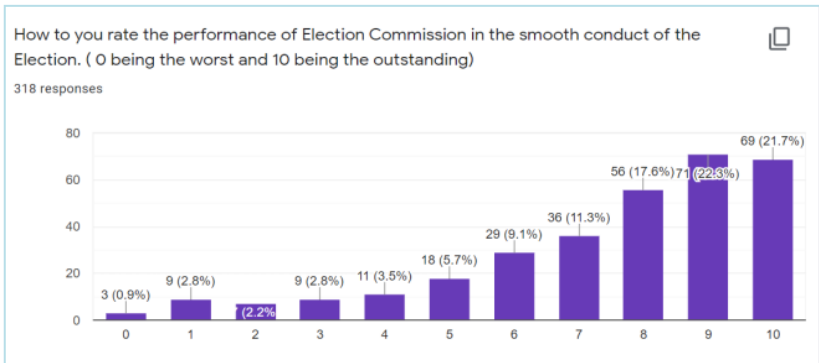
Many vibrant young political leaders with great vision but without enough money, get disillusioned, and move away from the political system, leaving the space open for moneyed and corrupt candidates.

and the elections. Many vibrant young political leaders with great vision but without enough money, are disillusioned by this, and move away from the political system, leaving the space open for moneyed and corrupt candidates.

A Quick Online Survey

After the completion of the single-phase elections on 6th April 2021 in Tamil Nadu, *PreSense* conducted a quick online survey to understand the perception of tech-savvy (users of the internet) voters, living in Tamil Nadu. 318 people responded within 3 days. 85% men and 15% women responded, representing all the districts and various age groups of Tamil Nadu. Youngsters and those under 40 years of age, who participated in this survey, represented only 21%. The respondents were requested to remain anonymous for the survey, and not disclose their identity. The responses revealed high level of maturity.

Rating of Election Commission



When asked how they rated the Election Commission (EC) for the conduct of the elections on a scale of 0 to 10, the respondents gave an average rating of 7.4 out of 10. Sixty percent of them gave a rating of more than 8 out of 10. From the comments given by the respondents, it is felt that the people were not happy about the 'inaction' of the Election Commission, on the violators of rules (cash-for-votes and Covid norms). We feel that this factor has pulled down the rating to 7.4, in spite of best efforts by EC to conduct the elections smoothly.

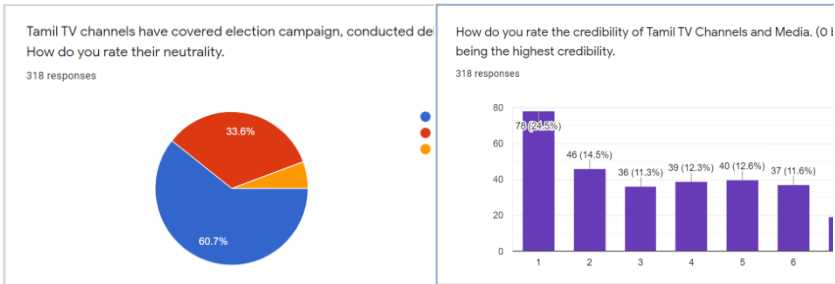
Plus and Minus

When asked to specify one major item that irked them about the elections, the respondents enlisted three main aspects, viz. (1) Indecent and hate speeches by leaders (40%), (2) Cash disbursal to voters (27%) and (3) Election Commission not taking action against violators (22%).

On the positive side, the main aspects were (1) Use of social media during the campaign, (2) Limited acts of violence, and (3) Leaders talking about achievements and developmental schemes during the campaigns.

Rating of Media

When the respondents were asked to rate the media, 94% perceived the media as completely or partially biased (61% felt the media was totally biased and one-sided). When the respondents were asked to rate the media credibility on 0 to 10 scale, the average rating came to 3.7 out of 10. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents rated it below 4.



PreSense has been insisting on several platforms, that there should be some regulation in the broadcast / publication of opinion polls before the elections. Many of these opinion polls are done in secret collaboration with political parties, and they are not done scientifically. These biased opinion polls, when aired frequently, tend to influence the voters too. *PreSense* has always been insisting that the right to 'freedom of speech and expression' as provided in the Indian Constitution, is being misused, to benefit the wrong people. It is also worth mentioning that on 23rd April 2021, Justice Shri Bobde, Chief Justice of India on the day of his retirement, mentioned that freedom of speech was the most abused right at present.

While *PreSense* appreciates and salutes the Election Commission for their excellent task, to protect and uphold the Indian democracy, they should not remain helpless observers,

If the Government does not have the willingness to introduce the Electoral Reforms, EC itself should find out the provisions and rules available in the Act and the Constitution, just as EC under former Chief Election Commissioner, T N Seshan did, to curb money power in politics, and discipline the political system.

when political parties and candidates violate the rules. If the Government does not have the willingness to introduce the Electoral Reforms, EC itself should find the provisions and rules available in the Act and the Constitution, just as EC under former Chief Election Commissioner, T N Seshan did, to curb money power in

politics, and discipline the political system.

Media and Politicians Should Not Create Panic Among People, for Their Self Interest

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (May 2021)



There is a perception in the minds of people that more people die out of panic than from Covid. Whether this statement is right or wrong, today, many of the print, television and social media create panic in the minds of the people, by spreading fearful information about Covid and deaths, rather than create confidence in the minds of the people to overcome this challenge. Recently, all the channels, including regional and national media, telecast the burning of dead bodies and funeral processions. Many, especially children and elderly people, became mentally disturbed. Shamefully, some of the senior journalists defend this action as modern journalism and freedom of speech. A new coinage, 'vulture journalism' is floating around on the social media platforms for the first time. Another serious matter of concern is the behaviour of some of our political leaders. They too indulge in 'vulture politics',

making politics out of the agony of the people and dead bodies, in order to gain political mileage. They spread wrong information on the various aspects of Covid management, without realising that their political statements might create more panic in the minds of the common men. These statements are religiously carried by the media. Recently, statements against vaccination by some senior political leaders, have created doubts in the minds of the common men. Now, the same leaders contradict themselves by promoting vaccination.

Sadly, the media houses depute their reporters and cameramen to hospitals and burial grounds, putting them to heavy risk in this pandemic time. Many government offices hold their press conferences physically, inviting a large number of TV and print reporters, when they could have organised these press briefings through video conferencing.

A recent study reveals that more than 200 such reporters have died of Covid in India. In Tamil Nadu alone, more than 20 such reporters have died while on duty, in the past ten days. This reflects the greediness of the media owners to provide news even against accepted norms of restrictions, thus risking the lives of their own young reporters. Sadly, another study reveals that news channels have lost viewership to the extent of 50-80% and their revenue is also affected substantially. The news channels have not yet realised that because of their gory and repelling news flow, viewers are shifting to other entertainment channels during this lockdown period.

While the private channels conduct discussions through Zoom or Google Meet Live, Doordarshan, the Government-owned channel invites people to their studios, causing risk to the guests. It is preferable if Doordarshan conducts only virtual discussions during this period to avoid risk to the guests and to their own staff.

Even fake news and alarming information is spread through social media, creating panic among the people. At the time of writing this Editorial, social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook are yet to comply with the regulations given by the Government of India. The Government of India has so far been hesitating to take action against the erring social media platforms, and insist that they follow the rules in India.

Nowhere in the world do the domestic media spread fake news against their own nation, denigrating their own country. In India, many of the media and political leaders 'misuse' the Constitutional provision of 'freedom of speech and expression' to spread false information about our own country, and this is picked by international media to disgrace our nation globally.

Media owners, reporters, political leaders and social media users should rise above such pettiness, and create an environment to develop confidence among people. Government of India should also be bold enough to deal with these mischief makers, who seek refuge under 'freedom of speech', with an iron hand.

PM Modi's Seven-Year Rule Gets Good Rating, but the Middle-Class Rings Alarm Bells

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (June 2021)

Generally, it is said that politics and elections are based more on 'perception' than on 'performance'. We have in the past, seen several Prime Ministers (PMs) and Chief Ministers (CMs) losing elections in spite of their sterling performance, and several non-performing politicians winning again. While analysing the seven years of Modi rule, we chose to study the



perception of a sample section of the common people. No doubt, the Government and the ruling party have released lots of documents enlisting their various achievements. Ultimately, how the performance is perceived by the common man matters much for any political system to function.

In May 2021, Narendra Modi completed 7 years of his Prime Minister ship. For this Editorial, PreSense conducted a snap online Survey to study the perception of a sample section of

the people. Between 11th June and 13th June 2021, PreSense received 1321 online responses from across all states, from both genders and different age groups. Since it was conducted online, we can safely take this as the perception of the average educated middle class across India. This segment was the base, which provided Modi huge mandate both in the 2014 and 2019 General Elections. Hence, these perceptions are significant to the Modi team. We also clarify that we have not done any study of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) segment.

Positive Aspects

Generally, all the respondents, irrespective of whether they were supporters of Modi or not, perceived the following as his positive achievements:

- Strong Leadership qualities both within India and globally;
- Scrapping of Article 370 and resolving the J&K problem overnight – taking bold political decisions which other leaders hesitated to take;
- Friendly relationship with all foreign countries;
- No corruption charges during these 7 years, and even before, when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat State, *ie.* a clean personal image, and not involving his family in the politics and Government;
- Various Government Schemes like Jan Dhan, Swachh Bharat, Mudra Loans, Free Housing, Free Gas, Beti Bachao, Ayushman Bharat, Payment to Farmers, etc.;
- Demonetisation, effective structural changes in the economy, curbing black money, introducing digital economy, etc.;
- Covid Management (managing vaccines within a short time and vaccinating a large number of people, despite negative publicity given by some opposition leaders and the media).

Negative Aspects

The online respondents belong to the average middle class people. Hence, this can be considered the perception of the average middle class segment.

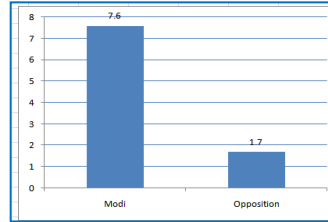
- Petrol and diesel price hike, leading to a price rise of other commodities;
- Unemployment problem / job losses;
- Not done anything to favour middle class and senior citizens, including Pensioners (bank interest is getting reduced for deposits);
- While the schemes are laudable, implementation is poor;
- A soft approach towards the corrupt. Raids with little progress thereafter. The corrupt have become fearless and are unshaken
- Some Ministers generally inefficient, and Gujarat cadre officers dominating the bureaucracy;
- Poor communication strategies – not making any serious effort to counter fake messages and false news;
- ‘Perceived arrogance’ of some BJP and RSS leaders – not connecting with people –assuming themselves to be ‘intellectual islands’ with an ‘I Know It All’ attitude;
- Not taking enough action against continuous protests like CAA, Farm Laws, etc

Interestingly, the persons who voted for Modi in 2014 and 2019, and confirm voting for him in 2024 too, are highly critical of his handling economic issues and insensitivity of the Government towards the problems faced by the common man.

Rating of Modi Government and Opposition

When the respondents were asked to rate the Modi Government on a 0 to 10 scale, 75% rated more than 8.0. 8.6% of the respondents rated 3.0 and below. The average rating by all the respondents was 7.6 out of 10.

The respondents were also asked to rate the performance of the Opposition Parties led by Indian National Congress as an effective opposition, on the scale of 0 to 10. 85% of the respondents rated them less than 3.0 out of 10. Only 3.7% of the respondents rated them 8.0 and above. The average rating was 1.7 out of 10.

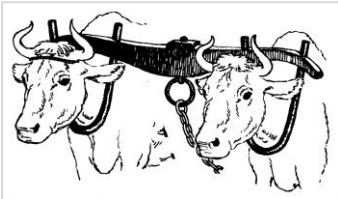


***Rating by
Respondents***

These two indicators reveal the lack of an effective opposition in the current situation.

Functioning of the Opposition Parties

As indicated earlier, even those respondents who were against Modi were critical of the Opposition Parties led by Indian National Congress. In any democracy, both the opposition and the ruling parties are like bullocks tied to a yoke. Both have to travel together in a balanced manner. Both have the responsibility to run the democracy, and both are accountable to the citizens.



In 1991, when Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister, the country was facing a major financial crisis, leading to the liberalisation of economy. Although RSS was against the principles of liberalisation, the then opposition leaders, Vajpayee and Advani worked closely with Narasimha Rao to bail out the country from the crisis. Both the PM and the Opposition Leaders placed the nation above their political gains. Even as a minority government, Narasimha Rao completed his full term, implementing many financial reforms,

the fruits of which we enjoy today. When Pakistan raised allegations against India, Narasimha Rao, instead of travelling himself, deputed Vajpayee to give a befitting response on behalf of India, to Pakistan at the United Nations. This gesture sent a strong message globally that all the political parties in India follow a similar policy on Jammu and Kashmir.

Today, even during the pandemic situation, our Opposition Parties do not act responsibly and try to politicise every issue by spreading fake and unverified messages. Sadly, many of the opposition parties issued irresponsible statements, raising doubts about the vaccination, and creating confusion in the minds of the common people. Sometimes, they issue statements which favour enemy countries too.

Alarm Bell Rings

There is visible frustration among the average middle class segment on account of the rising petrol price, unemployment, economic issues, etc. The survey also indicates a drop of 9% support to Modi over 2019. Some have supported Modi because of TINA (There Is No Alternate) factor. The Modi Government should not take this for granted. This is an alarm bell.

There is a clear indication that out of the respondents who voted for Modi in 2014 and 2019, nearly 9% of them indicated that they would not vote for Modi in 2024. Although the General Elections are to be held only in 2024, the ruling establishment should understand the clear and loud message of average middle class. It may get reflected in the UP (Uttar Pradesh) State elections to be held next year. Therefore, they should not take them for granted. From the various responses in the survey, it is clearly indicated that the people are more anxious and concerned about their day-to-day life, than of the achievements trumpeted about a better macro policy or sound foreign relations.

In the past, more than economic issues, emotional issues have helped BJP to come to power. With the new set of young voters and the growing frustration of the average middle class, emotional issues may not play a greater role in future. When a national party like Indian National Congress is weak, it could lead to a fragmented mandate with many regional parties securing seats, leading to chaos and confusion of leadership. India has witnessed such fragile governments in the past, with Charan Singh, Deve Gowda, I.K. Gujral, Chandrasekar and V.P. Singh without majority of mandate, collapsing at the whims and fancies of various regional party leaders. It is also sad that Indian National Congress is not taking enough efforts to emerge as a strong opposition party. Weak Congress is not good for the democracy.

To the question, 'who could be an alternative to Modi, many respondents could not specify any leader. Various names have emerged. Interestingly, Rahul Gandhi has not emerged as front runner. Only a few people indicated his name. Many indicated 'None'. This clearly indicates the leadership crisis in Indian polity. Some of the senior leaders, with whom we spoke, said that a leader would emerge at the appropriate time. Our concern is that such leaders should not become a temporary leader for a stop-gap arrangement, like we had in the past.

Our Conclusion and Suggestion

As on June 2021, Modi continues to enjoy a good rating and the confidence of the average middle class. As we have not surveyed the BPL segment, we are unable to say anything about their perception. Although Modi has emerged as a strong national and international leader, there is frustration among the average middle-class people due to various economic issues. Even before the nation could recover from Demonetisation and GST impact, Covid has attacked the whole world, leading to further complications. Even though Modi has

been facing several such challenges, he has been managing the situation well.

There is also a feeling among the respondents that the Government is not handling the protests for CAA, Farm Laws, etc effectively. They have allowed too much time for the protests, causing inconvenience to the general public. Also, they do not act heavily on those who spread wrong/fake messages against the country. They also feel that the Government is soft towards corrupt people, who are already booked.

Unfortunately, the communication from the ruling segment is very poor. Although the Government has managed to overcome a lot of challenges, they are not being communicated effectively to the people. Even though the Government boasts of good governance, it is not felt at the grass root level, mainly because of lack of implementation and effective communication. The Government does not counter fake news effectively, and wrong information is spread by print, television and social media.

Media relations is very poor after Modi took over in 2014. Since the media is kept at a distance, without proper interaction, the Government is not able to use the media effectively. During the previous governments, there used to be a Media Advisor to Prime Minister, and he would function as a bridge between the media and the Government. Now, there is no such arrangement. A large gap exists between the Government and the media. This will not help the Government in the long run. The Government needs the support of the media to carry information about their schemes to the public. Senior journalists confirm that there is no coordination between the PMO (Prime Minister's Office), Ministry of I&B (Information & Broadcasting), PIB (Press Information Bureau), various ministries, and the media for dissemination of information.

There is added frustration when Modi supporters 'chest-beat' about their performance, when the common people are voicing their concern about their day-to-day life problems, including the petrol price. The 'perceived arrogance' and insensitivity of some of the BJP and RSS leaders on vital issues, add to the frustration.

Modi commands the confidence of the people and enjoys a clean non-corrupt image. This is a great advantage. Although the next Parliament election is due only in 2024, with assembly elections in some States scheduled for 2022, both the ruling and the opposition leaders should introspect about taking the country to the next level like bullocks in the yoke.

(Survey analysis by Prof. Dr K. Prabhakar, Editorial Advisor, and Priyadharshni Rahul, Deputy Editor)

High Prices of Fuels, Edible Oils and Commodities Hit Common Man Hard - Bring Fuels under GST immediately

By T N Ashok, Consulting Editor (July 2021)

From May to July 2021, the common man has been battling high prices of petrol, diesel and edible oils amid a depressing scenario of joblessness, unemployment during Covid times. It has been tough balancing the family budget.



Petrol prices breached the Rs 100 mark in 17 states. Diesel touched the Rs 90 mark. Since May 2021, fuel prices are on the rise, revised 15 times in June preceded by 15 times in May. Domestic prices had to sync with international prices.

The Government walked a tight rope in dismantling administered pricing mechanism to balance the interests of the economy and play to vote bank politics. While Petrol, Diesel went out, Kerosene and LPG were retained under Administered Price Mechanism (APM). Even as overall subsidies came down, the common man was caught by surprise by high prices. The subsidies provided by the government of PM Modi is about Rs 12,840 crore FY 20-21, almost half of the Rs 35,000 crore provided by the previous UPA government. LPG subsidy has been reduced and ceding of this by affordable class has not made an impact. LPG prices have gone up to Rs 700 to Rs 800

against the older price of Rs 500 per cylinder with a jump of Rs 300.

High diesel prices have had cascaded onto transportation costs reflecting high prices of commodities from vegetables, fruits to rice, wheat, barley and pulses like dal, which have to be transported over long distances. While cereals have a long shelf life, perishable commodities don't. Economists have been stressing on building up a large network of cold storage chains (refrigerating veggies and fruits at different places) to prevent waste leading, to a shortage and high prices.

What is the crux of the problem one might ask? Vote bank politics and political compulsions force governments of the day to prevent them by passing on the increased dose by dose but in quantum jumps of high price hikes. When the price escalation comes in a lump sum, the family budget goes into deficit. How does a family man balance his budget? Save on non-essentials.

On the subsidies on petroleum products, UPA led by Dr Manmohan Singh tried to fix this by allowing floatation of oil bonds to mop up revenues from the public. This comes for redemption next year amounting to over Rs one lakh crore plus interest. The present BJP Government has to raise resources at a time of low tax collections.

No solution appears on the horizon. Says M R Sivaraman, former Revenue Secretary of the Government of India, tax collections across the board have been very low as GST collections have seen a sharp revenue shortfall. Taxes have been low due to manufacturing coming to standstill because of Covid protocols.

Sivaraman says, "In such a situation the state or central governments cannot bring down the prices of fuels as this is the only high revenue raising resource for them. Petrol and

Diesel are yet to be brought under the GST and there is a tussle in the GST council between the centre and the states. GST can level out the prices uniformly in all states". But as T K Rangarajan , former MP of CPIM, points out that the states will never agree to bring petrol and diesel under GST as their share of the cess comes down to 28%, leading to a loss in revenue. States get 55% of the revenues from local levies on Petrol and Diesel. It may be virtually impossible for the centre to make up this loss of 27% of tax revenues to the states.

It's a tough task for both the centre and the states to get over this. As there is no immediate solution, the common man may have to bear the pain as prices will remain high until October/November this year that is the onset of the Kharif season.

Assuming the harvest is good and there is an abundant supply of food grains and edible commodities, Sivaraman says prices will flatten out to fall. Also, if crude oil prices come down from the 80-dollar level to about 65 USD level, which oil pundits predict, it will reduce the fuel prices. "This is the tipping point when the Government will intervene because it has machinery to monitor closely the prices of all commodities in the economy. If it finds that transportation costs alone have contributed to the rise in price of a particular commodity, then the Government will slash the prices of fuels", he says.

Notwithstanding the theoretical aspects, both Centre and State Governments should realize that prices are soaring in this challenging time of pandemic putting the poor and middle class into untold miseries. They should sit together and find a way out to bring the Petrol/Diesel prices under GST, before it becomes too late.

Mother India@75 Sorrows Over Parliament Disruption

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (August 2021)

The Indian Parliament's Monsoon Session 2021, which commenced on 19th July, was adjourned *sine die* on 11th August 2021, two days ahead of its scheduled time. The 17th Lok Sabha saw its session cut short for the fourth consecutive time ahead of its scheduled date. Also, the Winter Session of November 2020 could not be held due to Covid fears. Both the Houses of Parliament were disrupted by opposition members and were forcefully adjourned. Lok Sabha worked only for 21% of the Scheduled time and Rajya Sabha for 29%.

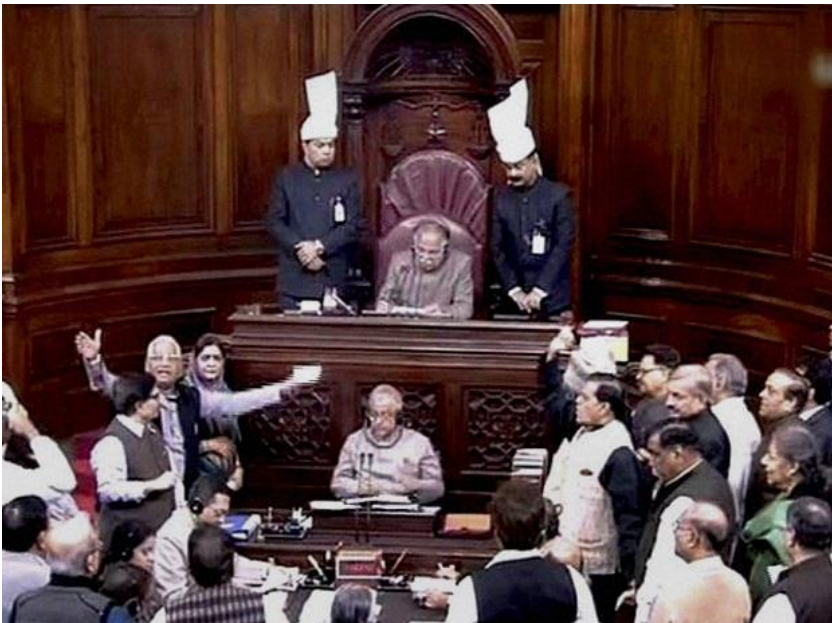
Opposition parties disrupted proceedings demanding a debate on the alleged Pegasus software snooping on journalists, MPs and even ministers and opposition parties based on a media house report, The Wire. Opposition led by the TMC called it Pegasus Snoop Gate. Though the BJP led NDA Government offered to allot time to discuss all the issues of the so-called Pegasus spyware thread bare, the Congress and TMC led opposition was not interested creating an impression disruption was the only goal.

The government however managed to introduce 15 Bills and get them passed with its majority in the house. All the bills were passed in both the Houses amidst the din without any discussion. Paradoxically, an adamant Opposition, which was disrupting proceedings in both houses, came forward to discuss the 127th Constitutional Amendment relating to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), presumably in pursuance of an electoral gain. Strangely, the Lok Sabha spent 474 minutes and Rajya Sabha 360 minutes discussing the 127th

Constitutional Amendment bill, while other draft legislations were passed without discussion.

Commentary & Analysis

Though the Government was willing to discuss all issues raised by the Opposition, it was insisting on a debate only on the Pegasus issue, to be discussed on priority basis. The same opposition leaders, who were in the Government earlier, knew pretty well that the matter was sub-judice, as it was already in the realm of the Supreme Court. Besides, any open discussion on such sensitive matters involving national security in a public domain was also not possible, but a clear breach of security protocols.



Besides, it is common knowledge that every person holding a smart phone and downloading mobile apps is susceptible to

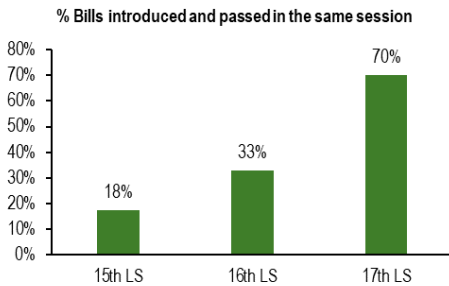
snooping without his or her knowledge. Pegasus may not be a serious issue for the common man. But the opposition could have followed parliamentary protocols by requesting the Business Advisory Committee, for allotting time for a detailed discussion on various issues affecting the common man such as unemployment, economy, fuel price, price rise, inflation more relevant to their constituencies. Sadly, they did not even allow the Prime Minister to introduce the new Cabinet Ministers, as per the Parliament procedure.

Such irresponsible behaviour of some opposition members freed the Government of its obligation to escape from discussions on such vital matters. An intelligent Opposition could have prepared an agenda of alleged government failures and discussed the same in both houses relayed live by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in house TV networks. They could have grabbed headlines the next day in favour of the public in a positive manner. But they failed to do so for narrow gains. Now they carry the blame for wasting Parliament's time and money.

They should have participated in the discussions on the various bills introduced by the Government. For reasons best known to them, they compromised in favour of a political stance apparently for electoral gains and only participated fully in the 127th Constitutional amendment bill.

Because of the lack of Opposition's maturity, the ruling party gained brownie points taking full advantage in skirting over critical matters for discussion. In the midst of all the ruckus, the Government introduced 15 bills and all were passed without discussion in the same session, excepting the 127th Amendment bill. Strangely, in the 17th Lok Sabha 70% of the Bills introduced were passed in the same session. This is very high compared to the previous 15th and 16th Lok Sabha. In a democratic process, any proposed legislation needs to be scrutinized thoroughly and debated well before its passage in

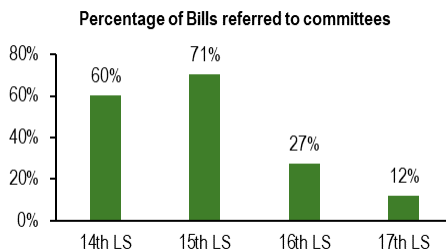
the house. According to a Senior Member of Parliament, draft legislations prepared by the concerned bureaucrats, often are not in tune with the ground realities and they need to be thoroughly discussed by the MPs, both in the Standing Committees and in the Houses. Then only these bills are fine-tuned with public interests and pass muster of a judicial scrutiny.



Another MP, who also chose to remain anonymous, claimed that the present Government does not refer the Bills to the Standing Committees and pass them without in-depth discussions. During the 14th and 15th Lok Sabha (UPA

Government), 60 to 70 percent of the Bills were referred to the Standing Committees. The NDA Government referred only 27% of the bills in the 16th Lok Sabha and 12% in the current 17th Lok Sabha to the standing committees.

Standing Committees with Members from all parties discuss the draft legislations in detail (media is not privy to such discussions) and also get the views of domain experts. They take the consensus view on the bills and present their report to the Parliament. Based on the Committee's Reports, both the Houses discuss thoroughly and fine tune the draft legislation.



This democratic exercise is absolutely essential to avoid protests later and any legal scrutiny.

The amendment to legislation on labour was passed by both the Houses. Accepted by all, though there were muted protests. This bill was thoroughly scrutinised by the Standing Committee on Labour and then presented to Parliament. Hence this sensitive bill with lot of reforms has been generally accepted.

On the other hand, the Farm bills, over which there was nationwide protest by a section of the farmers, were passed without reference to the Standing Committee. The legislations are now facing the imponderable and have come under legal scrutiny. Had the Government referred the Farm bills to the Standing Committee and then got them approved through a consensus, such problems could have been avoided, political observers point out.

Expressing concern over the lack of debate in Parliament and state legislatures, the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana said it is a "sorry state of affairs" as the absence of quality debate leaves many aspects of laws unclear and increases the burden on courts. He said that an elaborate discussion during the law-making process reduces litigation as when courts interpret them, "we all knew the intent of the legislature".

Another issue is the delay in electing the Deputy Speaker for Lok Sabha, opposition MP's say. Normally the Deputy Speaker is elected within a month of the new Lok Sabha. Unfortunately, even after 27 months, (longest in 75 years of parliamentary democracy), the government has not taken any initiative to elect a Deputy Speaker.

The unruly behaviour of a Rajya Sabha Member by climbing on the Table in the well of the House and throwing rule book on the Chair makes every Indian to hang his/her head in



shame. This speaks of the poor quality of the Members nominated by the Political parties. While 90 to 95 percent of the Members observe decorum in presenting their view points, a section of the MP's,

apparently with the blessings of their party leaders indulge in unruly behaviour, to impress them denying an opportunity to MPs, observing parliamentary protocols, to raise issues so relevant to national interests.

Suggestions

Both Ruling and Opposition parties should stop the "Blame Game" in peoples' interests, especially in the interests of the constituency people who elected them. Senior party leaders on either side should sit and find a solution across the table and thus avoid such unruly scenes in parliament, which does not project a good image of MPs both within the country and outside. Youngsters get a wrong message about Parliament and its MPs or how democracy is run from such unruly behaviour. Definitely avoidable. Due to the spread of Covid, Parliament could not run on the scheduled timelines.

Time for Proactive Decisions

New Rules have to be framed to prevent Members from indulging in unruly behaviour and they should not only be barred from the rest of the Session but also be subject to a salary cut. Daily allowances and privileges, to which MPs are entitled, should be denied. Penalties of heavy fines should be imposed on them, as parliamentary records show crores of rupees of public money have been wasted in such disruption of parliamentary proceedings skipping in-depth discussion on

relevant issues of public interest. Sadly, political parties do not condemn such misbehaviour inside the House. Unfortunately, we do not have Opposition leaders strong enough in stature to stand up to speak against such unruly behaviour of some MPs. Strong stature of party leaders would invite admiration and serve as a role model for young MPs. Both Ruling and Opposition parties should respect the Institutions of Parliamentary Democracy and should not take them for granted.

New Rules have to be framed to prevent Members from indulging in unruly behaviour and they should not only be barred from the rest of the Session but also be subject to a salary cut. Daily allowances and all other privileges, to which MPs are entitled, should be denied.

The Civil Society expects a new era at least from the Winter Session 2021, keeping the common man in mind, instead of the impending assembly elections for electoral gains.

Let us remember what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"Democracy means tolerance, not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us. With all my admiration and love for democracy, I am not prepared to accept the statement that the largest number of people are always right".

Graphics courtesy: PRS Legislative Research

The Teen Aged PreSense Salutes 'Kalaimagal', 90-year-old Surviving Tamil Magazine

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (September 2021)

When all the print magazines across the world suffer for readership and revenue due to technological changes, Kalaimagal, the 90-year-old Tamil monthly magazine, still continues to maintain good readership and revenue without compromising on the values and traditions focusing on Indian culture, Tamil literature, etc.

It was started by Shri R. Narayanaswamy Iyer of Madras Law Journal group in 1932 to encourage new Tamil writers, with Dr U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer and nine other eminent scholars were in the Editorial Board. Shri T. S. Ramachandra Iyer was named the Executive Editor.

Dr U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer (1855-1942), the founding Editor of Kalaimagal was a great Tamil scholar and researcher. He was mainly instrumental in bringing out many long-forgotten works of classical Tamil literature to light. Over a period of fifty years, he collected many paper manuscripts, palm-leaf manuscripts relating to classical Tamil literature from different places and published them. He is affectionately called 'Tamil Thatha' (meaning Tamil Grandfather). In 2006, Central Government also honoured him with a postal stamp.



Mahakavi Bharatiyar, the popular Poet and freedom fighter equated him with 'Sage Agastya', considered as the first exponent of Tamil. Rabindranath Tagore met him and also

penned a poem in praise of his efforts to salvage ancient classical Tamil literary works from palm leaf manuscripts.



Dr U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer working with palm-leaf manuscripts.

Founded by the great Tamil Scholar Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer, Kalaimagal continues till date to maintain the rich traditions of values and ethics. Dr K V Jagannathan, another great Tamil literary person and disciple of Dr. U.

Ve. Swaminatha Iyer succeeded him as Editor and improved the values further and further. Even the subsequent Editors maintain the same tradition and values till now. Kalaimagal is still considered as a 'dream destination' for young writers.

The present publisher PTT Rajan says that they do not carry articles on political controversies and cinema. They do not accept advertisements depicting women in poor light. They publish articles, short stories and poems with rich moral values. Since they have a niche readership across all the countries, some advertisers, including banks, consider it a great honour to place their advertisements in such magazines which maintains highest values and traditions.

Many of the new Tamil writers consider it a great honour to start their literary journey from Kalaimagal. If their piece gets published here, it is considered as a passport to reach all other magazines.

Kizhambur Sankara Subramanian, the Editor of Kalaimagal, says that the popular Tamil writer Akilan started his first journey from here and became Janapith awardee. Many well-known Tamil writers have started their first publication in Kalaimagal and became popular later. Many Sahitya Academy Award winners are its regular contributors.



**July 1934
edition**



Sep 2021 edition

Many eminent people used to be not only contributors, but also regular readers, which include Rajaji, Karunanidhi, Kanchi Sankaracharyas and more. "Since many eminent people are closely following up our magazine, we have to maintain the highest quality and value" says Sankara Subramanian. He also adds

that Kalaimagal has readers across the world and international readers want to learn and respect our Indian tradition and values, which we follow scrupulously.

When he visited Sri Lanka recently, he found that at Peradeniya University, Kandy, Kalaimagal issues were kept from the first edition in their library. Many scholars have researched on the past issues of Kalaimagal in both Indian and foreign Universities to obtain their Doctorate. Without compromising their traditions and values, they are now integrating with modern digital world to suit the needs of the readers.

Generally, people doubt if positivity can survive the time and get the required support. "Definitely there are always supporters for all positive journalism with strong belief in values and ethics. Though there may be challenges, they will

“Definitely there are always supporters for all positive journalism with strong belief in values and ethics. Though there may be challenges, they will all vanish on seeing the enthusiasm and support of the readers” – PTT Rajan

175th edition.

all vanish on seeing the enthusiasm and support of the readers”, concludes PTT Rajan, the Publisher. PreSense is a cub magazine in the modern digital world. Kalaimagal is the traditional grandmother in 90s with rich experience. PreSense takes pride in saluting this Grand Mother magazine in its

Does Civil Society Play its Role Properly to Strengthen Indian Democracy?

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (October 2021)

There were two prophecies as to how India would shape up after Independence. The first was a statement attributed to Winston Churchill, as having been made by him in British Parliament during the debate in 1947 on the Indian Independence Bill.

“If Independence is granted to India, power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters; all Indian leaders will be of low caliber and men of straw. They will have sweet tongues and silly hearts. They will fight amongst themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles. A day would come when even air and water would be taxed in India.”

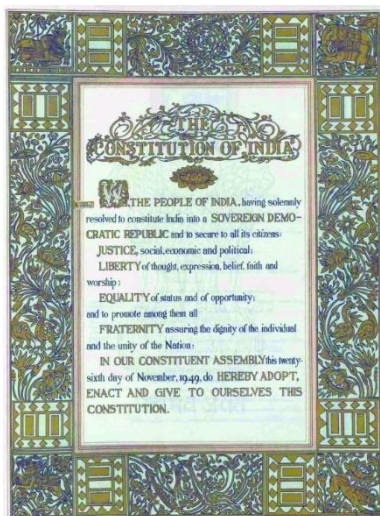
The second was from the Vellore jail diary of Rajaji, the tallest intellectual among India’s political leaders in the last century who fought for India’s freedom, dating back to 1921 (written 26 years before our Independence):

“We all ought to know that Swaraj will not at once or, I think, even for a long time to come, be better government or greater happiness for the people. Elections and their corruptions, injustice, and the power and tyranny of wealth, and inefficiency of administration, will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparative justice, and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration. The only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination. Hope lies only in universal education by which right conduct, fear of God, and love, will be developed among the citizens from childhood. It is only if we succeed in this that

Swaraj will mean happiness. Otherwise, it will mean the grinding injustices and tyranny of wealth.”

The question remains whether the dreams of our freedom fighters and pre-independent leaders have been achieved even after 75 years of Independence.

Generally, Legislature, Executive, Judiciary are considered as pillars of democracy. By virtue of importance, Media is also considered as the Fourth Pillar. Unless all these four pillars function effectively, respecting each other and discharge their role, no democracy can survive. While all analysts talk about the four pillars, they do not talk about the most important stakeholder viz. civil society, for whom the democracy is established. The Preamble of our Constitution starts with *"We, the People of India"*. That means 'We, the People of India' have created the Constitution and given it to themselves.



If *"We, the People of India"* have created the Constitution for themselves, then what are their responsibilities? Though the word 'Civil Society' is not defined in India, We consider *"We, the People of India"* as the civil society. In that case, every voter becomes responsible for the smooth running of the democracy. Non-Government Organisations, Media, Social Groups and every responsible citizen of this country become part of the 'Civil Society'.

Democracy and Governance

Generally, there is always criticism about all the four pillars. In recent years, we observe the Legislature and Executive do not have proper coordination, leading to disruptions. Many State Governments have only 20 days sittings of their Assemblies annually. In Parliament, we have seen how the Parliamentarians disrupted the proceedings, instead of spending their time on debates. Same way, we have witnessed how the Executives rushed through various bills without discussion in the chaotic situation.

The enormous delay in the Judicial system creates disillusionment and frustration among the citizens. Even the fourth pillar Media is biased and they provide information, based on their affiliation. Even social media is either emotional or biased. In view of this, the role of civil society (We, the People) becomes very important and relevant in maintaining the democracy.

Selective approach

Civil Society includes every voter interested in the welfare of the nation, Non-Government Organisations, Traditional and social media, Educational Institutions, various forums, Social Workers, etc. Unfortunately, in recent years, we see polarization of people based on caste, religion, language, etc. We see many people with extreme sycophancy or hatred taking their lines of argument. This is not good for any democracy.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi observed recently, even the Human Rights Organisations follow a 'selective approach' towards Human Rights violations. We never see any 'Human Rights Activist or Organisation' condemning the attack by terrorists on innocent people. Recently, we saw a majority of the political parties, activists and mainline media debating

selectively on the four dead persons, while eight people were killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. In this incident, four farmers and four political workers were killed. While, the lives of all the eight persons are important, the political parties and media were discussing only four farmers, which suited their convenience. During the same time, many innocent people were killed by terrorists in Kashmir. All these people kept silent over the killings. We can quote many such incidents, where the selective approach was adopted by the media, social workers and political parties.

Strangely, one major political party in India does not prefer to greet the people on Dussehra, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, etc. while they rush to greet the festivals of other religions. These selective greetings by responsible political parties create frustration among the people. Blatant exhibition of hatred towards language, caste, religion, community, etc. are dangerous to the functioning of democracy.

There are many NGOs that take neutral stand and work for the welfare of the nation. Their voices are not heard. Their good works are not publicised by the mainstream media. They need to be given full support by civil society and media.

Freedom Movement was the success of civil society. Jayaprakash Narayan's movement in the post Emergency era was a civil society movement. This movement led to political polarisation. Anna Hazare's nationwide movement against corruption led to the emergence of a political party, which rules a State for the second time. Jallikattu protest at Marina in Chennai made the Government to bow down to the aspirations of the people. These are the recent examples of the invisible power of civil society.

While we speak about the Civil Society organising themselves spontaneously for genuine cause, we cannot also ignore that in recent years, vested interests create movements against

some of the development projects causing huge delay or closure of these projects. They are also reportedly funded by foreign agencies. Unfortunately, a common citizen has to watch this silently. Sadly, Media too spreads misinformation to get public sympathy for wrong causes.

Unfortunately, civil society does not come on the streets often. The people at the helm of affairs in the Governance should understand that the emergence of social media has given a great tool in the hands of every citizen. The civil society watches the happenings silently and takes the appropriate decision during the elections silently. At the same time, the NGOs, Media and other social activists should function independently without any bias and bring out the problems in a neutral manner in the national interest to strengthen the democracy. The Executive, Legislature and Judiciary should understand the sentiments of the common man and function effectively to improve the system.

Repeal of Farm Laws – Lessons to be Learnt

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (November 2021)

The entire country was taken by surprise when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the repeal of three Farm Laws on 19th November 2021 in a public broadcast. The three Farm Laws were promulgated through a Presidential Ordinance in June 2020 and later introduced in the Parliament in September 2020. Both



the Houses of Parliament discussed the three Bills together for a limited number of hours and passed them. President gave the assent to these Bills within a week. Probably, this is the first time in Indian history that an active law signed by the President is withdrawn within short time, even before implementation. The repeal was passed without discussion on 29th Nov 2021, the first day of the Winter Session.

Farmers' protest

The major opposition parties have also included the concept of Agricultural Reforms in their respective manifestoes, but the way in which the Government pushed these Farm Laws hurriedly raised lot of suspicion in the minds of Farmers and opposition leaders. The Farmers of Punjab, Haryana and part of UP went on dharna protesting against the law from 26th November 2020. They are continuing the protest till date on the borders of Delhi, braving the extreme climate. The political leaders were allowed to meet the Farmers to give their support, but they were not allowed to bring their political flags.

The farmers and the opposition leaders allege that the Government did not consult any of them before promulgating the ordinance and even later when they introduced the Bill in the Parliament. Despite the Government justifying the importance and the benefits of the Farm Laws, the Farmers continued their protest without break. Meanwhile, it is reported that more than 700 farmers died in the protest.

Seven State Assemblies ruled by Opposition parties passed resolutions demanding the repeal of the Farm Laws. Even after the Supreme Court had stayed the Farm Laws and appointed a committee to examine the Law, the Farmers did not withdraw the protest and continued their agitation. The union minister for Agriculture and officials held 11 rounds of talks with farmers without finding any solution.

The Government alleged that anti-national elements and Khalistanis have penetrated into the farmers' protest with an ulterior motive. The Government also alleged that only the brokers were protesting and not the real farmers. Meanwhile, the farmers across the country have a feeling as to why the Government pushed the Farm Laws in a hurry and they also started suspecting whether the Government wanted to favour big corporate houses.

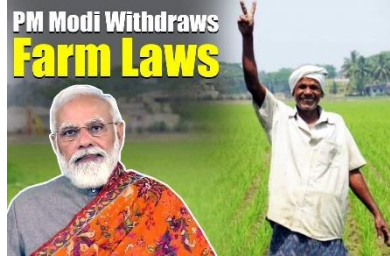
PM's announcement

Since the farmers were adamant and opposition parties were also protesting, the Prime Minister had to announce the repeal of Farm Laws and assured the nation that he would introduce the legislative process when the Winter Session started. During his public broadcast, Modi said that the Government brought those three Bills with good intentions, but failed to convince the farmers. "Maybe something was lacking in our 'tapasya' [penance], which is why we could not convince some farmers about the laws," he said.

Thought it was an emotional speech, the farmers did not return home. They have added more demands.

Catch22 situation

Why did Modi Government get into this Catch22 situation? Time and again, your eMagazine PreSense, while appreciating various schemes introduced by Modi Government, has been pointing out the lacunae of (1) lack of communication and disconnect with people and (2) not taking the opposition and stake holders into confidence. While reviewing the 7 years of the Modi regime, PreSense pointed out in the Editorial (June 2021 edition), based on a survey, that alarm bell was ringing. In the recent bye-poll results, the ruling party has suffered a major setback due to their lack of effective communication.



It is generally perceived that probably because of the byelection results and the ensuing 5 State Assembly Elections, Modi Government might have repealed the Farm Laws. After the announcement of the Prime Minister, this author had an informal talk with various farmers and political leaders, including the ruling party members. Though everybody agreed that the Farm Laws are needed to benefit the farmers, they did not appreciate the way it was introduced without consultation. This bill should have been handled taking the success story of GST. Probably, some 'intellectual think tank' might have misled the Government, without realising the sensibilities of the subject.

According to our Constitution, Agriculture is in the Concurrent List. That means, both the State and the Centre have the

powers to enact the law. In view of this, Modi Government should have convened a meeting of the Agriculture Ministers of all the States and the Farmers representatives for a detailed discussion. The farmers in each State have different challenges. Instead, the Government introduced the Farm Laws through Ordinance route, without consulting the State Governments and the Farmers.

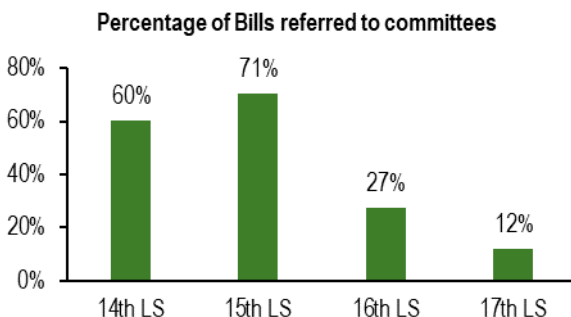
Even when the Bill was introduced in Parliament in September 2020, the opposition demanded that the Bill be referred to Standing Committee. Government hurriedly passed the Bills in both the Houses with minimal discussion and got the assent of the President within a week. The hurry of the Government created a suspicion in the minds of all farmers and opposition leaders whether the Government was in a hurry to favour a few big corporate houses. As Prime Minister himself agreed, the Government could not convince the farmers, in spite of several rounds of talks with the Minister and officials.

Everybody knows that the Ministers and officials do not have enough powers to promise anything to farmers. Instead, Prime Minister himself should have invited the Farmer Leaders and listened to them patiently. That would have solved more than 90 percent of the misunderstanding. Chest beating, Trumpeting and blaming caused more irritation to the protesting farmers.

Lessons to be learnt

1. Right from the beginning in 2014, there is a perception among the people that the Government never cared for the public opinion or the views of the opposition. Though such an approach might have yielded success in some cases, it is not a desirable one in a democracy. Government should start consulting the stakeholders in future.

2. In a Parliamentary democracy, Standing Committees have been set up to discuss the Bills thoroughly and to improve upon them. Unfortunately, during the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha, the Bills were not referred to Parliamentary committees for vetting. Had these three Farm Bills been referred to the Committees, they would have improved the Bills and the country would not have faced this situation.



3. Of late, there is a general feeling among the people that the Government and the ruling party do not have connectivity with the public. This phenomenon is seen more often than not in the 17th Lok Sabha. Also, the irresponsible behaviour of Opposition parties causes concern.

The Prime Minister should review the situation internally and take remedial action.

Saluting Gen Bipin Rawat and 13 Martyrs

By Srinivas Gopal, Editorial Board (December 2021)



PreSense salutes and pays homage to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat, his wife and 12 others who died in the helicopter crash at Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu) on 8th December 2021. They were on board an Indian Air Force Mil Mi-17 helicopter flight en route from the Sullur Airforce base to the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington, where Gen. Rawat was to deliver a lecture. At around 12:10 p.m. local time, the aircraft crashed near a residential colony of private tea estate employees on the outskirts of a hamlet in the Nilgiris district. The crash site was 10 KM from the flight's intended destination. Rawat's liaison officer, Group Captain Varun Singh was the sole survivor and was admitted to the hospital at Bengaluru and later he also died. Gen. Rawat was 63 at the time of his death. The last rites for all the martyrs were held with full State honours.

General Bipin Rawat (16 March 1958 – 8 December 2021) was an Indian military officer and a four-star general of the Indian Army. He served as the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces from January 2020 until his death. Prior to taking over as the CDS, he served as the 57th Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee as well as 26th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army.

The Government has appointed an investigation team to find out the reasons for this accident. There is also a feeling among the people that it could be a sabotage. Nation awaits the investigation report.

PreSense joins the Nation in saluting the brave soldiers.

Editorials Published in 2022

PM Modi's Security Breach: Need for Legislation to fix Accountability

By Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor (January 2022)



When the nation was gearing up to celebrate the 73rd Republic Day with pride, the country unfortunately witnessed an incident of security breach of our Prime Minister at Punjab. On the 5th of January 2022 during his visit to the National Martyr's Memorial at Hussainiwala, his convoy got stuck on a flyover for around 20 minutes, blocked by protesting farmers.

Special Protection Group (SPG) entrusted with the task of providing proximate security to the Prime Minister of India sprang into action and surrounded his car to prevent any untoward incident, a sheer collapse of security administration. The PM cancelled his schedule and returned to Delhi. A Senior IPS Officer says, "there could have been a bomb under the bridge, the car could easily have been targeted by a well-positioned sniper or grenade-launcher, or faced an attack from

a drone, an IED, or some other similarly easily-procured weapon” as this security lapse had happened just 15 kilometres from Pakistan border.

It is well known that the overall responsibility of securing the prime minister on his visits to states lies with the respective state forces — a rule that has in fact been codified in the SPG’s “Blue Book” guidelines.

Response of the Punjab Government and reaction of the Opposition

As per protocol the State Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police should have received the Prime Minister which was not observed. The conspicuous breach of protocol by them, led to serious debates. The PM security protocol demands that the State’s DGP be prepared with plan A plan B and plan C route map of PM with required movements and scouting. Suspension of the Superintendent of Police and transfer of DGP later cannot undo the event.

The most shocking response was from Punjab Chief Minister saying, “since there were persons carrying the BJP banners on the flyover where the PM’s convoy was stranded, the PM could not conceivably have been under serious threat”. Punjab Congress President, publicly claimed it as a “tit for tat for the “suffering” faced by the farmers on Delhi’s borders. Such allegedly irresponsible and immature statements from senior leaders apparently angered the people.

Our country has been a witness to several assassinations of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi by ones who claimed to be supporters and security guards. We have also witnessed the mysterious death of the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. This insensitive response of the opposition is a true sign of immaturity even after 75 years of independence. The Prime Minister of India is not just a leader

of a political party, but the most important constitutional authority and his security is a reflection of our national security, globally.

Security lapse near Indo Pak Border

Security breach of the Prime Minister of India, compromising protocols, conventions and miscommunication between the State and Central security agencies close to Indo Pakistan border is a matter of serious concern. Neither was the State police security tightened nor did it curb the large number of demonstrators who blocked the pre-decided route of the Prime Minister. The State Police did not make any attempt to remove these demonstrators immediately.

PM's travel by helicopter was dropped due to rain and poor visibility and as per the Ministry of Home Affairs, PM Modi proceeded to travel by road only after necessary confirmation of security arrangements by the DGP Punjab Police.

It was also reported in a section of the media that the Punjab State Police was fully aware of the plans by protestors to disrupt traffic on crucial roads and had constantly updated senior police officials about the intensity. They were also aware of the announcement by the Fringe group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) offering Rs.1 lakh reward for anyone who threw a shoe at PM Modi during his visit to Punjab. In spite of this, it is not known as to why Punjab Police did not follow the security norms to protect the Prime Minister.

Hon'ble Supreme Court's intervention.

Taking cognizance of this mammoth security breach, the Chief Justice of India formed a committee under Justice Malhotra, Supreme Court Judge (retd) to probe into the circumstances that led to the PM's security lapse. The committee will also include DGP Chandigarh, Inspector General of National Investigation Agency (NIA), Registrar General of Punjab and

Haryana High Court and Additional DGP Punjab. The committee is expected to submit its report at the earliest. The after effect threatening calls to the advocates of Supreme Court, petitioner and others, clarify that the incident cannot be taken as a mere lapse of security but rather as a planned event targeting the PM of our country. *It is now left to the Supreme Court to intervene and unveil the truth of this allegedly condemnable event.*

Ministry of Home Affairs should discuss with all the Security Agencies, including SPG to strengthen the security of Constitutional authorities like Prime Minister, President and others. If required, necessary legislation can be introduced fixing accountability for any breach.

Appreciating Parliamentarians for the First Part of Budget Session 2022

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (February 2022)

7th Session of 17th Lok Sabha (Budget Session 2022 – Part one) was one of the productive Sessions of this Lok Sabha and the entire Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha functioned without much noticeable disruption. The Session started with the President's Address to the joint session of Members of both the Houses on 31st Jan 2022, followed with the presentation of the Economic Survey and Regular Budget for 2022-23. Part one of the Session was adjourned on 11th Feb 2022. The Parliament will again meet on 14th March 2022 for the second part to continue the Budget discussions. Common man expects that the Budget to be discussed thoroughly without disruption, to avoid the budget being passed by voice vote in a hurry.

It is quite heartening to note that the productivity of the Lok Sabha was 118% and that of Rajya Sabha was 91%. Lok Sabha functioned for 49.3 hours Rajya

Productivity

Productivity Lok Sabha



Productivity Rajya Sabha



Sabha for 36.8 hours. Both the houses spent nearly 15% of the Parliament time in Question Hour. This is a good trend.

Graphics courtesy: PRS India

PreSense always insists that Question Hour and Zero Hour belong to the common man, who has elected the Members. Only during these hours, the Members can take up a lot of serious local issues for a solution. In recent years,

Parliamentarians have developed a trend asking for adjournment of Question and Zero Hours, citing some reasons, which could be discussed in the regular business hours. If the Chair does not accept, they disrupt the Parliament and forces the Chair to adjourn the session without any business. This is a bad trend and against the interest of the people. If the political parties want to discuss any serious issue, there are many ways to draw the attention. Sadly, the Members seek adjournment of Question and Zero Hours citing State-level issues.

In the last concluded session, the Hon'ble Speaker mentioned the indecent behaviour of some members. The leaders of all the parties assured good behaviour of their members. There are many role model MPs in our Parliament, cutting across party lines. Only a handful of members, in order to gain publicity and to draw the attention of their party leadership indulge in such a disruptive mode. These members send a wrong signal to the youth, bringing bad image even to MPs of good stature. Senior party leaders should not encourage such unholy behaviour of their members in the House, which is treated as the temple of democracy.

If the Members want to protest against the Government, they can work beyond the hours and bring out all the deficiencies of the Government to the fore. This way they will be doing a great service to the democracy and parliamentary system. Our humble request to all Members is to allow Question and Zero Hour without disruption.

Disruption of Question and Zero Hours is against the Interest of the Common Man

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (March 2022)

The 12th edition of Sansad Ratna Awards presentation ceremony was held in Delhi on 26th March 2022. Nine Parliamentarians, four standing committees and two veteran leaders were honoured for their performance in person. Sansad Ratna Awards are presented on behalf of Civil Society by Prime Point Foundation and your eMagazine PreSense since 2010. An eminent Jury Committee Chaired by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal (Hon'ble MoS Parliamentary Affairs) and Co-Chaired by Shri T S Krishnamurthy (Former Chief Election Commissioner of India) selects the Awardees based on the performance data provided by PRS India.

Every year, during the event, we come out with two important suggestions for consideration by the Government and the Parliamentarians. This year we made two important appeals to the Government and to the Parliamentarians for consideration.

Do not disturb Question Hour and Zero Hour

In both the Houses of Parliament, Question Hour and Zero Hour are meant for taking up important issues relating to common men and constituency. Though 20 Questions are listed in the Lok Sabha and 15 in Rajya Sabha for oral answers by the Ministers during Question Hour as Starred Questions, hardly 5 to 6 Questions are answered. When starred Questions are taken up, the Members can raise supplementary Questions and grill the Ministers. 200 Unstarred Questions are answered by the Ministers in writing.

During the Zero Hour, all the important issues relating to constituency and State that are affecting the common people in the region can be taken up. Unfortunately, we find that most of the time, the opposition parties submit notices to the Speaker seeking adjournment of the Question Hour and Zero Hour to discuss their agenda for their political reasons. If the Speaker or the Chairman does not adjourn, some of the Hon'ble Members make noise during these hours disturbing the proceedings.

Many times, due to the disruption, Question Hours and Zeros Hours are getting cancelled. In a way, this gives an advantage to the Treasury benches and Ministers to avoid supplementary questions. In our view, it is a denial of the right of the common people, who have elected the Hon'ble Members, to discuss the important issues concerning them. Also, this deprives the information and benefits to the common people.

During the Sansad Ratna event 2022, we emphasized that such disruptions or adjournments of Question and Zero Hours were against the interest of the common people and we appealed to the Hon'ble Members to desist from disrupting these two important hours. In fact, we made an appeal that Question Hour should be increased in both the Houses from the existing one hour to two hours, so that more number of questions can be answered orally by the Ministers in the House.

Increase the working days of the Parliament

Between 1952 to 1972, the Indian Parliament was functioning for 120 days a year on an average. Presently, the Parliament works only for around 60 days per year. Around 25% of the working time gets lost due to disruptions. On an average, the Indian Parliament functions only around 45 to 50 days every year. We have also seen that some of the Sessions getting washed out without doing any business.

Many of the bills get passed either without discussion or with less than 30 minutes of discussion. 75 percent of the Budget proposals get passed without discussions and guillotined. Sadly, the bills are also not sent to the Standing Committees by the Government for better scrutiny. Only 13% of the bills were referred to Standing Committees during this 17th Lok Sabha. In the current 17th Lok Sabha, the attendance in the Standing Committees is getting reduced session by session.

Last year, then Chief Justice of India also remarked about the lack of discussions on the bills in the Parliament, adding burden to the Courts for further scrutiny. Hon'ble Members have been elected by the voters to effectively participate in the proceedings of the Parliament and the Standing Committees and not to cause disruptions in the functioning of the Parliament. The working days of the State Legislatures are also causing concern. On an average, our State Assemblies function around 20 to 30 days per year.

In the United Kingdom, the Parliament sits for 150 days every year. In Germany, their Parliament sits for 105 to 110 days. With 1.3 billion population in India and complex problems, it is not in the interest of common people if the Parliament sits only for 60 days on an average every year, that too subject to various disruptions.

During the Sansad Ratna event, on behalf of PreSense and Prime Point Foundation, we appealed to the Government of India and to Hon'ble Members of Parliament to consider increasing the Parliament working days to a minimum of 120 to 150 days.

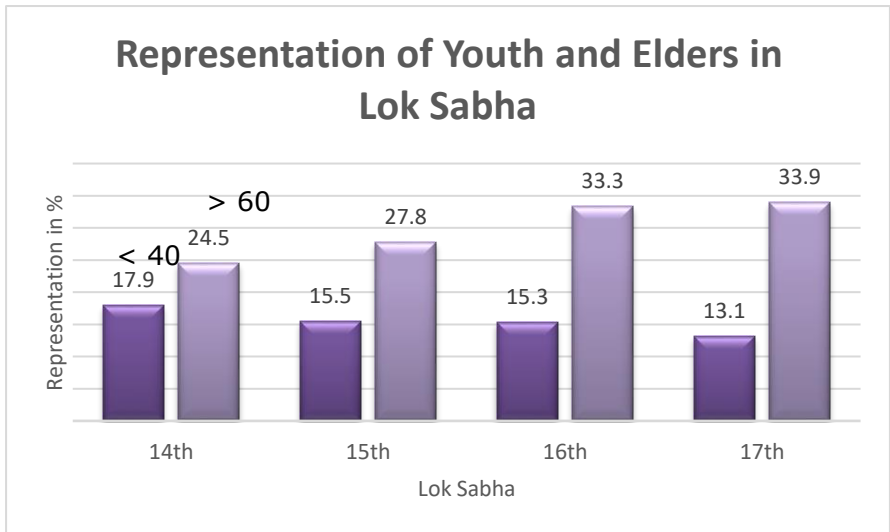
India is the world's largest democracy. Unless the Parliamentary system functions effectively, we cannot boast of an effective democracy.

Is there a 'Leadership vacuum' in Indian Politics? Are youngsters encouraged?

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (April 2022)

When we were analysing the Parliament data, we came across an interesting trend. The representation of youth (less than 40 years) and the elders (60 plus) in the 14th, 15th, 16th and the present 17th Lok Sabha was analysed.

Youth in Lok Sabha



Youth (less than 40) representation is getting reduced from the 14th Lok Sabha. Between 2004 (14th Lok Sabha) and 17th Lok Sabha (2019), it has come down by nearly 5%. The first Lok Sabha had a youth representation of nearly 25%.

On the other hand, the representation of elders (60 plus) has gone up by nearly 9.5%. PreSense made a quick study of this phenomenon and interacted with many young and senior political leaders, academicians, educated youngsters, etc.

Leadership vacuum

The country is facing a leadership vacuum in politics. Leadership is not a problem in the other verticals like the business, academia. Corporates, Industry etc. The Leadership vacuum gets managed within those verticals. Politics plays an important role in the governance of the nation and the political decisions are affecting the common man on a day to basis.

The reluctance of youth to enter politics.

During the pre-independent era, many educated youths lined up to join the Congress to fight for freedom. They sacrificed their family, earnings and profession for the sake of the country. They were all committed to their goal.

Probably after liberalization in the 1990s, when the youngsters get various opportunities for earning money, their interest in politics has come down drastically. Committed youngsters and their parents perceive 'politics' as a bad and corrupted profession, though corruption is prevalent in all domains. They do not realise like any other profession, there are good and bad people in politics too. Because good youngsters do not prefer to enter politics, naturally, bad people occupy this space.

In India, two types of youngsters join politics. The first group is from the existing political families and the second group is without any political family background. Though the country has abolished the feudal system officially after Independence, it is estimated that the country is governed by around 200 families in politics. If we analyse these families, the first-generation politicians, were highly committed, hardworking and sacrificed a lot. Though the first-generation leaders were not much educated, they understood the pulse of the society and were working closely with the people.

The second and third generation politicians from these families inherit the legacy of their parents and enter into positions quickly. Most of them might not have field experience like their parents. Around 70% of the heirs of political families do not show much interest in acquiring knowledge or in policy making. Because of their money, religion or caste and muscle power, they get elected to State Assemblies and Parliament. Their contribution to the nation is negligible.

On the other hand, in our estimate at least 30% of such second and third generation leaders from political families learn from their family experiences and exhibit better performance in politics. For example, Naveen Patnaik (Odisha), Supriya Sule (Maharashtra), Bhartruhari Mahtab (Odisha), Dr Heena Gavit (Maharashtra), Jayant Sinha (Jharkhand) continues to exhibit better performance in the political field. We see this trend across India in all States.

Is there a space for freshers?

If Indian politics is dominated by the members of a certain group of political families, a question arises as to how young aspiring educated people can enter politics and be part of the governance. Many educated youngsters do not want to take risks and sacrifice their time. When the opportunity comes, they want to earn money and take care of their family and live a comfortable life. Also, presently, money and caste play a greater role in Indian politics. Committed educated

Many youngsters, when they get a small success, they become arrogant and assume that they have achieved everything and conquered the world. That goes into their head and disrespect even seniors.

youngsters with talents from the middle class and poor class are not able to dream of politics.

Even those who want to join politics do not want to spend time acquiring knowledge to climb up the ladder. They want an immediate position in the party and in the governance. Only very enterprising youngsters want to learn the Indian Constitution, the role of democratic institutions, etc. Sadly, many of our own elected representatives do not have much knowledge about the Indian Constitution and other rules governing the country.

Attitude

Most of the youngsters after joining politics do not develop attitudes to sustain their performance and most of them get discouraged when they face small challenges. At the same time, many youngsters, when they get a small success, they become arrogant and assume that they have achieved everything and conquered the world. That goes into their head and disrespect even seniors. They need support to manage both success and failure without emotion.

Preparing youngsters for leadership

Twenty or thirty years back, some educational institutions produced great leaders. Those institutions permitted free discussions on various political aspects. Elections for the Students Unions provided good training grounds for leadership. Many political parties picked up students with great leadership skills and groomed them. Presently, we do not have such opportunity to the aspiring students. Since the youngsters do not show patience and tolerance, even such political discussions turn out to be violent. Modern students grow without any knowledge about the happenings around them. They do not even read newspapers. They have become addicted to social media. Wrong messages are planted in their

minds. Also, the youngsters with political ambition do not have the patience and mindset to discuss with senior leaders and learn from them. They consider the seniors as redundant.

In the past decades, we saw leaders like Vajpayee, Advani, Indrajit Gupta, Pandit Nehru, Kamaraj, Somnath Chatterjee, Bal Thackeray, Annadurai grooming the next generation of leaders. Presently, we are not able to see such senior leaders grooming the next line of leaders for the future. There is a generation gap between seniors and youngsters. Seniors are not technology oriented, whereas youngsters are highly technology driven. Seniors want to achieve the goal step by step, whereas the youngsters want to reach the goal quickly with the shortcut methods. Seniors are afraid that young leaders outside their family may overthrow them, if they are allowed to grow. Hence, they want to stick on to their positions.

Even women's representation in politics and governance is very less. Many educated women are reluctant to be part of the political system. In the current 17th Lok Sabha, we have only 81 women Members, out of the strength of 543. The bill for one-third reservation for women is still pending for decades.

Empowering youth and women are very important to strengthen the democracy in future. Political parties and the Government should seriously ponder over this and encourage more youngsters and women to be part of the political system and train them for the future. Youngsters also should understand the reality and develop their attitude to learn from their elders.

Release of Rajiv Gandhi Killer Opens a Debate

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (May 2022)

On 18th May 2022, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India released one of the Rajiv Gandhi killers, Perarivalan, using their special powers granted under Article 142 of the Indian Constitution. Article 142 of the Constitution gives unlimited power to Supreme Court to do complete justice in cases where the litigants have suffered injustices during the proceedings.

Reasons for release

The reasons given by the Supreme Court was that the Governor delayed the decision under Article 161 on the recommendations of the Tamil Nadu Government to release Perarivalan, one of the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case and who was in jail for 31 years. Tamil Nadu Government had recommended remission of the sentence in Sep 2018. Governor referred to the President in Jan 2021 without taking decision, as it was investigated by CBI and the mercy petition was rejected by the President earlier.

The Court has observed that the advice of the State Cabinet was binding on the Governor in matters relating to commutation / remission of sentences under Article 161. Considering the 'mental stress' faced by the prisoner due to delay, the Supreme Court invoked Article 142, which is being used in rarest of rare occasions, released the convict Perarivalan immediately.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister hugs and celebrates

Some of the political parties of Tamil Nadu (other than BJP and Congress), including the Chief Minister M K Stalin hailed the judgement and the Chief Minister met Perarivalan at Airport, hugged him affectionately and hosted a tea party to celebrate his release. Even many of the regional media in Tamil Nadu started portraying Perarivalan as a great hero. The Supreme Court released him only because he had served 31 years of jail term and did not declare him innocent.



The judgement of the Supreme Court to release the Rajiv killer and the Chief Minister's action of hugging him and honouring him generated a big debate in the national media and frustration among the

neutral people.

History of the case

On 21st May 1991, Rajiv Gandhi during his election campaign, was assassinated at Sriperumbudur, near Chennai, by a human bomb, identified as Dhanu. Along with him, 17 others, including policemen and the party workers died. Even Rajiv Gandhi's body itself could not be identified, but for his Lotto shoes. 43 others had major injuries with penetration of pellets inside their bodies. Some of them died in due course. Some of them are living with all disability. Rajiv Gandhi assassination had a serious impact in the economy and political side of the nation. It had an international impact then. The country took several years to come back to normalcy. The investigations revealed the involvement of LTTE and a well-planned conspiracy to destabilise India.



Dhanu, the suicide human bomb waiting to garland Rajiv Gandhi and to trigger the bomb – One eyed Sivarasan (fourth from left) mastermind behind this assassination – 10-year-old student Gokilavani (first from left) innocently standing by her side.

After the assassination, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was formed and they arrested several people. The Tada court set up for this purpose sentenced Perarivalan to death penalty. The Supreme Court confirmed death sentence in 1999. Perarivalan submitted a mercy petition before the Governor of Tamil Nadu under Article 161 of the Constitution. The Governor rejected this petition in October 1999. Again, on the orders of the High Court, the Governor reconsidered the mercy petition and rejected it again in April 2000. He filed a mercy petition before the President under Article 72 of the Constitution and this was rejected in August 2011. Aggrieved by this, Perarivalan filed a writ petition before the

Madras High Court and this was transferred to Supreme Court. In Feb 2014, Supreme Court commuted the death sentence to 'imprisonment for life'.

In September 2018, Tamil Nadu Cabinet passed a resolution to release the convict Perarivalan. In Jan 2021, the Governor, determined that President of India was the appropriate authority to decide the petition and hence forwarded the recommendations of Tamil Nadu Government to the President of India.

Views of `the common man`



Rajiv Gandhi patting the 10-year-old girl few seconds before the blast – Suicide human bomb Dhanu (with flowers on her head) waiting to trigger the bomb

Though the death sentence was confirmed and reconfirmed by Supreme Court of India and the President several times and in

spite of the Supreme Court commuting the death sentence to 'imprisonment for life', Supreme Court has released the assassin considering the 'mental stress' of the assassin due to delay in taking decision by the Governor.

Though, no one questions the authority and wisdom of the Supreme Court to invoke article 142, the general feeling among the common man is that Supreme Court should have considered the 'mental stress' and sufferings of the voiceless family members of 17 people who died along with Rajiv Gandhi and also 43 others who got injured seriously due to penetration of pellets.

While the assassins were able to engage highly paid senior lawyers to represent them at the Supreme Court, the family members of poor victims, who lost the lives or got injured seriously, could not engage any lawyer to represent their case. Both Central and State Governments and the Supreme Court could have considered the sufferings of the poor victims for a moment.

One school student of 10 years old Gokilavani, few seconds before the blast, read out a poem to Rajiv Gandhi who



A police officer and party workers trying to identify the charred body of Rajiv Gandhi

appreciated the child patting on her back. This child was blown into pieces. Unfortunately, the authorities did not consider the agony and 'mental stress' of the family members who lost this child.

Further the celebration of some of the parties and the hugging by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu added more anger and frustration among the neutral people nationally.

The Supreme Court has observed that the resolution of the Cabinet is binding on the Governor in respect of remission of punishment of convicts. What would happen if the recommendations were biased or irrational or against the interest of the unity of the nation? Governor has to act on his own to protect the interest of the people and sovereignty of the nation.

Now lot of demands are made to release many terrorists from the prison with the support of various State Governments. In our view, Article 142 should not have been invoked by the Supreme Court in the present case. There are delays in the courts also. If Courts can take the executive power, what would happen if executives took over the powers of the court due to delay in finalizing the court cases. This will create more confusion and conflict between Judiciary, executive and legislature.

Time to review Article 161 and 142

There are many judgements to confirm that 'imprisonment for life' means, that the prisoner has to remain in the custody till the end of his life. A time has come to review the term 'life imprisonment'. Article 161 and Article 142 should include suitable amendments to avoid confusion in future.

Improper Branding and Communication Creates Confusion on Agnipath

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (June 2022)

The infographic is divided into three main vertical sections. The left section features a soldier in full combat gear at the top and a group of soldiers in blue uniforms marching at the bottom. The middle section features a tank in the background. The right section features a fighter jet at the top and an aircraft carrier at the bottom. Text boxes with blue headers are overlaid on these images.

Eligibility
Age limit for applicants from 17½ to 21 years

Recruitment
Candidates will be enrolled under the respective Service Act for a service duration of four years including training period
Recruitment as per terms and conditions

Training
Imparted rigorous military training in existing training centres

Service
Opportunity to serve the nation in varied terrain from mountains to deserts, on Land, Sea or Air

FINANCIAL PACKAGE
Composite Annual Package
1st year package - approx. ₹ 4.76 Lacs
Upgradation upto approx. ₹ 6.92 Lacs in 4th year

Allowances
Risk & Hardship, Ration, Dress, Travel allowances as applicable

Seva Nidhi
30% of monthly emoluments to be contributed by individuals
Equal amount matched & contributed by the Government
Corpus of approx. ₹ 11.71 Lacs after four years, exempted from Income Tax

Death Compensation
Non-contributory life insurance cover of ₹ 48 Lakhs
Additional Ex Gratia of ₹ 44 Lakhs for death attributable to service
Pay for unserved portion upto four years including 'Seva Nidhi' component

Disability Compensation
Compensation based on % disability laid down by medical authorities
One time ex-gratia of ₹ 44/ 25/ 15 Lacs for 100%/ 75%/ 50% disability, respectively

On Completion
All candidates entitled 'Seva Nidhi' on completion of four years
Skill Gained Certificate

Screening Assessment
Centralised transparent screening, based on merit and demonstrated performance during Service
Agniveers can apply on volunteer basis to enrol in the regular cadre

Selection
Selection through a centralized, transparent and rigorous system
On enrolment in regular cadre, pay fixed as regular soldier. Pension as per extant regulations

Graphics courtesy: Republicworld.com

Announcement and Apprehension

On 14th June 2022, the Defence Minister and the Chiefs of Army, Navy and Airforce took the nation by surprise by their announcement about the new recruitment process for the Defence Forces. They announced the new initiative called 'AGNIPATH,' through which the Defence forces would recruit around 40,000 youth across the country, in the age group of 17.5 years to 21 years (later modified to 23 years for this year) with a qualification of 10th or 12th pass. These youngsters, called 'AGNIVEERS' would be trained for four years in the

Army, Navy or Airforce with monthly salary of Rs.30,000/- to R.40,000/-. After four years of recruitment, 25% would be absorbed in the Defence Forces and the rest would be discharged with a Seva Nidhi of around Rs.12 lakhs. These Agniveers will also earn a degree after completing the four-year training.

This announcement generated a lot of confusion across the Nation among the youngsters, who are preparing themselves with passion to join Army. In the normal recruitment procedure, anybody joining the Services would serve a minimum of 15 years, with an option to continue if they are suitable.

This triggered a protest across the nation with many opposition political parties taking advantage of this situation. Meanwhile, anti-social elements also entered in the protest and burnt public properties like rail coaches and buses. It is estimated that more than one thousand crores of public properties have been burnt during this protest.

On the other side, the Government struggled hard to remove the apprehensions of various people, including the retired people from the Services. The three Services have already announced the scheme in their websites and started inviting online applications for recruitment of Agniveers. As on the date of releasing this edition, it is reported that more than one lakh youngsters have enrolled through the website of Airforce.

Generally, in India, people look for security of job with retirement benefits. When the Government called this as a 'recruitment process,' there was an apprehension that what would happen if 75% of the recruited people are discharged after four years at a young age. Also, the retired Army people feared that the 'Regiment' system will go away after the introduction of this new system. For this, the Government has clarified that Regiment system will continue. Every Army man used to be proud of his Regiment, which used to have a long proud history behind them.

Meanwhile, some of the State Governments offered to give priority to these Agniveers in their Police force. Also, some of the leading Public Sector organisations and Indian Corporate Houses like Tata Group and RPG have announced that they would give priority to these Agniveers, after they complete their four years' service.

Apprehension

PreSense spoke to many people in this field. They all agree that in future, wars will not happen with Guns and bullets. It would be done through technology and digital mechanism. Our Defence forces need to be prepared for the new environment. It is also reported that Gen Bipin Rawat himself wanted to prepare our Defence Services for the future and this Agnipath was his brainchild. Retired Seniors agree that this Scheme is a wonderful futuristic and visionary one.

According to a senior Dalit leader, with whom we spoke said that presently, many of the youngsters in the rural area after completing 10 th or 12 th do not proceed for higher education and they are misled and picked up by various agencies to do illegal activities. He is of the view that this Agnipath Scheme would be a great boon for such rural boys and girls to stabilise their life.

There is also an apprehension that when these Agniveers return after four years, they could get employment as Security Staff or Watchman. Though the recruitments are made for the category of Jawans, these Agniveers would return after four years with a Degree and multi skills, including technology, communication and soft skills. Four years of Army training would make them disciplined and patriotic citizens. Even the Government and Private organisations would prefer Agniveers for their regular jobs. With twelve lakhs of Seva Nidhi and credibility earned, some Agniveers may become Entrepreneurs with the support of Public Sector Banks. For selfish reasons, some organisations create a fear among the youth of this country.

Whenever a new system gets introduced, there would be more fear and anxiety. When the Liberalisation was introduced during Narasimha Rao regime, there was a great fear and insecurity among the people. Any scheme is not perfect at the opening stage. They get improved over a period of time.

Why this confusion?

PreSense has indicated several times in the past that the present NDA Government lacks communication. They introduce all the good and wonderful schemes in a hurry without taking the stakeholders into confidence and creating avoidable fears and apprehensions. An incredibly good Farm Bill was introduced in a hurry without taking into confidence of the stakeholders and the Government had to withdraw due to public protest. When we spoke to Senior BJP leaders, they were also not aware of the Scheme properly to counter the misinformation spread by vested interests.

Although the government has brought out a wonderful military and technology driven skill development scheme for youth, it looks like it has not done proper home work in furnishing the details and the benefits of the scheme while announcing it. This has led to misleading impression as if the scheme is faulty which is not.

The Government instead of announcing Agnipath as a 'Recruitment Process' for defence forces, could have announced this as a 'Skill Development Programme for Youth' with Defence Forces as Partners. The selected youth could be given the same amount as 'stipend' and not as salary. They should have announced that 25% of Trained Agniveers would be absorbed by the Defence Forces and the rest would become employable with a Degree and Multi skills.

Though this type of training could not be offered by any private organisations, even a lesser quality skill development programme by a private agency would cost huge money to the

candidates. In this case, the selected candidate gets salary and Seva Nidhi with multi skills suitable for the industry.

Comparison: Agnipath vs Engineering Degree

Assuming, one of the two boys of the same age group after 12th standard joins Agnipath and the other an Engineering Course, how they would be treated by the market when they finish their four-year programme. The youngster who joins Agnipath would get monthly salary and the youngster who joins an Engineering College has to spend around ten lakhs to complete his study. After four years, the Engineering graduate would start his hunt for job and may end up joining a company with 15000 or 20000/-. As per the study made by many HR Companies, more than 80% of the youngsters coming out of the colleges are not employable and lack skills. On the other hand, the youngster who joins Agnipath would return with a Degree along with discipline, multi skills and Seva Nidhi of Rs.12 lakhs. Naturally, the industry would prefer the Agniveers.

Agnipath is one of the visionary schemes of the Government and the Government should initiate steps to effectively communicate to remove the apprehensions. At the same time, the political parties who are opposed to this scheme should avoid misleading the youth of this country and encourage youngsters to join Agnipath in large numbers to improve their skills and become employable. The Government should learn a lesson out of this development that in future any good schemes for the benefit of the society should not become a controversial one because of misinformation in the absence of proper communication.

The Future of Dynastic Politics in Indian Democracy

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (July 2022)

The recent political developments in Sri Lanka and Maharashtra have generated debates across India about the competency and the future of dynastic politics in Indian democracy. When India got the freedom in 1947, the country had more than 500 kingdoms across the nation in every region. Sardar Patel brought them together under Indian Republic. After the vanishing of traditional Rajas, a new class of Maha Rajas started emerging in all regions of the country after Independence and continues even after 75 years.

Dynastic Business vs Dynastic Politics

Normally, the family members inherit the business and carry it forward, like Tatas, Ambanis, TVS, etc. Since inheriting business does not require the approval of the people, it is going on smoothly. The next generation in dynastic business takes the business to the next level with new ideas and technologies.

In politics, the dynamics of inheriting the political positions are different. Immediately after Independence in 1947, many political dynasties emerged in every State across the nation. Dynastic politics has two categories - one with the authority of governance and the other with positions like MLAs and MPs, including Municipal Councillors. Many dynastic politicians vanished slowly in the first sixty years. Presently some families remain in ruling position and some as MLAs and MPs.

What would be the future of such dynastic politicians after 10 years? Why many of them vanished gradually in the past? Who would survive in future?

PreSense spoke to many political leaders, party workers and common men. Everybody agrees, that the 'family name' may not work in future and the 'connect with people' only would help the political families to remain in positions.

Nehru-Gandhi Dynasty



Nehru-Gandhi dynasty (Mahatma Gandhi was not associated with this family) had the control over the Indian Government directly and indirectly for nearly 47 years, out of 54 years of Congress rule after Independence. The Congress party is also under their control all these years. Presently, the party is not able to secure even the official Opposition Party status. The party which was governing almost all the States in the country is now left with only Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Even the Senior leaders of the party allege that the family does not allow any external leadership and the party has lost 'connect with people.'

Regional dynasties



At the regional level, parties like DMK (developed by Karunanidhi for 50 years), Shiv Sena (founded by Bal Thackeray), NCP (founded by Sharad Pawar), National Conference (founded by Sheik Abdullah), Samajwadi Party (founded by Mulayam Singh Yadav), JDS (founded by Deve Gowda), RJD (founded by Lallu Prasad Yadav), YSR Congress (founded by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy), BJD (founded by Biju Patnaik), Telugu Desam (founded by NT Ramarao) are some of the popular political parties, that are ruling or were ruling some of the States. Presently many of these parties are strong in their regions.

Dynastic Politics – Advantages

The children of the political leaders have distinct advantage over the other political workers who the same experience in the party. They have great exposure to various nuances of politics and also to get easy access with senior leaders of their

own party and other parties. Being a member of a political family gives them an on-the-job training to get groomed as a leader, with adequate knowledge and skills. Also, they get priority in securing seats for election or position in the party or the Government over others.

If we analyse these families, the first-generation leaders were highly connected, hardworking, made lot of sacrifices, collaborated closely with the people and understood their pulse. The second-generation leaders inherited this legacy. Apart from this inheritance, only those leaders who maintain their connect with people continue to be popular. Right from young age, these next generation family members can carefully build their positive image systematically with the handholding of their seniors in the family.

For example, Supriya Sule (NCP), mentored by her father Sharad Pawar, has emerged as an effective political leader with her top performance in the Parliament and is also carefully nurturing her constituency. Also, Dr Heena Gavit (BJP), daughter of Vijayakumar, was getting trained from her school days under her father's guidance and she is doing excellently well both in the Lok Sabha and in her constituency.

Even in the governance and administration, the descendants can learn from their seniors in the family. Anurag Thakur trained by his father Prem Kumar Dhupal, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, has quietly proved his efficiency.

Sometimes, the second-generation leaders excel their own parents in their performance. Indira Gandhi trained by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Naveen Patnaik trained by Biju Patnaik have even excelled in their performance and proved to be worthy successors.

Not resting on their father's legacy, the above leaders maintain a good rapport with their constituency always and address their problems personally.

Disadvantages

Though the descendants of political families have great advantages to learn, in reality many of them do not take it seriously. Though the family legacy can help to quickly get positions within the party, only 'contact with cadre and people' can ensure success in the political leadership. Many party workers of various parties, share in confidence that the second or third generation family members of their leaders, do not have enough contact with the party workers, but only interested in posting their photos in social media, when they visit common people. They do not take interest in understanding the problems of people and to find some solution. Using the family name, many of them want to hold positions. They do not understand that the party workers are the bridge between themselves and the people. It is also reported that a sizeable number of second and third generation family members lack good attitude and soft skills. They communicate arrogantly with their own party cadre.

Without preparing themselves for the political positions, many of them want to enjoy the power. It is also reported that majority of the young generation members from the political families are not even prepared to listen to suggestions from the seniors, who are politically experienced. That is why, most of them vanish from the political scene slowly. Those who take advantage of the legacy, survive and flourish.

There are also allegations against the political families that they have amassed wealth using their political powers. When the political equations change, they are subjected to enquiries, investigation and court cases.

Way ahead

There are many leaders like President Draupadi Murmu. Narendra Modi, Jayalalitha, Mamata Banerjee, Mayawati and others who have risen to higher positions politically braving all challenges without any family background, because of their performance, commitment and sacrifice. Being a descendent of a political family is always advantageous, provided the new generation member takes it seriously and learn from the seniors. Dynastic politics cannot be avoided in Indian democracy. With the changing dynamics of voters, if the next generation members do not have connect with party cadre and lack in soft skills, slowly they will disappear from the political scene.

Political parties Should Respect the Institution of Parliamentary Democracy

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (August 2022)



While the Nation was preparing to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of our Indian Independence, some of the political parties caused disappointment to the Nation by disrupting the Monsoon Session of the Parliament in August this year. While the nation is proud of being the largest democracy in the world, a section of Parliamentarians shamed India with their unparliamentary behaviour for their selfish interest.

Low Productivity due to disruption is against the interest of the Nation

The Monsoon Session ended as a complete washout without taking up many of the burning issues facing the nation. The productivity of the Lok Sabha was 47% and that of Rajya Sabha was 42%. Sadly, the productivity of the Question Hour was the lowest, at 12.1% in the Lok Sabha and 18.2% in the Rajya Sabha. That means both the Houses did not give much

importance to the Question Hour, where the real issues of the people are brought out.

The entire country elects the Members of Parliament to discuss and to take up the issues facing the Constituency and the Nation. Generally, in our view more than 90% of the Members want to take up their job seriously and sincerely. They want to participate in the discussions and to raise important issues. Unfortunately, a handful of members belonging to some political parties for their own selfish reasons and to gain political mileage, disrupt the proceedings. They rush to the well of the House and shout slogans, display banners on the face of the Speaker and indulge in various activities against the rules of the House. They don't realise the negative impact, it may create on the students and youngsters watching the proceedings live.

The sittings are forcefully adjourned without doing any business. When all the political parties have enough opportunities to discuss all the issues, even sitting late, in both the Houses of the Parliament, it is highly unfortunate that the floor leaders of some of the parties encourage disruption, instead of getting time allotted through Business Advisory Committee.

The unruly behaviour of some of the Members of Parliament in disrupting the House has led to frustration among many of the citizens. PreSense has pointed out several times in the past that disruption of the House is against the interest of the Nation and the citizens.

Punish the disrupters

Before writing this Editorial, we spoke to many concerned citizens. Everybody uniformly agrees that the Speaker should punish the Members who disrupt the House. If few Members disrupt the House, many serious Members are unable to utilise the Parliament time for the benefit of the people. If some Members continuously indulge in disrupting the House, shout

slogans in the well and display banners hiding the face of the Speaker, they should be suspended for the Session, besides withdrawing all the allowances and travel charges. Their privileges also should be withdrawn for specific period.

These Members cannot justify that they are doing disruption in the interest of the nation, since other avenues are available for discussion. We have seen many important Private Members Bills do not get introduced or debated on Fridays, due to disruption. The party leaders and floor leaders should not encourage such anti-people disruption for their short-term gains.



Allow the Inter-Session Notices

Due to disruptions, many issues are not taken up in the Parliament. To get more participation from the Members and to address many problems of the country, the Speaker and the Government should consider accepting notices under Rule 377 and Questions online during inter-session period also. This will improve the efficiency of the Government too.

Working of Parliament and Committees

Presently, Parliament functions only for 60 to 70 days in a year. Out of this 25 to 30 percent is wasted due to disruption. The productive working hours are getting reduced. Parliament should function for a minimum of 100 to 120 days with least disruption. Then only the Parliamentarians will be fulfilling the dreams of our freedom fighters.

Over the last five years, it has been observed that the attendance in the Parliamentary Committee Meetings is very poor. Members show scant respect of interest in attending the Committee meetings. Parliamentary Committees are like 'Mini Parliament' with representation from all parties. In the past, they have contributed a lot by scrutinizing the bills and the budget presented to them. Government should motivate the Members to participate in the Committees. The Government should refer as many bills to the Committees as possible for scrutiny. This will strengthen the Committees and the quality of the bills for passage. Also, many important issues relating to individual States could not be taken up for discussion during the Parliament Sessions. The respective Committees can take up suo moto all the important matters that are not discussed in the Parliament and discuss within the Committee. The Committees have the advantage of inviting the stakeholders as witness to get the expert views.

Members do not use the Parliament library

The library in the Indian Parliament is one of the best libraries in the world. It is generally observed that only 5 to 10% of the Members utilise this facility properly to enrich knowledge and to share it during the debates. Besides, the Parliament itself is conducting training programmes to all the Members for their effective participation. Unfortunately, such facilities are not used by the Members. Even PRS India conducts seminars on various bills to educate the Members for the discussion. Only a handful of Members participate in such educative programmes.

Deputy Speaker not elected even after 3 years

Even after three years, the Government has not decided to elect the Deputy Speaker for the Lok Sabha. It is a Constitutional position and the Deputy Speaker plays a significant role in the Parliamentary functioning. For the first time, since adopting the Constitution, the position of Deputy Speaker is lying vacant for three years. It is not a healthy one in the democracy.

Unless the ruling and opposition parties respect the Institution of Parliament, the purpose of our celebrating 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' will be lost entirely.

Need for Media Policy and Media Regulations

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (September 2022)



With the growth of technology, the way of communication has changed. It has also thrown more challenges to credibility of information. A decade ago, only those working in registered newspapers or magazines or broadcasting channels were considered as journalists. They were brought under 'working journalists' category as per law. Presently, every youtuber and social media writer calls himself as a digital journalist and assumes 'absolute freedom' for himself, just because he enjoys a platform to express his views. These new classes of journalists do not understand that 'freedom of speech and expression' provided under 19(1) of the Indian Constitution is subject to restriction and is not 'absolute',

Digital media – free for all platform

Fake news and false information have become order of the day. In the free for all social media platforms, even genuine journalists get confused and lose credibility. Abusing of persons, due to ideological conflict has become common. Even women professionals, including well known politicians are not spared. Striking down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act 2000 by Hon'ble Supreme Court has given more freedom to wrong persons. Genuine victims are helpless and continue to suffer.

In spite of the fact that freedom of speech is being 'misused' by wrong people, the Government and authorities could not do anything but watch silently. Even the Courts have pointed out this several times for introducing regulations.

Digital Media is an uncontrolled beast

Media is considered as one of the four pillars of democracy, the other pillars being Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are having their own laid down policies and regulations. An organised system has been developed even from British days.

Media is the only industry which does not have any rules and regulations. Print Media has a regulatory body known as Press Council of India, which does not have any teeth, when a media goes wrong. It is only an advisory body. Presently more than 900 Television channels are functioning and they deliver the news instantaneously. Many times, for the sake of rating, they indulge in spreading wrong information and creating sensation. They have formed self-regulatory body, which does not have any punishing authority if a complaint comes. They blow up insignificant matters creating tension in the society. Most of the TV channels in India take sides and are not neutral. In a hurry, they pick up false information from the social media and broadcast, creating more problems. Ultimately, no action is being taken by the self-control mechanism. Even when media persons commit serious criminal offence and when they are booked by Police, they start crying as if 'freedom of speech' is being attacked. For fear of such allegations, even the Government does not act on the media when they commit offence and follow unethical practices.

Digital media continues to remain as uncontrolled beast. On the one hand, digital media is helpful in bringing out corruption and public grievances. On the other hand, it is used by wrong persons for spreading fake news and false information for their self-interest. Since there is no regulation governing digital media, they are allowed free. The victims are suffering silently.

We have recently seen many instances of social media triggering riots in many parts of the country. Even some of the traditional media journalists are taking sides and triggering

the confusion, by providing false and fake information through social media. When authorities booked them, a section of senior people started crying as if it was an assault on 'freedom of speech'. Unfortunately, in the name of freedom of speech, anti-national views are spread.

Fake News and False Information are not freedom of speech

In Feb 2021, Government of India wanted to regulate the digital media. They issued guidelines. Immediately, it was opposed by some media persons alleging that it was against the freedom of speech provided in the Constitution. Some cases are also pending in Supreme Court. We are unable to understand for whom these activists are fighting for. Are they fighting for wrong persons against the interest of genuine victims? As already discussed, the cancellation of section 66(A) of IT Act itself has caused lot of difficulties to genuine women victims.

Solution

Even in the 26th National Media Conference held at Abu Road, Rajasthan many speakers expressed concern over the unregulated digital media. Now, the Media industry faces lot of challenges. Presently it is in crossroads. It is losing credibility for various reasons. Many working journalists have lost their jobs due to lack of revenue. It is all because, Media is the only industry in India which remains without any rules and regulations.

In the name of self-regulation, nothing is being done. The professionals like Doctors, Advocates, Dentists, Chartered Accountants, Cost Accountants and Company Secretaries are stable because their professions are well regulated and streamlined. The industries like Banking, Telecom, Education are also stable because of the existence of proper rules and regulations.

Only the Media industry remains unstable without proper rules and regulations. The moment, when we talk of regulations, a section of the media argues that it is against freedom of speech and they equate it with censorship, without understanding the real purpose. Any regulation does not mean censorship. Like other industries and profession, media also needs urgently a proper regulation.

Media has three aspects viz. (1) Content, (2) Carriage i.e., platform and (3) Ownership. All the present laws regulate only Carriage and Ownership. There is no law in India to regulate the contents, particularly in digital platform.

Form a committee

Union Government should form a committee under the chairmanship of a sitting or a retired Supreme Court Judge to formulate regulations in consultation with stakeholders. Senior media professionals themselves can be part of the regulatory authority with legal statutory status. Until such time, innocent victims, including women, will continue to suffer in silence and wrong people will enjoy the 'freedom of speech and expression'.

Indian Opposition Parties not Performing Their Roles Effectively

By Ramesh Sundaram, Consulting Editor (October 2022)

The recent election of Mallikarjun Kharge (80) as the President of Indian National Congress has raised lot of debates in the media and among people. Kharge carries a rich political and administrative experience. He has won 9 times continuously in the Karnataka State Assembly Elections and two times Parliament elections. Now he is a sitting member of Rajya Sabha. He has served as Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly and in Parliament. He was also a Cabinet Minister in the Centre. He belongs to Scheduled Caste and respected by all parties, including the Prime Minister.

For the first time in 24 years, a leader outside Nehru-Gandhi family (Mahatma Gandhi is not connected with this family) is taking over as the President of the Congress. In the post-independent era, except during Narasimha Rao period, whenever the Congress was the ruling party, irrespective of whomsoever was the party President, the Nehru family was controlling the party and the Government.

Political analysts feel that Mallikarjun Kharge may also be another Manmohan Singh 2.0 to follow the orders from the Nehru family. Only time can tell whether Kharge will act independently and wisely to strengthen the Congress party.

Challenge

The Congress party has lost its credibility among the people due to unprofessional handling by the Nehru family. It has lost even the official status of an Opposition Party in Parliament, as it has failed to secure 10% of the House strength. It has lost many of the State Governments, excepting Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. The Congress also lost

the Punjab Government due to wrong handling of Chief Minister issue.

Congress being the only national party with pan-India presence, technically it should lead all the opposition parties in the coming State Assembly and 2024 General Elections. It remains to be seen whether Kharge will be able to unite all the opposition parties under the leadership of the Congress. Further, over a period of 5 years, the Congress has lost many of its senior leaders like Gulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal and many others. Sadly, Rahul Gandhi has also not developed enough political competency to lead the party. He is surrounded by sycophants who do not advise him politically viable strategies. Even Sonia Gandhi did not function as an effective Interim-President after the resignation of Rahul Gandhi, probably due to her health conditions and court cases. Many Congress leaders, with whom PreSense spoke, expressed their deep concern over the future of the Congress party.

Need for good opposition

For effective governance of the Government, there should be a strong and responsible opposition. Prior to 1990, ruling Congress was strong. Rajiv Gandhi who was having 400 plus seats earlier could not win in the subsequent elections. After Rajiv assassination, Congress formed a minority Government under Narasimha Rao in 1991. At that time, the country was facing deep economic crisis due to the poor governance and political instability of earlier Governments. Though, Narasimha Rao Government was a minority Government, the then opposition leaders Vajpayee and Advani were highly responsible leaders and worked closely with the Government to stabilize the economy of the country. It is on record that then opposition led by Vajpayee and Advani played responsible role keeping the country's interest in mind. They diligently played the role of constructive opposition to perfection. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao even deputed Vajpayee to represent

India in the United Nations on Pakistan issue, a rare and the only of its kind gesture in the post Independent India.

After Narasimha Rao period, till 2014, the ruling parties were not strong and they had to depend on various smaller and regional parties. This led to lot of scams between 2004 and 2014. These scams spoiled the image of the Congress with the result that in 2014 the Congress lost heavily across the country. BJP got a massive mandate under Narendra Modi.

Emergence of Regional parties

The Congress was losing ground after 1990 and hence the regional parties (like DMK, AIADMK, TDP, Shiv Sena, SP, BSP, JDS, JDU, RJD, etc.) and parties founded by the leaders quitting the Congress (like TMC, NCP, YSR Congress, etc.) slowly started playing major role in formation of Government at the Centre. Even in 2019 General Elections, the Congress party itself did not name Rahul Gandhi as their PM candidate. Rahul Gandhi, lost even in Amethi in 2019, the constituency won by their family for decades. He resigned as the President of Congress owning moral responsibility. Sonia Gandhi held the position of 'Interim President' for three years. During this period, the party had to face lot of corruption charges and money laundering cases. This has further wreaked the party leading to important leaders leaving the party. Now after three years, in October 2022, the party has conducted the election for the post of President. It remains to be seen whether all opposition parties will accept the Congress as their leader in the coming elections.

Status of opposition parties

Though opposition parties are numerically strong, they are divided due to regional issues, personal ego, allegations of corruption, etc. Almost all parties are having cases pending with CBI or ED.

Though there are plenty of issues to take on the Central Government, the opposition parties take up only trivial and

populist issues, keeping the *vote bank politics* in mind. They do not take up development issues. On the other hand, they protest against many of the developmental projects, for their own reasons.

For example, according to media reports, seven National Highways Projects were cancelled in a State due to non-cooperation by a State Government ruled by Opposition. One of the prestigious projects, the Neutrino research project, was stopped

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due to misguided protests by some political parties in Tamil Nadu. Tuticorin Sterlite Copper manufacturing unit was closed due to a protest by opposition parties, citing environmental issues. This unit was supplying copper to the entire country. Now copper is being imported from other countries. Sometimes, knowingly or unknowingly, our opposition parties play into the hands of geopolitical sabotage against the interest of our nation.

When Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associated organisations were banned by the Government of India for alleged involvement in anti-national activities, many of the opposition parties did not comment and some of them opposed Government's decision due to vote bank politics. On the previous night of Diwali, a blast occurred at Coimbatore probably with an intention to repeat bomb blasts in several places. Now National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken up the investigation and many people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in terrorist activities. Some of the arrested people seem to be the associates of the convicts of 1998 Coimbatore blasts and 2021 Sri Lanka blast during Easter. Sadly, none of the leading opposition parties, including

Congress, have condemned the blast by terrorists, for fear of vote bank politics.

PreSense places on record the constructive role being played by BJD (Odisha) in maintaining good relationship with the Centre and focusing only on the development of the State. Navin Patnaik remains as a role model Chief Minister keeping the country's interest above that of his party. BJD Members in both the Houses of Parliament use the Parliament time effectively.

In Parliament also, a section of the Opposition (not all parties) frequently indulges in disruption leading to ruckus and loss of productivity. Even for some trivial local issues, they create ruckus.

What is the way out?

In a vibrant democracy, both ruling and opposition parties should work together keeping the interest of the country in their mind. The first priority of the new Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge is to unite all the opposition parties keeping the national interest in focus. Instead of talking about trivial issues to please the vote bank, they should fight for more developmental projects.

On the part of the ruling party, PreSense feels they should respect the institution of Parliament, by taking the opposition parties into confidence before introducing the bills. They should refer maximum number of the bills to the Standing Committees for perfection. Government should also realise that keeping the post of Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, a constitutional position, vacant for three years is not in the interest of democracy.

Democracy can be more effective only when the ruling and opposition parties work together keeping the national interest at a higher plane than their political and vote bank interests.

Release of Rajiv Killers by Supreme Court Triggers Controversy

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor (Nov 2022)



In May 2022, Supreme Court Bench invoked the Special Powers under Article 142 of the Indian Constitution and released Perarivalan, one of the seven convicts of Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case. Based on this judgment, the other six convicts were also released from the prison in November 2022, again invoking the Article 142. The reasons quoted by the Supreme Court was (1) the delay in taking a decision by the Governor under Article 161 to release them from the jail after serving 30 years of imprisonment (2) the good conduct of the convicts and (3) acquiring education qualification in the jail.

Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing 'complete justice' in any cause or matter pending before it. While the Dravidian

parties like DMK and AIADMK have welcomed the release, the National parties like BJP and Congress have opposed this order.

Background

Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, was assassinated by a suicide bomber in May 1991 at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. Along with Rajiv Gandhi, 16 others, including few police officers and children were killed in the blast. 41 others, including police officials were seriously injured and have pellets in their body and they continue to suffer even now. Investigations revealed the international conspiracy to attack on Indian sovereignty and integrity of our Nation. This assassination had a serious impact on the economy of the country. It took several years to come back to normalcy.

Conviction confirmed

The accused persons of Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case were given death sentence by TADA court at Chennai in 1999. In the same year, an appeal was dismissed by the Supreme Court. Leading lawyers argued on behalf of convicts. During the same year, a mercy petition was also rejected by the Governor of Tamil Nadu under Article 161. On the orders of the Madras High Court, the mercy petition was reviewed by the Governor again and was rejected in 2000. President of India also rejected the mercy petition under Article 72 in 2011. Based on another petition, the Supreme Court converted the death sentence into 'imprisonment for life'. That means, the convicts had to undergo imprisonment during their life time.

After exhausting all the judicial and mercy petition process, the convicts represented to the Tamil Nadu Government for 'remission of sentence' and to release them from jail in 2018. The State Government forwarded their requests under Article

161 to the Governor in 2018 with a Cabinet resolution. Since the Governor did not take any decision and forwarded it to the President for a decision, the convicts appealed to the Supreme Court for remission and release them prematurely from the prison.

Supreme Court orders

Only for this petition, the Supreme Court released them invoking the Special Powers under Article 142, quoting the delay in taking decision by the Governor and mentioning that the Cabinet resolution was binding on the Governor. The other reasons being: (1) serving of 30 years in prison (2) good conduct and (3) acquiring educational qualification, etc.

Controversy

Tamil Nadu based Dravidian parties like DMK and AIADMK and other small parties hailed this judgment. Some parties even celebrated the release. When Perarivalan was first released in May 2022, M K Stalin, the Chief Minister hosted him a party and honoured him with shawl. This had generated a lot of criticism. Though all the seven convicts have been released, they were not declared innocent. Only their sentence was remitted.

This judgment by Supreme Court has generated controversy. In a strongly-worded statement, Congress general secretary for communication, Jairam Ramesh, said: "It is most unfortunate that the Supreme Court has not acted in consonance with the spirit of India on this issue."

Addressing a press conference, Abhishek Singhvi, Constitutional expert and senior advocate of the Supreme Court, said the decision had shocked the nation's conscience and had invited serious concern and criticism from all sides of the political spectrum.

Despite being aware of the nature of the crime and the evidence that led to their conviction as well as the objection of the Governor, why did the top court seek to grant 'preferential treatment' to individuals convicted of the most heinous crime, Singhvi asked.

Anusuya, a retired Police officer who was on duty on that day said in a press conference that she along with 40 others suffered heavy injuries and have pellets in the body. She felt that Supreme Court should have taken into consideration before invoking Article 142 the sufferings of 16 innocent families who lost one of their family members and 41 others who suffered major injuries during the blast.

PreSense spoke to many common people and also lawyers. They were all unanimous in conveying as to why the Supreme Court should invoke special powers under 142 to release the Rajiv killers, who attacked the sovereignty and integrity of the nation, when thousands of under-trials and persons with ordinary murder charges and with good conduct are suffering in jail for decades.

Impact of the Judgment

Democracy is functioning with three pillars viz. (1) Legislature, (2) Executive and (3) Judiciary. The 'Theory of separation of powers' allows each pillar to discharge its role independently without interfering on the other. Legislature should make law; Judiciary should make judicial reviews; and Executive will take the decisions.

In this particular case, legal experts feel that Supreme Court should not have invoked Article 142 to provide 'complete justice' to the petitioners by taking the decision. 'Complete Justice' does not mean releasing them from jail. It can also be advising the Executive (in this case Governor) to take a decision within a specified period. As this case involves

international angle with four convicts belonging to Sri Lanka, Supreme Court should have left the decision making to the Executive, who are responsible for the security and safety of the country. Supreme Court should confine to judicial review of the decision taken by the Executive.

Based on this judgment, already some of the convicts have started applying for remission of their sentence. Even some of the political parties have already demanded the release of dreaded terrorists for vote bank politics. If the State Governments start recommending such petitions to the Governors under Article 161, Governors will be under pressure. It would be always better for the Supreme Court to leave the matter, particularly when the terrorists and international criminals are involved, to the Home Ministry of the Central Government to take decision, as they have complete data of the security of the country. Security and sovereignty of the nation are more important than legal points.

BJP and Congress are filing the review petitions separately, as it involves an attack on the sovereignty of the nation. PreSense suggests a debate in the Parliament and also a dialogue between the Government and the Supreme Court to get a clarity on Article 142 and 161

Prime Minister Modi Celebrates Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar at Varanasi - Archaeological Survey of India insults Kambar at his birth place

By R, Nurullah, Editorial Advisor (Dec 2022)

While the Prime Minister celebrates Tamil language, and culture at Varanasi, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Central Government, is keeping the 'Kambar Medu', the birth place of Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar at Therazhundur (Tamil Nadu) as an 'open public toilet' due to lack of maintenance, thereby insulting the greatest poet of this land.



Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar (1180 – 1250 CE) has written the epic "Kamba Ramayana", based on Valmiki Ramayana in 11,000 Tamil verses. He is being celebrated by Tamil Scholars and Asthikas as "Kavi Chakravarthy (Emperor of Poets)" - the title was given to him by Kulothunga Cholan III. Even our Prime Minister Narendra Modi used to quote from the verses of Kambar in his speeches.

This place 'Kambar Medu', is in the possession of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), a Department of Government of India, under Ministry of Culture. Unfortunately, this great holy place is not being maintained by the ASI properly. Though the entire area is fenced, due to lack of maintenance and care, one will find lot of bushes in the area. Since it is under ASI, even the local bodies cannot clean the site.

Due to the slums around this monumental place, this place is being used as an open public toilet. (Though it is fenced, one gate is left open). On one side, Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrates the glory of Tamil literature and language at Varanasi as 'Kasi Sangamam'.

On one side, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrates the glory of Tamil literature and language at Varanasi as 'Kasi Sangamam'. On the other side, ASI insults the birth place of the Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar by improper maintenance by allowing it to be used as an open public toilet.

On the other side, ASI insults the

birth place of the Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar by improper maintenance and allowing it to be used as an open public toilet.

A few decades back, one great Tamil scholar Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer, who compiled lot of Tamil literature from the palm leaves, visited the Kambar Medu. He crawled on the place, to avoid his feet being placed on the holy place. I am quoting this as a sample to indicate how the scholars value this spot.



Inside the Sri Amaruviappan Temple (Vishnu temple), near his birth place and where Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar used to worship daily, his idol is installed and daily pooja is being performed for centuries.

Like Maha Kavi Kalidasa, Kambar is also said to have been blessed by Goddess Kali Devi to become a celebrated poet.

World over, the birthplaces of great poets are preserved as National Monuments and respected. For example, the

birthplaces of Shakespeare, Valmiki, Maha Kavi Kalidasa, Tulsidas are also preserved as great monuments



***National monument at
Shakespeare's
birth place***



***Monument where Sage
Valmiki lived***



***Monument where Mahakavi
Kalidas lived***



***Monument at the birth place
of Sri Tulsidas***

Compare these with the pathetic condition of the birthplace of Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar at Therazhandur (Tamil Nadu). He lived in this place also.



PreSense has brought this to the knowledge of Arjun Ram Meghwal, MoS, Parliamentary Affairs and Culture. He has promised to visit personally the birthplace of Kavi Chakravarthy Kambar during January 2023 and take necessary action. At our request, Su. Thirunavukkarasar (Former Union Minister and a sitting Congress MP) has also taken up the issue with Union Minister for Culture Kishan Reddy for finding a solution.

PreSense appeals to the Government of India to (1) maintain the holy site properly thereby providing highest dignity and honour to the greatest poet of our country and (2) to start an exhibition centre with the products already excavated from the site.

Editorials Published in 2023

Indian History and Text Books Should be Rewritten with Factual Details of Freedom Fighters who Sacrificed Their Lives

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Jan 2023)



Main entrance of Cellular Jail at Andaman

The PreSense and Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) Team visited the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the first week of January 2023. The purpose of our visit was to spread democratic and Constitutional awareness amongst the students. With the help of Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma, sitting MP of the Islands, we could visit many

schools and a few social projects. He also accompanied us to the schools and we had useful interaction with the youth. We offered to provide online training programme free of cost, to young students who want to join politics, irrespective of the party, on Indian democracy and Constitution.

After the First War of Independence in 1857, British Government transported around 30,000 aggressive and revolutionary freedom fighters to this Island in phases. It was known as Indian Penal Settlement. Freedom fighters were kept in Ross Islands (Now known as Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Island) and Viper Island. In 1906, the Britishers opened the Cellular Jail. Between 1943 and 1945, Japanese forces took control of this Island during World War II. Both British and Japanese authorities tortured our freedom fighters and even killed them.

Sadly, our text books do not talk about such great warriors, who sacrificed themselves to get freedom for us. We found many of the citizens of Andaman Islands are the descendants of one or other freedom fighter. They belong to different States, religion, language. They live peacefully like a family. Though the Island is separated from the mainland, by a distance of 1300 km, their patriotism towards Mother India is enormous. When we visited the Schools, students greeted us with 'Jai Hind'.

A & N Islands consists of 836 small Islands, of which only 37 are inhabited. 84% of the Island is Forest. This Island is strategically important for Indian defence. Hence, the Lt. Governor of this UT is a retired official from the Defence.

Only three years back, this Island got 4G internet connectivity through a single cable laid from Chennai. If the Government adds one more cable and provide a seamless internet facility, many IT companies can set up their back-office and BPO facilities. This is an ideal place for IT Industry, with the availability of skilled manpower.

Though the Island is surrounded on all sides with sea and has 3000 mm of rains every year, the people do not get drinking water on a daily basis. Already, the local MP and the UT Administration are working on some projects. This is a serious issue to be considered by the Indian Government urgently.

Shortly, an International Airport will be opened there. This will open up more tourism opportunities. There is a great potential for Shipping and Fisheries, with rare kind of fishes available in the sea.

Though this Island is represented in Lok Sabha, the people feel that they do not have any Legislature and membership in Rajya Sabha.

Sadly, our text books do not carry the contributions made by Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the freedom movement. This is the Capital of the Indian Freedom Movement. Many freedom fighters were tortured and killed. Since many of the freedom fighters were members of Indian Independence League (IIL) and Indian National Army (INA), founded by Netaji, probably for political reasons, they might have been ignored from the history. Only during the Morarji Desai regime, the Cellular Jail was dedicated to the nation as a 'National Monument'. Many of the freedom fighters who were killed by the British and Japanese authorities have not yet been declared as Freedom Fighters, though many of them have been declared as 'Martyrs'. The descendants of freedom fighters, with whom we spoke feel that their ancestors, who were killed by the British and Japanese authorities, be declared as 'freedom fighters'.

PreSense appeals to the Indian Government:

1. Andaman Island being the capital of freedom movement, Indian history and Text books should be rewritten giving the factual report about the contribution made by thousands of freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Indian Independence.
2. There is a great potentiality to improve this Island with more employment opportunity in Information Technology, Shipping, Fisheries and Tourism. They should be explored.
3. Above all, the residents should be provided with clean drinking water 24 x 7 x 365 days, besides improving Health and High Education facilities. That will be the greatest homage that we, Indians, can pay to their ancestors who sacrificed their lives for the nation.
4. Already Prime Minister Modi has named / renamed some of the Islands. There are many Islands that are not named.

Prime Minister may consider naming them after many martyrs / freedom fighters who were killed by British and Japanese Authorities before Independence.

Every Indian should visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a 'Patriotic Pilgrimage' and pay homage to the freedom fighters.

Jai Hind

Owner's Pride – Neighbour's Envy: Is India Facing International Conspiracy?

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Feb 2023)

Leadership during Independence

"Owner's Pride; Neighbour's Envy" used to be a popular slogan in 80s to brand a TV. The same logic applies to India too, as a brand today.



In the past few years, we have been hearing about International conspiracy theories to damage the India's economics and image. Though

it is getting debated over three decades, a fact remains that India is emerging as one of the largest economies of the world with talented human resources. At the time of Indian Independence in 1947, Winston Churchill was reported to have remarked, "all Indian leaders will be of low caliber and men of straw." While giving freedom to India, British regime gave an option to 500 plus Samasthans to either join India or Pakistan or to remain Independent. British regime thought India would break into several pieces and the leaders would find this unmanageable. After Independence, Indian leaders proved their leadership skills and brought together all the 500 plus Samasthans under Indian republic, thanks to Sardar Vallabhai Patel.

India's growth story

Over 75 years, India has been growing steadily and strongly, under various Governments - proving wrong the statement of Winston Churchill. India has emerged as the largest

democracy in the world with more than 800 million citizens electing the Central Government, that too through EVMs. The change of power from one party to the other has been very smooth in the last 75 years. India developed her own written Constitution which saved the country from many crises. The Constitutional bodies like Supreme Court and Election Commission have remained independent.

After the liberalization in 1991, India is emerging slowly and steadily as one of the vibrant economies of the world. Today, we are in the fifth position, pushing even UK down. On several occasions, when the political crisis happens, our leaders have shown resilience and resolved the crisis within the framework of the Constitution and also with the guidance of Supreme Court. India has shown the supremacy in Science & Technology and in its rich cultural heritage. Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) are heading many Multi-National Companies (MNCs) and political system in various countries. With nearly 130-crore population and with multiple caste, language and culture, India has shown unity in diversity, due to the attitude of the people. On the other hand, neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Nepal are not able to maintain their economy and political system properly.

Even during the Covid time, India was able to vaccinate all the citizens with two or even three doses, besides sparing vaccine to some of the needy countries. India was able to reduce the death rate due to the proper management of the health system, while advanced countries suffered heavily.

Traditionally, some of the advanced countries do not like India to grow and become a super power in the globe. In the past few years Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is emerging as a strong global leader. He is being carefully listened to by both America and Russia. India did not yield to pressure of America to stop import of oil from Russia.

Naturally, all the efforts to damage the image of India are being done by vested interests outside the country. The recent Hindenburg report on Adani, George Soros statement against India and the BBC documentary on Gujarat riots can be quoted as some of the strategies to damage the image of the country and that of the Indian Prime Minister. There are people who defend these reports in India and keep debating them in media.

Past examples

Even earlier, there were continuous protests against Koodangulam Nuclear Plant in the UPA Government. The then UPA Government termed this as global conspiracy. Construction of six nuclear reactors with capacity of 6000 MW was unduly delayed due to protests by the local people. The then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh blamed 3 NGOs using foreign funds to trigger the protests in India.

In 2018, Sterlite Copper was closed at Thoothukudi (Tamil Nadu) due to protests by local people quoting environmental reasons. The closure of this unit has resulted in the increase of import of refined copper from 0.44 lakh tonnes in 2017-18 to 1.52 lakh tonnes in 2019-20. Same way our exports got reduced from 3.78 lakh tonnes in 2017-18 to 0.37 lakh tonnes in 2019-20.

USING Indians to damage India

India's growth and robust democracy is an eye sore to many of the developed countries. Naturally, they would pump in money through various Indian NGOs and make use of Indian citizens, media and political parties for their advantage. Innocently, our own Indian citizens, media and political parties knowingly or unknowingly help them to carry out the protests against the interest of the country. For example, the recent protests against CAA and Agricultural bill on a false narrative

has created more damages. There are reports of invisible foreign hand in these protests.

Unfortunately, our own Indian mainline and social media play a role against the interest of the nation, supporting the invisible enemies under the pretext of environment protection, freedom of expression, social justice, etc.

Indian Foreign Minister Dr Jaishankar has also in his recent interview to ANI confirmed that some forces were making clever attempts to damage India's image globally. He felt that more than the conspiracy, politics was behind them.

Role of Indian media and political parties

Whether it is conspiracy or politics, we see a clear design to damage India's economy and image through our own people. Indian media including social media users and political parties should think beyond their self-interest and not to be part of invisible hands that are damaging India.

Sansad Ratna Awards Crosses 100th Award Mark – completes First Phase and moves on to Next Phase

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (March 2023)

Sansad Ratna Award which celebrates the top performing Indian Parliamentarians, initiated by Prime Point Foundation and your eMagazine PreSense since 2009 on the suggestion of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, after 14 years of challenging journey has now completed the first phase of crossing the 100th Award mark. The first phase was to create awareness among the Parliamentarians and the general public/media about participation in the House proceedings. The Greeting Tweet by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for the 13th edition of Sansad Ratna Awards has added more visibility and credibility to the Awards.



Tweet



Narendra Modi ✓

@narendramodi

🇮🇳 India government official



Congratulations to the MP colleagues who will be conferred the Sansad Ratna Awards. May they keep enriching parliamentary proceedings with their rich insights.



Pralhad Joshi ✓ @JoshiPralhad · 19h

Congratulations to the eminent Parliamentarians on being conferred upon Sansad Ratna Awards for 2023.

13 MPs, 2 Parliamentary Committees and 1 Lifetime Achievement honour will be awarded during the 13th edition of these awards.

Sansad Ratna Awards is considered as one of the prestigious awards by the Members of Parliament. A time has come that we need to move to next phase. The first phase was done based on the performance data provided by PRS India Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites. The focus was more on participation in the House proceedings.

In the second phase, besides the performance data,

Congratulations to all the **Sansad Ratna Awardees -2023**

Shri. Bidyut Baran Mahato
BJP, Jharkhand - Lok Sabha

Dr. John Brittas CPI-M, Kerala - Rajya Sabha

Dr. Manoj Kumar Jha RJD, Bihar - Rajya Sabha

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar
BJP, West Bengal - Lok Sabha

Smt. Fauzia Tahseen Ahmed Khan NCP, Maharashtra - Rajya Sabha

Shri. Kuldeep Rai Sharma
INC, Andaman Nicobar Islands
- Lok Sabha

Shri. Vishambhar Prasad Nishad Samajwadi Party, UP - Rajya Sabha

Smt. Chhaya Verma INC, Chhattisgarh - Rajya Sabha

Dr. Heena Vijayakumar Gavit
BJP, Maharashtra - Lok Sabha

Standing Committee Awardees

Shri. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
INC, West Bengal - Lok Sabha

The Finance Committee from Lok Sabha

Chairman – Shri Jayant Sinha
BJP, Jharkhand

Shri. Gopal Chinayya Shetty
BJP, Maharashtra - Lok Sabha

Transport, Tourism and Culture Committee from Rajya Sabha

Chairman – Shri V. Vijayasai Reddy
YSR Congress, Andhra Pradesh

Shri. Sudhir Gupta
BJP, Madhya Pradesh - Lok Sabha

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Lifetime Achievement Award

Shri T K Rangarajan

Former Rajya Sabha MP and Senior CPIM Leader

PRALHAD JOSHI

UNION MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, COAL & MINES, GOVT OF INDIA (MP, DHARWAD CONSTITUENCY)

[Pralhad Joshi](#)

[pralhadjoshi](#)

'innovation' in the constituency development will also be considered. Prime Point Foundation and PreSense have constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of Dr

S K Kharventhan, Former MP and a Sansad Ratna Awardee to suggest guidelines for the additional parameters.

As part of the transition to next phase, we have also handed over the baton to the next generation team headed by Ms. Priyadharshni Rahul. She will become the Chairman of the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee to take it to the next level. The Founder, Prime Point Srinivasan, will become the 'Chairman Emeritus' to mentor the new team and to plan new strategies. There will be a Governing Council consisting of eminent experts to handhold the new team.

Wisdom and knowledge are two essential things in any initiative. Elders with their vast experience have enough 'wisdom'. The youngsters, though not experienced, have more 'knowledge'. In our new model, elders with wisdom will mentor and handhold the vibrant and energetic youngsters with knowledge. This is to empower the Next Gen leaders.

Before the event, our team and myself met various senior leaders at Parliament House. All leaders were highly appreciative of this Sansad Ratna initiative. Their confidence in our team has placed more responsibility on us. Prime Point Foundation and PreSense reassure commitment to the nation and to create awareness on the Parliamentary democracy.

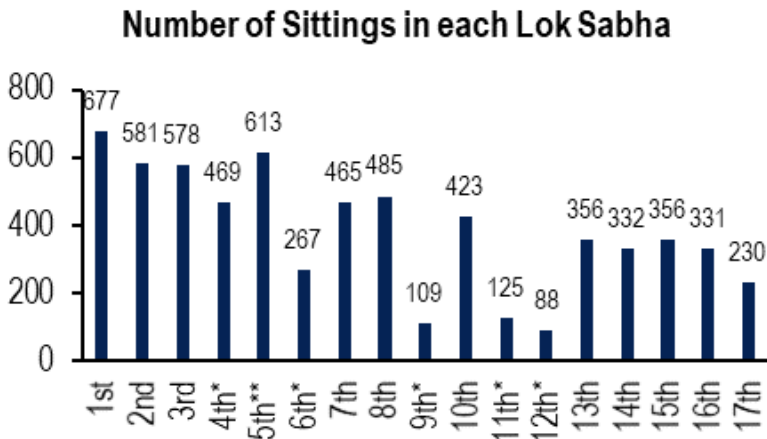
We are also happy to share with our readers that we are working out an online 28 hours programme jointly with IIT Madras on the theme "Indian Democracy: Constitution, Parliament, Judiciary and Civil Society". Details will be announced shortly.

Jai Hind.

The 17th Lok Sabha is Likely to Create a Record for the Minimum Number of Sitting Days in the Post-Independence Era

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (April 2023)

India is celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Indian Independence, but unfortunately the current 17th Lok Sabha will be creating a record as the 'shortest Lok Sabha' since 1952.



Note: *Term less than 5 years; **6 year term. Figures for the 17th Lok Sabha are till the Budget Session 2023.

Entering the final year of its term, the 17th Lok Sabha has functioned for 230 sitting days only so far. Of all the Lok Sabhas, that completed the full five-year term, the 16th Lok Sabha had the lowest sitting days (331). With one more year remaining in the term, and with an average of 58 sitting days per year, the 17th Lok Sabha is unlikely to sit for not more

than 331 days. This could make it the shortest full-term Lok Sabha ever since 1952.

It is a matter of great concern to all the voters in India. PreSense feels that both the ruling and opposition parties have to take responsibility in running the Parliament. Both should sit together and discuss to run the Parliament smoothly in the interest of the nation. The voters in India elect the Members of Parliament with the hope that they would take up their constituency, State and national issues in the Parliament for redressal. Not running the Parliament as per schedule is not in the interest of the people. Some of the political parties indulge in such disruptions and ruckus for their own political gains. Many of the MPs confess confidentially that they do come prepared for every session but are not able to take up the issues.

Budget Session 2023

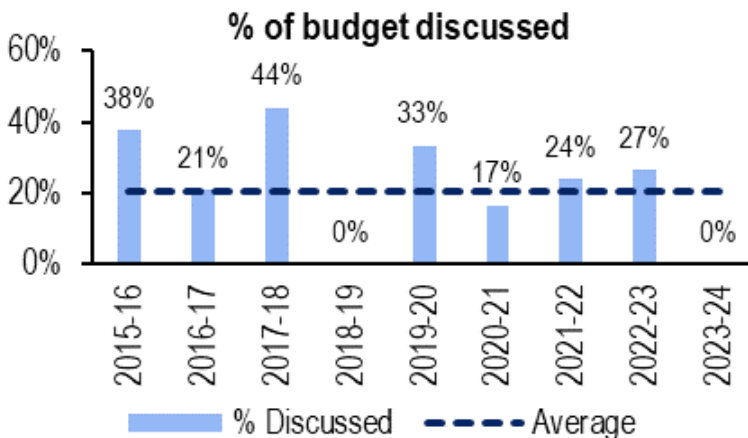
The recently concluded Budget session was held from January 31, 2023 to April 6, 2023, with a recess from February 14 to March 12. Parliament adjourned sine die on April 6, having sat for 25 days. This session saw very limited legislative activity and minimal discussion on the Budget amidst continuous disruptions. The productivity of the Lok Sabha during this Budget Session 2023 was 34% and that of Rajya Sabha was 24%. 8 Bills were introduced in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and 6 were passed.

Budget passed without discussion

This session has been the sixth shortest budget session since 1952. Lok Sabha spent 18 hours on financial business, of which 16 hours were spent on the general discussion of the Budget. In the previous budget sessions of the 17th Lok Sabha, financial business was discussed for 55 hours on an

average. The expenditure of five Ministries (amounting to Rs 11 lakh crore) was listed for discussion in Lok Sabha, however none were discussed. The proposed expenditure of all Ministries, amounting to Rs 42 lakh crore, was passed without any discussion. In the last seven years, on average, 79% of the Budget has been passed without discussion.

Rajya Sabha discusses the working of select Ministries during the budget session. It was to discuss the working of seven Ministries including that of Ministries of Railways, Skill Development, Rural Development, Cooperation and Culture during this session. None of these were ever discussed.

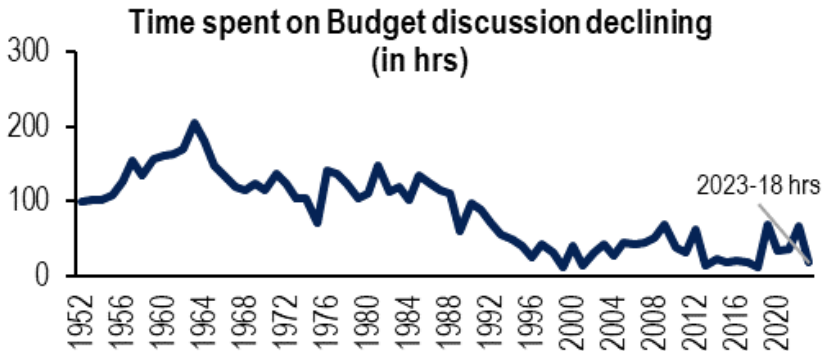


Debates, Private Members Bills and Questions

The Motion of Thanks on the President's Address was the only item discussed in this session. It was discussed for about 28 hours in both Houses, with 150 members participating in total.

This session also saw the least amount of time spent on questions in the current Lok Sabha. Question Hour functioned for 19% of scheduled time in Lok Sabha and 9% in Rajya

Sabha. About 7% of starred questions were answered in each House. No Private Member Bills were introduced or discussed. Each House discussed just one Private Member Resolution.



During the time of Debates, Questions and Private Members Bills, Members can take up important issues. Unfortunately, due to ruckus and disruption, Members were not able to participate effectively.

Election of Dy. Speaker, Lok Sabha

PreSense has been pointing out from the beginning of the 17th Lok Sabha that the Dy. Speaker was not elected in time. With one more year to go for 17th Lok Sabha, this Lok Sabha will create one more record for not electing Deputy Speaker in the post-Independence era.

PreSense has been honouring good Parliamentarians with Sansad Ratna Awards for their top performance in the House. PreSense shed tears to know that this 17th Lok Sabha is going to create records for wrong reasons in the 75 years of post-Independence era, when it completes its term. Unless both the ruling and opposition realise their responsibility of running the Parliament to its fullest efficiency, the next generation may

lose hope on the system. It is time they respect the Constitutional Institutions, beyond their political gains.

Graphics and content source: PRS Legislative Research

Karnataka Assembly Elections 2023 – Lessons to be Learnt by Political Parties

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (May 2023)



In the Karnataka Assembly Elections held in May 2023, Indian National Congress (INC) has won the elections with 135 seats (43% vote share) as against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 66 seats (36% vote share). Former Prime Minister Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular) has secured 19 seats with a vote share of only 13.3%. In this election, though BJP has retained their vote share - more or less the same (loss of 0.3% over 2018), JD(S) has lost 5% vote share and INC has gained 5%.

Though INC and BJP have campaigned aggressively with Narendra Modi visiting the State several times, BJP lost the Government. The Karnataka Assembly Elections 2023 has taught many lessons to various political parties, particularly not to take the people for granted.

PreSense Team talked to various political leaders and political analysts.

Disadvantage BJP:

During this term, BJP changed their Chief Minister in the middle. BS Yeddyurappa, one of the tall leaders of Lingayat community and a powerful mass leader was removed and Bommai, another Lingayat Leader was made the Chief Minister. This move was probably to reduce the influence of Yeddyurappa and to develop other leaders. This created huge dissatisfaction among the major Lingayat Community, who were the backbone of the BJP. Though Yeddyurappa's son was given a ticket in the last minute, it did not satisfy the community. BJP lost their seats in many of the Lingayat-dominated constituencies.

Besides Bommai Government was blamed for 40 percent corruption by the Congress and one of the contractors committed suicide. Congress made use of this allegation effectively to brand Bommai Government as a corrupt Government. Unfortunately, BJP did not counter the allegations.

Even way before in January 2023, it was well known that BJP might not score more than 35 to 40 seats. It is also reported that some of the young BJP leaders who were holding office were also behaving in an 'arrogant' manner and did not establish contact with the ground.

The political workers who visited Karnataka from other States confide that the local workers did not do much groundwork, in spite of the anti-incumbency wave which was visible. They were also pinning hopes on Modi and Amit Shah's visits to neutralize the negative impact.

A few days before the election, BJP announced a new reservation quota for Vokkaligas and Lingayats and removed the quota from Muslims. This had boomeranged heavily. It made minority votes get consolidated under Congress. Even

traditional minority votes of JDS went to Congress for fear of the BJP. Interestingly, BJP did not put up any minority candidates.

Also, BJP played hardcore Hindutva in the campaign. Normally Southern States, do not entertain hardcore Hindutva. This has also helped Congress to consolidate minority votes. Hindu votes also did not go entirely with BJP.

One of the senior poll analysts, JVC Sreeram of Hyderabad, who visited Karnataka during the election for a survey indicated that he could see the majority of the women voters, irrespective of their caste and community were angry against BJP for the increase in cylinder price. He says a sizeable section of women have moved away from BJP. PreSense gave this caution when we reviewed the Himachal Pradesh election also. JVC Sreeram cautions, unless BJP takes up this concern of women voters seriously, it may pose greater problems in future elections.

Since Modi and Amit Shah campaigned several times, they could increase from the 35 seats to 65 seats. B S Yeddyurappa and Siddaramaiah (presently CM, Congress) are the only two mass leaders and vote catchers of Karnataka. Though there was an internal problem in Congress between Siddharamaiah and DK Shivakumar, they put up a united fight without exhibiting their internal rivalry. Rahul Gandhi's Pada Yatra in a few districts also helped them to secure more votes.

Congress had promised lot of freebies, including free bus pass for women, monthly payment for educated youth and housewives, free electricity up to 200 units, etc. This has also tilted the votes towards Congress as BJP was already suffering from poor governance and anti-incumbency.

Lessons to be learnt

With few more Assembly and Lok Sabha elections coming up shortly, both BJP and Congress should realise that people are becoming cautious about governance and leadership. BJP should go to the elections with the Chief Minister face in the future.

During the campaign, Modi appealed to the people to vote for him.

People are generally

clever. They want to see the person who would be ruling them from their State. In the future, such strategies may not impress the voters. Modi's face would fetch votes for Lok Sabha, as he has proved to be a good administrator. But for States and Municipalities, the local face is needed. Modi's campaign has helped BJP to increase its presence across all segments of Karnataka. BJP should realise that Prime Minister Modi cannot substitute a local leader in Regional elections but only supplement the local leaders. BJP should develop leaders across all States as their party face. (eg: Uttar Pradesh and Assam Assembly elections). Putting all the burden on the shoulders of Modi will not be good for the nation.

BJP should develop leaders across all States as their party face. (eg: Uttar Pradesh and Assam Assembly elections). Putting all the burden on the shoulders of Modi will not be good for the nation.

BJP should customize campaign models according to the States, based on their culture and habit. Unlike the North Indian States, Southern States will not accept hardcore Hindutva. A highly religious person in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra will vote for Non-BJP parties, including Communists. Unfortunately, BJP seems to be applying the same model everywhere without respecting the sentiments of the local usage and custom.

According to poll analysts, women voters are angry with BJP for the increase in the price of LPG cylinders. This is a highly sensitive area. Women voters have more influence over their family members. Experts suggest, even if the development projects get slightly postponed, the cylinder cost should be subsidized to help the poor people. New Airports and Vande Bharat trains may not make a poor man happy when he suffers economically from a price rise. Unfortunately, BJP leaders do not realize this important factor.

Congress has promised many freebies and captured power in Karnataka. DMK, their alliance party in Tamil Nadu, had also captured power two years back promising similar freebies. Even after two years, they could not implement any of the promises. Even when they wanted to implement it, they restricted it to a BPL category. Such false promises to capture power has angered the people of Tamil Nadu. Anti-incumbency has set in even within two years. Congress should learn a lesson out of Tamil Nadu experience and start working on their promises, which may cost the Government heavily. If they do not implement it, it may boomerang again.

Too much of pampering of minorities during the election campaign by Congress may also be counterproductive. Immediately after the formation of the Government, there were media reports about some groups celebrating the Congress victory with Pakistan flags and also killing cows in public. Both hard-core Hindutva and extreme pampering of minorities may lead to dangerous situations. Congress also should stop mocking the traditional Indian culture and systems for vote bank politics.

Deve Gowda's JDS party is slowly getting disseminated from Karnataka because of their past actions. This has helped Congress in a major way and BJP in a small way. In the future, Karnataka is moving towards a bipolar electoral system with BJP and Congress playing the main role.

Prime Minister Modi's State Visit to the US has brought India to Global Stage – A Comprehensive Review

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (June 2023)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State visit to the US and his address to the joint sitting of the US Congress on 23rd June 2023 has brought India to the centre stage at global level. During his approximately one-hour-long speech, he described the partnership between India and the US as the "defining partnership of this century". PM Modi received 53 rounds of applause and a record 15 standing ovations. Narendra Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Joint Sitting of the US Congress twice and the sixth Indian Prime Minister to address the Joint Sitting. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi, PV Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee and Dr Manmohan Singh have already addressed the joint sitting once.

Special Honour to Narendra Modi and India

Narendra Modi is the fourth Head of State/Government to address the Joint sitting of the US Congress twice. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has addressed Joint Sitzings three times. Britain's Churchill addressed two joint meetings and one informal meeting of the US Congress.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela also addressed the Joint Sitting twice.

Modi's visit was historic as no Indian PM before him had the privilege of such red-carpet treatment and rose garden dinner with an Indian menu. This type of honour is usually given only to heads of developed countries.

Agreements were signed, for the first time with India, to supply aircraft engines for combat aircraft and transfer of technology to state-owned HAL. This is a landmark achievement.

President Biden has gone out of the way to extend a warm welcome and strengthen Indo-US ties despite 70 of his own party men representing 26% of the party's strength asking Biden not to give a red carpet welcome to Modi, quoting Gujarat riots when he was the Chief Minister of the State. They alleged that Modi was suppressing religious minorities and freedom of expression. Biden virtually rejected his own party's criticism and extended a warm welcome to show he did not lend much credence to such reports.

The US needs India as part of the Quad to counter China on the South China Sea where India also has economic interests in oil fields and drilling in Vietnam by ONGC.

Counter narrative

During the Indian Prime Minister's state visit to the US, Obama told CNN that the issue of the "protection of the Muslim minority in a majority-Hindu India" would be worth raising in Modi's meeting with the US president, Joe Biden. Obama said that without such protection there was "a strong possibility that India at some point starts pulling apart." This is a very damaging statement by Obama provoking the disintegration of India.

During the Joint Press Conference with President Biden, a journalist asked Modi the question as to why his administration did not prevent harassment of minorities and suppressed press freedom. Modi denied any discrimination against minorities under his government and said the benefits reached all the people.

President Biden reacted to the journalist by saying that he and Modi had discussed at length the issue of human rights, rights of minorities and democracy.

In India, Modi's followers started abusing the journalist on social media for asking this question. White House reacted strongly to the online harassment of the journalist.

While Indian media was reporting about the 'red carpet welcome' to Modi, the American media was focussing on Obama's allegation. Back in India, Finance Minister Nirmala Seetharaman and Assam Chief Minister Biswas reacted sharply going out of the way to talk about the lineage of Obama as a Muslim which could have been avoided. Diplomatic experts feel that while Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were handling the situation, other leaders should not have shown hyper ventilated reaction since Obama was not the President.

Our Observations

India is emerging as a strong nation and is coming on to the global centre stage. Now India has developed the courage not to obey the DICTATS of superpowers like the US. While on one side, the US may like to maintain a friendly relationship with India for market purposes, they like to weaken India both internally and externally promoting wrong narratives like this. India is the only country in the world, that is secular and where minorities enjoy more facilities and privileges than the

majority people both legally and politically since Independence.

While Obama and Biden belong to the same party, it is not known why they speak in different voices. Indian Government should try to trace the intent behind it.

Also, there has always been global criticism against developing countries like India, which cannot be avoided. PreSense has been pointing out very often that the BJP Government and leaders do not communicate when needed and communicate when not needed. Only the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister should handle the diplomatic issues. Unnecessary comments by other Ministers and followers of the BJP may become counter-productive. The BJP leaders should shed "I know it all" attitude and entrust the communication to the professionals. While the Anti India lobby is communicating professionally with the support of a few of our own Indian political leaders to defame India and create trouble among the citizens, Government has to ensure that professional communication is stepped up to counter such false narratives.

Chandrayaan 3: India's Ambitious Leap into Lunar Exploration

By Ramesh Sundaram, Editor in Chief (July 2023)

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been at the forefront of space exploration, and its Chandrayaan missions to the moon are a testimony to the scientific advancement and technological prowess of India. PreSense congratulates the entire ISRO team for their great initiative.

History of Chandrayaan missions

Indian Academy of Sciences first mooted the idea of a scientific mission to the moon in 1999. In 2000: Astronautical Society of India carried it forward. The National Lunar Task Force was set up by ISRO which concluded that ISRO has the expertise to carry out a mission to the moon. On August 15, 2003, then-Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee announced the Chandrayaan project during his Independence Day Speech. In November 2003: The Government approved the Chandrayaan mission.

Chandrayaan 1

India's first moon mission Chandrayaan 1 spacecraft was launched on October 22, 2008 and was operational till August 2009. The estimated cost of the project was Rs.386 crores. It included a lunar orbiter and an impactor. On November 8, 2008, the spacecraft was put into lunar orbit. On November 14, 2008, the impactor made a controlled landing near the South Pole on the moon. Chandrayaan 1 mapped the chemical composition of the moon's surface and 3D photography. Its main discovery was the presence of a vast amount of water molecules in the moon's soil. The craft had a mass of 90 kg

containing 11 scientific instruments (5 Indian instruments and 6 instruments from other countries). One of the instrument's (Terrain Mapping Camera) aim was to completely map the topography of the moon. There were instruments for mineral mapping, measuring the height of surface topography, etc.

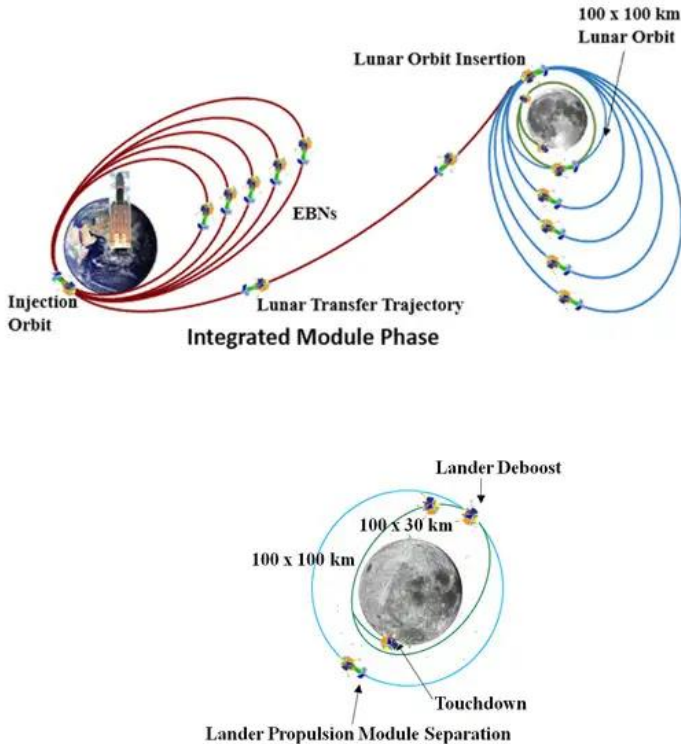
d) Moon Impact Probe or Impactor: It had an altimeter for measurement of the altitude of the probe, and a video camera for acquiring images of the moon's atmosphere and searching for water molecules on its surface. Ejected on November 14, 2008, the Impactor landed on the lunar south pole.

Achievement: The main achievement was on November 18, 2008, when the probe discovered a vast presence of water molecules in lunar soil. It was a breakthrough. The Impactor worked without flaw for 312 days and achieved the desired parameters in research. It also provided valuable data on the presence of various minerals. The Orbiter even mapped landing sites of earlier lunar missions – Apollo 15 & Apollo 17. It completed 3000 orbits acquiring 70,000 images of the moon's surface, a record when compared to lunar flights of other missions. The mission's success put the ISRO on the global space map. It established itself as a formidable player in space exploration

Chandrayaan-2

The spacecraft was launched on July 22, 2019. The spacecraft consisted of an indigenously developed lunar orbiter, Vikram lander and Pragyan rover. The orbiter reached Moon's orbit on August 20, 2019. It began manoeuvres for the landing of Vikram Lander on the moon. The lander unfortunately crashed due to lunar dust and software glitches like sensor failure and communication was lost between orbiter and lander. Still, the orbiter sent about 40,000 photos which were very helpful for the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Chandrayaan-3



Fired by Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-II rocket, Chandrayaan-3 was launched on July 14, 2023. It also consisted of an orbiter, a lander (the same name as Chandrayaan 2 lander) and a rover. These were redesigned to address the shortcomings of its predecessor. The lander and rover components underwent significant improvement, with enhanced navigational systems and communication capabilities to ensure a successful soft landing on the moon. The ISRO collaborated with many international space agencies and research institutions to incorporate advanced scientific instruments that will facilitate comprehensive scientific

research. The main aims of Chandrayaan-3 are: To soft land Vikram Lander on the lunar surface, to conduct roving operations on the moon and to conduct on-site experiments on the moon. Vikram will soft land in the South Pole region of the moon on August 23, 2023. Many improvements were incorporated in the Vikram Lander like stronger legs, improved capacity to withstand a higher descending velocity, reduction of number of engines from five to four, increase in quantity of propellant, larger solar panels and new sophisticated sensors. The Lander can land at a specific lunar site.

It will deploy a Rover to carry out on-site chemical analysis of the moon's surface. The Lander and Rover will carry scientific payloads. The scientists have chosen Chandrayaan-3 to land at the difficult South Pole of the moon because from there only can there be direct communication between the lander and orbiter for data transmissions otherwise a satellite has to be used for this, which is a costly affair. It is pertinent here to say that 4 million sq. km of the moon's surface mapped and transmitted from the orbiter of Chandrayaan-2 was very helpful in this mission.

Future projects

Chandrayaan 4: The timeframe for the launch of Chandrayaan 4 is 2025. It will be an Indo-Japan collaboration. Finer details have to be worked out. It will land a land-rover machine near the lunar pole which will do on-site sampling by drilling on the lunar surface and analysing the samples. It will also demonstrate night survival on the moon.

Chandrayaan 5: Its launch slot is between 2025 and 2030. It will include a land-based rotor percussive drilling machine to drill up to 5 meters into the moon's surface and analyse the samples on-site. The landing site is proposed to be in a

volcanically and tectonically active area on the near side of the moon.

Chandrayaan 6: This will be launched between 2030 and 2035. It will also do on-site drilling but the collected samples will be taken back to earth for further analysis.

The Chandrayaan Odyssey to the Moon – how it is done

A rocket cannot be fired to send a spacecraft directly (like an arrow) from the Earth to the moon and make it land on the moon. Firstly, the orbit of the spacecraft around the earth should be increased gradually. It should be in an elliptical orbit. Each time the spacecraft comes closest to the earth in its orbit a rocket in it should be fired to push it into farther orbit. As the orbit is increased it crosses the earth's gravitational field and reaches the moon's gravitational field. A rocket is fired again to make the spacecraft orbit around the moon. There the length of Chandrayaan's orbit around the moon should be gradually decreased to facilitate the smooth landing of its lander on the lunar surface.

As the lander comes down to the moon's surface, algorithms are worked out and a camera and laser sensor spectrometer are used to judge the distance and to help in soft landing. Even before landing the Lander takes many photos of the moon's surface. An area of 100 km by 38 km is chosen for landing. If there are any problems in the designated area, the lander can also be made to land a little farther away. Even after landing, Laser Guided Breaking Spectroscopy in-built in the Lander can be used to break any rocks found in the landing area.

Sidelights

The then President Dr. Abdul Kalam was very much interested in the Chandrayaan and other space programmes as he was

a space scientist. The ISRO team met the President Dr. Abdul Kalam while the Chandrayaan-1 was in the final stages. Dr Kalam asked them to add a Moon Impact Probe to the orbiter so that it can drop on the moon's surface while orbiting. He said the impact probe will send many valid data about the moon. The ISRO scientists complied with it and added the probe. The result was stunning. India became the first country to find water on the moon's surface. The impact probe transmitted the presence of water molecules through spectrum detection before crashing. This was singularly a great achievement by Indian scientists while no other country could find water on the lunar surface.

Divine blessings: Ahead of the launch of Chandrayaan 3, a team of ISRO scientists offered prayers at Tirupati Venkatachalapathy Temple with a miniature model of Chandrayaan-3 and sought blessings from Lord Venkatachalapathy for the smooth launch and success of the mission. Before every major mission, it is usual practice for ISRO scientists to offer prayers at the Tirupati temple seeking divine blessings for success.



**ISRO team after seeking
divine blessings from
Tirupati Temple**

Conclusion: Chandrayaan 3 represents another bold step for India in its pursuit of scientific research and lunar exploration. The mission holds the key to further understanding the Moon and its mysteries. With the wholesome support of the Government of India and a team of brilliant and dedicated scientists involved, Chandrayaan 3 will undoubtedly be a significant milestone in India's space odyssey. PreSense wishes ISRO and Chandrayaan 3 mission a great success.

ISRO Makes History with the Successful Placing of Tiranga on the Moon's South Pole

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (August 2023)



The Scientists who made India proud

The great Tamil Poet Maha Kavi Subramania Bharatiyar, way back in 1908 (125 years ago), wrote that India, after independence, should develop Science and Technology to explore the sky, sea, and even the Moon. He wrote:

"வானையளப்போம் கடல் மீனையளப்போம் | சந்திர
மண்டலத்தியல் கண்டு தெளிவோம்.

The dream of Maha Kavi Bharathiyar came true at 6:04 PM on August 23, 2023, when Chandrayaan 3, launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), soft-landed the Vikram Lander on the South Pole of the Moon. The landing was highly precise after a flawless journey of nearly 4.80 lakh kilometres. Thus, India became the first country to land on the South Pole of the Moon and the fourth country to land on the Moon, next to the Soviet Union, America, and China. The entire world watched the landing live, and the ISRO team is

getting greetings from across the world. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi watched the landing live from South Africa, where he was attending the BRICS Summit, and dedicated this great achievement to the Nation. He further said this will benefit not only India but also the whole world.



The success of Chandrayaan 3 is a major achievement for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and a testament to the country's growing capabilities in space exploration. It is also a major boost to India's prestige on the world stage.

The Chandrayaan Project was first announced in 1998 by the then-Prime Minister Vajpayee during the Independence Day address. The Chandrayaan programme was first conceived in 2003, and the first mission, Chandrayaan-1, was launched in 2008. Chandrayaan-1 made several significant discoveries, including the presence of water on the moon. For the first time, it was only India that told the world the moon had water.

The second mission, Chandrayaan-2, was launched in 2019. Though the lander, Vikram, and the rover, Pragyan, crashed during their descent to the lunar surface, this project was not considered a failure. It had a 90% success rate. The images sent by this project were used in designing and planning Chandrayaan 3. The orbiter used in this project was also used in Chandrayaan 3.

After analysing the causes of the crash at the last moment, the ISRO team planned Chandrayaan 3 with more new features. The Chandrayaan 3 mission was launched in July 2023.



The landing of Vikram on the moon's south pole was difficult, as the terrain was very rugged and uneven. However, the ISRO team was able to overcome these challenges and achieve a successful landing.

The most important aspect of this project is that the entire initiative was designed and executed by Indian scientists using only Indian products. During Chandrayaan 2 planning, the countries that promised to support India backed out. This forced India to design its own engines and rockets with our team. Now India is in a position to carry the payloads of other countries as well.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Mayilsamy Annadurai, Dr Vanitha Muthaiah, Dr. Veera Muthuvel, and Dr. Subbiah Arunan, the Project Directors of Chandrayaan 1, 2, 3, and Mangalyaan hail from ordinary families from small towns in Tamil Nadu. They had their primary education in government

schools in Tamil Medium only. Many women scientists across the country also played an important part in the success of the Chandrayaan programme. All of them have made India proud at the global level. We should also congratulate Dr. K. Sivan, the former Chief of ISRO, and Dr. Somnath, the present Chief of ISRO, for their guidance and passion. As this edition is being readied, the Chandrayaan-3's Pragyaan rover has smoothly landed on the moon's surface and is all set to probe and send the data to the ground station via lander.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with women scientists during his visit to ISRO on 26th August 2023

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited ISRO in Bengaluru on 26th August 2023 to greet all the scientists. He also appreciated the women scientists who have played a key role in the Mission. He named the landing location of Chandrayaan 2 as 'Tiranga' and Chandrayaan 3 as 'Shiva Sakthi'. He also declared that in future, 23rd August every year will be celebrated as 'National Space Day'.

In spite of all the challenges, the ISRO team has made every Indian proud globally. PreSense prays to God Almighty to bless the ISRO team with enough strength to achieve more milestones in the future.

Empowering Indian Women: Parliament Passes Landmark Women's Reservation Bill - Reserving One-Third of Seats for Women

By Priyadarshni Rahul, Editor (Sep 2023)



Indian Parliament made history during the Special Session held in September 2023 in the new building named 'Sansad Bhavan' by passing the 128th Constitution Amendment Bill that provides one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and other State Assemblies. In the historic event, Lok Sabha passed the Bill on 20th September 2023 with 454 members voting in favour and 2 against. The Rajya Sabha on 21st September 2023 passed the Bill with 214 voting in favour and none against.

It is historic in the sense that the Constitutional Amendment could be passed in both Houses of Parliament after 27 years. Though the Bill was introduced in 1996 for the first time, this could not be passed due to differences of views among the parties. The Bill was introduced several times without getting passed. Modi Government made efforts to bring consensus

among the parties to get the Bill passed in both Houses. This being a Constitutional Amendment Bill, it needs to be ratified by 50 per cent of the State Assemblies. All the parties have agreed to this Bill, it will get ratified by the State Assemblies too within two or three months. After the assent by the President, the Bill will become effective.

Presently, the current Lok Sabha has only 14 per cent of the women members. The State Assemblies in India account for less than 10 per cent of the women members. Now this amendment enables one-third of the seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies to be reserved for women. This includes the reserved constituencies for SCs and STs.

The one-third women reservation will come into effect only for the 2029 General elections because as per Article 82 of the Indian Constitution, the Census has to be completed, before Delimitation Commission is appointed. The Delimitation Commission is to be headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge. The Delimitation Commission will go through the Census data and mark the constituencies for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, including the reserved ones.



Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced the historic bill in the Lok Sabha

The Census was not held in 2021 due to corona pandemic and is likely to start only after the General Elections in 2024. It may take even two years. The Delimitation Commission will be appointed for marking the new constituencies by 2026 and it may take another two years. The Election Commission does not have any authority to mark the constituencies. They can conduct only elections. The procedures are enshrined in

Article 82 of the Indian Constitution. In view of this, the new reservation quota for women can come into force only from 2029, provided nobody challenges the amendment in the Supreme Court.

Some of the political parties allege that the ruling party made this amendment in a hurry when there was no urgency. In our view, this Bill has been pending for more than 27 years for various political reasons. PreSense appreciates the Modi Government for bringing this legislation now when there is a consensus among the political parties and getting it passed. This Bill is long overdue. We may not know what will happen in the future with ever-changing political views. The Parliament has passed this amendment and hence there would be pressure on the new Government to start the census and form the Delimitation Commission for implementing this amendment.

Since this eMagazine PreSense has been honouring the top performing Parliamentarians with Sansad Ratna Awards since 2009, we have observed that women Parliamentarians, though in small numbers, perform better with high-quality participation. It may be noted that both in the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha, Supriya Sule (NCP, Maharashtra) is maintaining the No. 1 position among the MPs in the overall performance.

PreSense also takes pride that Arjun Ram Meghwal, the Minister for Law and Justice and also the Chairman of the Jury Committee of Sansad Ratna Awards (an initiative of this eMagazine PreSense) has piloted this historic Bill in the Parliament.

While congratulating the Government and all political parties for the historic decision, PreSense is of the view that this will empower Indian women more in governance.

Please visit <https://tinyurl.com/womenbill2023>

PreSense: A Beacon of Positivity in the Digital Age

By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (October 2023)



It is a great honour and privilege for me to write this Editorial for the 200th edition of PreSense. This eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 at the valuable suggestion of Dr Abdul Kalam for positive journalism. Originally it was started as an eMagazine for communication-related topics, but after the 61st edition, we shifted our focus to the general category also covering almost all topics, including health, politics, environment, social issues, Indian heritage, culture, and education, etc. that impact the society. The tagline 'Communicate the Communication' was changed to 'Spreading the positive vibrations' from the 61st edition.

We consciously maintain that to date PreSense should be non-commercial and run with eminent volunteers, without seeking advertisements. Until now, braving all challenges, we release the editions every month without fail on the first day of every month. It was possible because of the dedication and

commitment of the editorial team. The feedback and encouragement from our readers have added to our enthusiasm.

Without compromising on our values and ethics, we are able to publish our eMagazine PreSense with high-quality articles.

Running a monthly magazine is always challenging, and that too with positivity. The Editorial team has to provide something new and interesting each and every month, on any subject, that the audience does not know earlier. This needs a lot of research and discussion with relevant people.

While negative journalism and sensational news attract a large audience, positive stories attract less number of audience. In the digital era, one can find a large number of hits on stories that are sensational, but of no importance for society.

In the midst of all these challenges, PreSense has successfully published its 200th monthly edition, maintaining the highest values and ethics. In the process, we are fully satisfied that we are able to maintain the highest level of credibility among the people who matter.

I should also place on record the encouragement and motivation given by Dr Abdul Kalam and Dr Y S Rajan for running this eMagazine with all positivity. Dr Abdul Kalam encouraged us by giving several exclusive interviews to PreSense, while major mainline newspapers were waiting for his time. He also encouraged us to publish cartoons every month. He launched the cartoon Character 'Prince' created by Triambak Sharma and till now, we have published 185 cartoons with Prince. He was a regular reader of our eMagazine and a fan of Prince cartoons. We miss him when we are celebrating the 200th edition.

PreSense not only contributes to digital journalism. Its other initiatives like the Education Loan Task Force, Sansad Ratna Awards, Next Gen Political Leaders and Digital Journalists Association of India also contribute to the benefit of society and strengthen our democracy, in a humble way.

Though we started in a humble manner in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr Abdul Kalam, today, we feel proud that we are able to contribute to society like a squirrel, maintaining the highest credibility. It could be possible only because of the past and current editorial team members and readers. PreSense is a standing example of positivity having a space in society.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, we assure all the readers that we will continue to maintain the highest level of values and ethics and retain the credibility earned by us over the years.

I dedicate the entire success story to God Almighty, without His Grace, nothing could be possible.

Sarvam Sri Krishnarpanam.

Jai Hind

Building Bridges to Peace: Charting a Path Beyond the Gaza-Israel Crisis and Ukraine Conflict

By Ramesh Sundaram, Editor-in-Chief (November 2023)

(The editorial discusses the Hamas-Israel war causing suffering in Gaza. It recounts events, media influence, India's stance, condemns attacks, urges peace talks, UN involvement, and emphasizes global cooperation for a war-free world.)



The Hamas-Israel war is causing untold misery to innocent Israelis and to hapless Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Not only that, the war along with the still ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is posing a huge humanitarian crisis. The peaceful existence of humanity is threatened because of these wars.

This editorial briefly describes the sequence of events on how the Hamas-Israeli war unfolded and also a critical analysis of the situation.

On October 7, 2023, the Hamas group conducted a surprise terror attack on Israel. The Israelis who were usually alert were caught napping. In this inhuman attack, other than Israeli soldiers, many civilians including innocent children were targeted, tortured, and killed gruesomely and taken hostages. Many nations considered this a blatant terror attack. Within hours, Israel began a counter-offensive against Hamas. The US condemned the Hamas terror attack and reaffirmed its support for Israel. The Vatican also offered mediation. The Qatar acted as a mediator. Due these prolonged efforts, Israel

and Hamas agreed to a temporary ceasefire in Gaza. As this issue goes for publication, Israel has continued the war after a six-day ceasefire. The picture has become very gloomy again.

The role of media in shaping public perception and influencing the narrative of the conflict cannot be overstated. News outlets on both sides presented their perspectives, contributing to the polarization of opinions. The digital age facilitated the rapid spread of information, misinformation, and propaganda, making it challenging for the global audience to discern the truth amidst the noise. The media should play a non-biased and constructive role in bringing the war to an end.

India's position:

In the wake of the Hamas attack on October 7, Modi has issued a strong statement in support of Israel. He initially tweeted, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel." Later Ministry of External Affairs released the Government's formal position repeating the condemnation of the Hamas attack but also reminding Israel of its "universal obligation to observe international humanitarian law' while fighting the menace of terrorism..."

It also reiterated its "long-standing and consistent" position on the Palestine issue. "India wants direct negotiations towards establishing... a sovereign, independent, and viable state of Palestine", Foreign Ministry spokesman Mr. Bagchi said. He described India's position on the Palestine issue as "longstanding and consistent", The spokesman said the government would like to see negotiations leading to a Palestine state "living within secure and recognised borders, side-by-side (and) at peace with Israel. That position remains the same."

Analysis: The terror attack on Israel by Hamas and that too targeting civilians and innocent children should be condemned unequivocally. The killing, torture, and beheading of innocent people was very inhuman and dastardly. It was further exacerbated by taking hostages and kidnapping them to Gaza. It does not bode well at all.

Though Israel has the right to counterattack, its continuing occupation and attack on Gaza cause untold misery to innocent citizens living there. These attacks have caused the death of many citizens for no fault of them.

Resolving the Hamas-Israel conflict requires a comprehensive and all-inclusive approach. International diplomacy must address the root causes of the conflict while considering the legitimate grievances and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians. A commitment to dialogue, mutual recognition, and a just two-state solution as put forward by India, may be the most viable path forward, though achieving consensus on these issues is an arduous task.

Both parties should hold a direct dialogue and bring an end to this mayhem. The UN should step in to resolve the issue. Israel should withdraw back to its original border and Hamas should not attack Israel. A benevolent Government can be set up in Palestine which will have total control over Gaza Strip and West Bank. A peace treaty has to be signed by the warring nations like Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine to bring about a permanent peace solution in West Asia. A UN Peacekeeping Force can be stationed between Palestine and Israel that will act both as a buffer and monitor the situation in the area. A case in point



was the deployment of UN Peacekeeping forces between Egypt and Israel after the Israel-Egypt war in 1957. In the last 75 years, more than one million men and women from 125 countries have served in 71 peacekeeping missions worldwide. They are very effective in defusing the situation.

All said and done, the inhumane terror attacks should be put to an end, not only in Palestine but in the whole world itself.

Last but not least the border issues have to be settled without ambiguity. In this effort, India, which has good relations with both Israel and Palestine, along with the UN can play a big role in ironing out this vexatious issue.

A peaceful world without any war should be the ultimate goal of all the countries of this world to save humanity from untold suffering. Let us not remain pessimist. Let us make the beginning. A new world order where all nations coexist may be a distant dream now but it may become a reality one day or other. The famous Indian adage `Vasudeva g' meaning "people of the world belong to one family" is apt in this demeaning warring situation.

Unity Beyond Politics: Reflections on Winter Session 2023

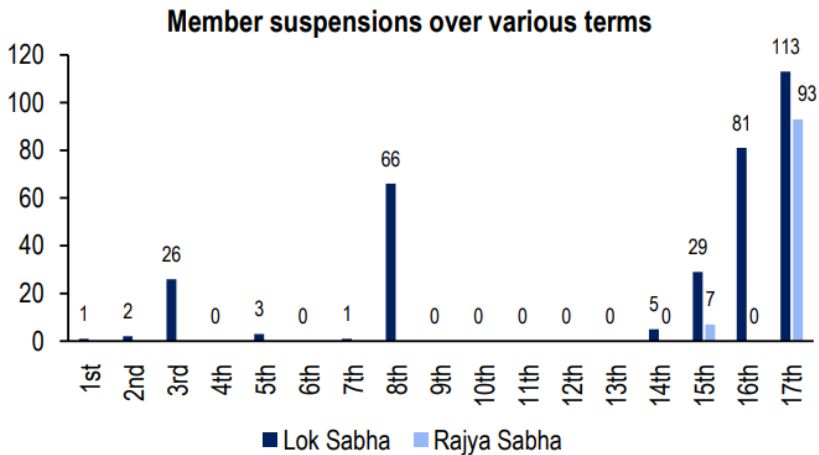
By Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor (Dec 2023)

(Winter Session 2023 raises democracy concerns, marked by disruptions and a security breach. Plea for unity, mature leadership, and opposition vitality. BJP urged to engage in dialogue. Strengthening democracy demands collaboration.)

The recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament in 2023 has raised serious concerns among the public regarding the functionality of democracy. Commencing on December 4, 2023, and concluding on December 21, the Winter Session witnessed disruptions and suspensions. The Lok Sabha functioned for 74% of the scheduled time, and the Rajya Sabha for 81%.

The spark that ignited heightened concerns occurred on December 13 with an unprecedented security breach. Two intruders jumped from the visitor's gallery into the Chamber, highlighting vulnerabilities in the security systems of the new Parliament House. Despite the Speaker initiating a high-powered investigation and proposing measures for future safety, opposition members disrupted the House. They demanded a response from the Prime Minister and a discussion in the House.

Frequent disruptions led to numerous adjournments in both Houses. This resulted in an unprecedented move by the Government to suspend 146 MPs (100 from Lok Sabha and 46 from Rajya Sabha) in a single stroke. This is the first time, a large-scale suspension has happened in the post-Independent era. Media responses varied, expressing both support and



Graphics Courtesy: PRS India

opposition to these suspensions. With a significant absence of opposition members, the Government proceeded with legislative business. Crucial bills, including a new criminal law bill, press regulation bill, and telecom bill, were passed.

Historically, opposition parties, notably led by Congress, have engaged in disruptions on flimsy grounds in the current 17th Lok Sabha. Apart from causing disruptions, a faction of opposition members exhibited unethical behaviour within the complex, protesting against the suspensions. The regrettable incident of Kalyan Banerjee, a TMC member, mimicking Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, was captured by Rahul Gandhi on his mobile, gaining viral attention. Even the President of India and the Prime Minister expressed concern over such behaviour. Even Mamta Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, and an ally of Congress also slammed Rahul Gandhi for his act of recording in his mobile and making it viral.



Kalyan Banerjee mimicking the Vice President and Rahul Gandhi recording in his mobile

The opposition's call for an open discussion in Parliament is deemed highly irresponsible. With a high-powered investigation already ordered, discussing a national security threat openly before cameras is not prudent. Instead, the opposition can demand the Government engage in closed discussions to address the crisis facing the nation and the parliamentary democracy.

PreSense, in various editions, has highlighted how during the Narasimha Rao Government, both ruling and opposition parties collaborated in times of economic and external threats. Narasimha Rao deputed the Opposition leader Vajpayee to the United Nations to speak on behalf of the Indian Government. That gesture sent a strong signal across the world that India was united on major issues. Unfortunately, today's political landscape lacks mature opposition leaders like Vajpayee or Advani, who prioritised national interests over politics.

Given the Congress's role as the largest opposition party, they must introspect and nurture a leader with a high level of thinking beyond politics. A senior leader like Rahul Gandhi video capturing the mimicking indicates the lack of guidance by experienced leaders. Senior leaders like Pranab Mukherjee, Dr. Veerappa Moily, A. K. Antony, Gulam Nabi Azad, and Ahmed Patel would not have allowed such things.

For a robust democracy, a nation requires not only a strong ruling party but also a vibrant opposition. PreSense hopes Congress recognizes its role in the nation's development and develops leadership that thinks beyond political considerations. They were ruling the country for more than 50 years. Even now, several leaders with expertise in governance are with Congress. They have to be involved in developing next-level leadership.

Simultaneously, the ruling BJP should extend invitations to opposition leaders for dialogue outside the Parliament to resolve sensitive issues. Allegations against the BJP for passing bills without committee references and without discussions in the House and the vacant position of Deputy Speaker in the 17th Lok Sabha need to be addressed.

India stands as the world's largest and most robust democracy. Strengthening democracy necessitates collaborative efforts between ruling and opposition parties, respecting the meticulously crafted Constitution by our freedom fighters.

Some of our Publications



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