



SPEAKS

Editorials 2022

**Compiled by
Prime Point Srinivasan
(Mg. Editor, PreSense)**

**Prime Point Foundation
Chennai**

Editorials 2022

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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



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New Delhi-110011

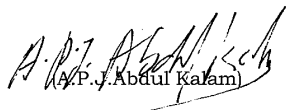
FOREWORD

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)


Journey of Ezine 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 2022

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 – March 2023

Publisher and Managing Editor	K. Srinivasan (Prime Point Srinivasan)
Consulting Editors	T N Ashok , Former Editor, Press Trust of India and freelance Journalist at Delhi C Badri , Former General Manager, Canara Bank and CVO, IOB, Chennai Ramesh Sundaram , Senior Journalist, Ex The Hindu
Editor	Priyadharshni Rahul , Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Delhi
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Technical Advisor	Srinivas Gopal



**PRIME POINT
Foundation**

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 23 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.

PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till Feb 2023, the Foundation has published 192 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. .

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 2022, the Foundation has conducted 12 editions and presented 90 Awards. IIT Madras was the supporting Partner up to the 9th Edition. 10th Edition was held at Raj Bhavan, Tamil Nadu. 11th and 12th Editions was 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.

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.



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.

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.



Preface to the Seventh Edition of 'PreSense Speaks' series

On behalf of the Editorial Team of PreSense, we present the Seventh edition of 'PreSense Speaks' Series, covering the Editorials published by us in 2022. The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, for positive journalism. In March 2023, PreSense completed 17 years. We have published 192 editions till Feb 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 Seventh edition of PreSense Speaks Series contains the Editorials published by us in 2022. We release this edition, coinciding with the 17th Anniversary of our eMagazine PreSense.

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
25th March 2023

Editorials Published in PreSense - 2022

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 K. Srinivasan, Managing 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 K. Srinivasan, Managing 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.

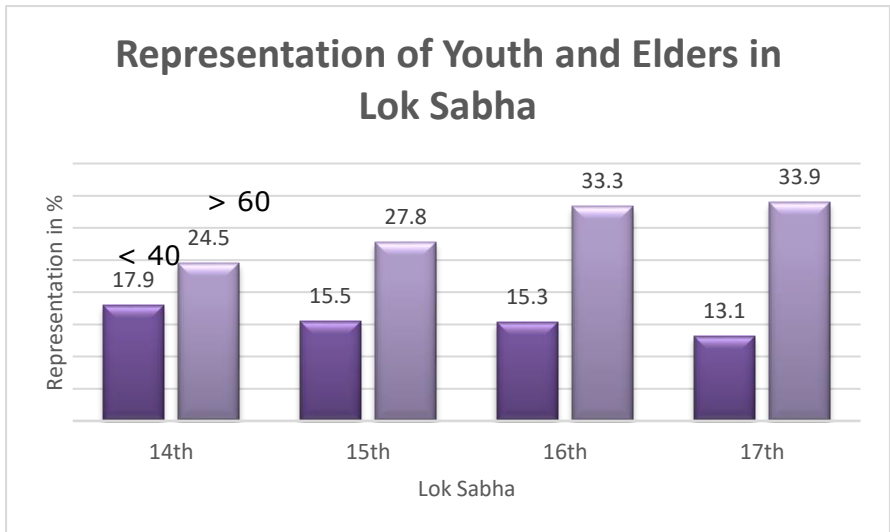
India is the world's largest democracy. Unless the Parliamentary system functions effectively, we cannot boast of an effective democracy.

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

By K. Srinivasan, Managing 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 K. Srinivasan, Managing 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



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

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.

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 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.



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

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)

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.

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.

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 Sheikh Abdullah), Samajwadi Party (founded by Mulayam Singh Yadav), JDS (founded by Deve Gowda), RJD (founded by Lalu 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 Dhumal, 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.

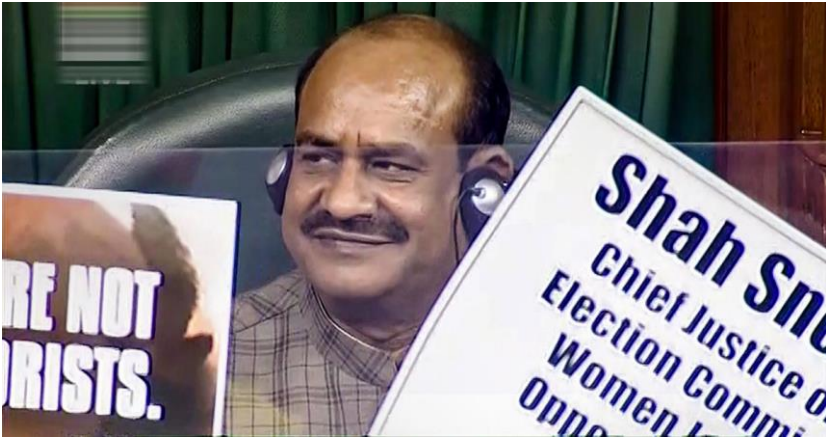
There are also allegations against the political families that they have amassed wealth using their political powers. When the political equations change, they are subjected to enquiries, investigation and court cases.

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 (Aug 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 (Sep 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 2008 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 (Oct 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 wrecked 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 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, Mg. 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 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.

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