

Marxism—A Theory Of Economic Fundamentalism

Introspection Time For Marxists

(A) Marxism Under Scrutiny

1. As the Soviet Union says good bye to its 74 year old state ideology, the latter has again come under scrutiny by both its protagonists and opponents. But this time, the debate is far less interesting than it had been at the time East European countries were bidding farewells to Marxism about three years ago.

(B) Repetition Of Old Stories

2. Arguing their cases, both the Marxists and the anti-Marxists have come forward with the oft-repeated stories. The Marxists have quoted the same worn-out narrative of Revisionism/ Adventurism, while the anti-Marxists have recounted the same old tale of Marxism being a 'falsehood'.

(C) Marxian Thesis Of Revisionism/Adventurism

3. This thesis explains every setback to a Marxist party or government either in terms of Revisionism or Adventurism. A revisionist is one who is sometimes a conscious capitalist agent and sometimes a planted one within the Communist Party or its government. An adventurer is one who harms the Communist Party or its government either by his adventurer understanding of Marxism or of the concrete conditions. In no case, this thesis finds any short-coming in Marxist theory as handed down by its prophets, even if the theory conflicts with reality.

4. But this thesis fails to answer as to why a revisionist saboteur (e.g., Khrushchov in the Soviet Union) or adventurer (e.g., Lin Piao in China) was able to spoil the rational communist show, why he succeeded to deceive a conscious party and well-awakened people, why the Marxist force of 'Historical

Determinism' did not throw him out, why did the US and so many West European countries not break up where so many revisionists rule, why the party equipped with the 'scientific outlook' did not sack him in time, why not the 'new man' created by the communist states stood up to defend the communist paradise, why the Soviet people were completely alienated even to the extent of demolishing the statues of the great Marxist leaders, like Lenin and others (though an unhistorical act).

(D) Anti-Marxists' Theme Of Marxism's Falsehood

5. This theme highlights that since many communist countries had discarded Marxism, it stands nullified in reality.

6. But this theme lacks rationality on two counts. Firstly, it makes a sweeping generalisation about Marxism as 'untruthful', without making any logical analysis, showing both Marxism's rights and wrongs. Secondly, it discriminates against Marxism by declaring it a falsehood, while not similarly dealing with many other social theories (such as Social Democracy, Keynesianism, Monetarism, etc.) which too have worked only partially. It further avoids touching the religious theories whose main theses about Nature and Society are irreconcilable with the Natural and Social reality.

(E) Need For Marxism's Rational Review

7. Since Marxism is being distorted by the two extremes—one pronouncing it as the scientific truth and the other posing it as falsehood, it is necessary to review the main propositions of Marxism as they actually stand.

(F) Definition Of Marxism

8. A broad definition of Marxism, in brief, is that it is a system of thought concerning the general laws operating in Nature, Society and Thought. It consists of six main divisions—Marxist Philosophy, Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Theory of Capitalism, State and Revolution, Socialism and Communism.

(G) Marxist Philosophy

9. The Marxist philosophy, in brief, expresses the central thesis of Marxism which, according to its propounders, is the relation between Matter and Human Consciousness. The answer to this query, as provided by Marx, Engles, Lenin and other Marxist leaders, is that matter (or nature) is primary, while human

consciousness (or man) is secondary.

10. The above thesis, however, sees only one side of reality and ignores the other, as is evident from the following facts.

11. Firstly, the above thesis, by permanently placing matter/human consciousness relationship in the primary-secondary position, relegates man to the subordinate place forever, despite the fact that, in given conditions, sometimes nature develops man and sometimes man transforms nature. For instance, in given conditions, nature develops man through its various processes of air, water, food, gravitation, etc., and, similarly, in given conditions, man transforms nature by manufacturing steel, glass and so many other material objects.

12. Secondly, the above thesis has given rise to the Reflectionist (or photographic) theory of knowledge (upheld both by Engles and Lenin) according to which human consciousness is merely a reflection of matter. But this does not fully reconcile with facts. Because if consciousness is only a reflection of matter, then why do two persons express different opinions about the same thing at the same time and place. More, if consciousness is simply a copy of phenomena, then wherefrom does false consciousness (e.g., Hegel's mysticism, according to Marx) arise or what is the materiality of such consciousness. If the material basis of consciousness lies in a social class (as maintained by Marx), then there should be as many conceptions of the sun as many classes there are. And there should be the same reflection on the question of strike among various concerned workers. If the basis of consciousness lies in the party, then why reflection varies between different members of the communist party. If consciousness emerges from economic environment, then why two brothers living in a joint family fail to adopt the same approach on their various household problems.

13. The said facts clearly show that consciousness depends not only on the material object, but also the subject. Man's brain is not a merely passive recipient of sense data, but an active interpreter of it. The stimuli received by the senses is transmitted as information to the brain where it is interpreted largely on the basis of available experience stored in a variety of mental structures, including memory. This explains why the reflection of falling apple led to the formation of the Law of Gravitation by Newton, though hundreds of thousands of people had been observing the said phenomenon for a very long time. This also shows why an average person and a botanist derive different

sensations from the retinal stimuli of a tree (due to the different dimensions of their experiences). Similarly, an engineer's observation and view of a building is different from that of a layman or a physician's examination of a patient varies from that of a witch doctor (because of the differences in their perceptual knowledge).

14. Thirdly, the thesis of the dominant status of matter (or social being) and the subordinate position of human consciousness places the initiative for knowledge in the objective and denies any important role to the subjective, though experience shows that many important scientific theories (e.g., Copernicus theory, Einstein theory, etc.) have been developed by man on the basis of hypothesis (proceeding from assumption to verification). In this way, human consciousness has acted as a causal force in history.

15. In the initiation or origination of the ideas, sometimes the matter or object takes the initiative (e.g., light) by acting on our sense organs, while man responds. When man takes the initiative on the basis of his hypothesis, the matter or the object responds.

16. Fourthly, the concept of the dominant status of matter (or social being) and the subordinate position of human consciousness (or man) permanently gives first position to the general and second to the individual. It means that natural or social development automatically implants consciousness in the human being without a person's individual initiative. But experience shows that no one learns anything automatically. It is only through a gradual process of self-effort that one comes to know something about any branch of knowledge.

17. The foregoing facts point out that, by one-sidedly viewing reality, it presents a one-sided explanation of the relationship between matter and human consciousness (or man).

18. However, while presenting a one-sided central thesis, Marxism has made three positive statements about Reality—nothing is absolute and eternal; everything is under constant change; and, universe and its various processes are knowable.

(H) Dialectical Materialism

19. The Dialectical Materialism, in brief, discloses the general laws of the development of Nature, Society and Thought, as analysed by Marxism.

20. The positive aspect of Dialectical Materialism is that it is an attempt to explain the behaviour of reality in terms of science. Its

negative aspect is that instead of presenting its analysis as a hypothesis or a model, it patents it in the form of universal laws, despite the fact that the human scientific knowledge is at a very very low level to draw any final conclusion about the behaviour of reality.

21. Dialectical Materialism deals with three laws—the law of contradiction, the law of transformation from quantity to quality and the law of the negation of the negation. Of these three laws, the first one is the fundamental law, while the other two are only supplementary.

(i) Law Of Contradiction

22. This law emphasises contradiction or struggle as the sole factor of change or transformation in all processes. Lenin had said that "Development is the struggle of opposites."

23. The contradiction or struggle, however, reflects only one feature of the operation of reality and obscures the other, as is evident from the practice of various natural sciences. For instance, in given conditions, the unity between the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen produces water, while, in other given conditions, the disunity in the molecules of water splits it into hydrogen and oxygen. At a given point, the unity between the atoms of iron, carbon, nickel and chromium creates steel, while glass is produced through the unity of atoms of sand, soda-ash and lime-stone. The unity between the protons and the neutrons constitutes the nucleus of an atom. There are 274 different combinations of protons and neutrons, called stable nuclides, known so far. Light is a combination of three basic colours—red, blue and green. Air is a mixture of gasses. Petrol is a combination of hydrogen and carbon. Ordinary salt is made up of the unity between chlorine and sodium. There are hundreds of thousands of chemical compounds. Sun's light and heat is produced through fusion-reactions where hydrogen is converted into helium. All types of life is made up of oxygen, carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen (whose combinations constitute proteins, carbohydrates and fats) plus some minerals and vitamins. There are 92 different kinds of atoms known so far. The 106 elements yet known to science are different kinds of arrangements of different atoms in space and so on. Similarly, in society, both unity and struggle, in given conditions play their respective roles.

24. For instance, in given conditions, the unity between certain persons constitutes a family. In another given conditions, the

disunity in a family splits it into two. In given conditions, the unity on a programme gives rise to a party. In another given conditions, a difference on policies or programme divides a party into two or more parts. In given conditions, the West Pakistan and the East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh) formed one country on a common basis. In another given conditions, their differences had split them into two countries.

25. Another one-sidedness of the fundamental law of contradiction is that it stresses only the internal contradiction as the motive force of development. Earlier, Mechanical Materialism maintained that motion was caused by an external force. But, in fact, both internal and external factors (through unity as well as struggle) play, at given times, their respective roles in the development of processes (e.g., lightning, an external factor, kills a man, or stone is grinded into sand by man, an external factor).

(ii) Law Of The Transformation From Quantity To Quality

26. This law maintains that when sufficient quantitative changes are accumulated, only then the qualitative change follows—thus making the quality dependent upon the quantity. But the scientific facts show that both quantity and quality are closely inter-related. For instance, every atom has its specific number and mass. Every element contains specific number of atoms. Hydrogen has its one atom, helium two and carbon six. The mass of a body is a measure of its energy content, i.e., $E=MC^2$. An alteration of atomic number and arrangement produces different chemical compounds. The addition of one atom to the two atoms of an oxygen molecule changes it into ozone. Every type of food contains a given quantity of energy measured in calories (e.g., one gram of fat contains nine calories). Differences in colours are due to differences in their electro-magnetic wave-lengths, and so on.

(iii) Law Of Negation Of Negation

27. This law regards that, in the final analysis, a process is negated by another. But this does not reconcile with facts. For example, a change from water to ice does not negate the former, since ice, in given conditions, transforms itself into water. Reverse changes in physical processes (e.g., air, gasses, etc.) are of common occurrence. In general, the final outcome of the development of a process is its transformation into another

process. Transformation is not negation. Negation denotes breach in the continuity of space, time, energy, matter, etc., while transformation signifies the latter's continuity with change. Negation negates the scientific concept of indestructibility of space, time, energy and matter.

28. The foregoing facts show that the said three laws of Dialectical Materialism view different processes of reality in a one-sided way.

(I) Historical Materialism

29. Historical Materialism, according to Marxism, is the scientific theory of social development. It consists of the following main propositions:

(i) The material production or the mode of production is the chief determining factor of social development.

(ii) The mode of production consists of two components—the production forces and the production relations. A contradiction between them is the dynamic of social change.

(iii) The production relations constitute the economic basis from which arises the super-structure, i.e., the political and cultural ideas and institutions.

(iv) The contradiction between the production forces and production relations is resolved through class struggle, which is the source of development of human society.

(v) The people are the makers of history.

(vi) What distinguishes men from other animals is their social production.

(vii) Man is a social animal.

(viii) Labour has created man.

(ix) Technology is neutral.

(i) Mode Of Production

30. As regards the Marxian proposition of the mode of production being the determining factor in social development, this is a positive statement. But it only offers a partial explanation of reality. This is because material production satisfies only one of the three biological urges, the other two being; (i) the security of life from any confronting danger and (ii) the reproduction of human species or the sex urge. These three biological urges are of equal importance and one of them occupies the primary position at a given time with the other two in the supplementary role. The non-biological (or social) urges of man include; (i) the

urge for freedom of body and mind, (ii) the urge for power and fame, (iii) the urge to create something, (iv) the urge to win everywhere, (v) the urge to be free from fear, (vi) the urge to serve others, (vii) the urge for revenge, etc. Sometimes, even one of the non-biological urges comes to the top and plays the primary role. The daily occurrences in one's individual and social life show the importance of each one of the above impulses. For example, Einstein's theory of Relativity, Indira Gandhi's assassination or the abdication of his throne by the British king, Edward VIII, etc., were not caused by the economic factors.

(ii) Production Forces And Production Relations

31. As regards the Marxian proposition of contradiction between the production forces and production relations as the dynamic of social change, this is not confirmed by facts. The Marxian inference that the widening contradiction between the stagnant capitalist production relations in the capitalist countries and the continuous changing capitalist character of their production forces into socialist one due to scientific technological advance will cause the collapse of capitalist system and its transformation into the socialist/communist one had not proved its viability in any Western country. But the reverse has happened in reality.

(iii) Economic Basis And The Superstructure

32. As regards the Marxian proposition of the production relations or the economic basis giving rise to the superstructure, i.e., political and cultural ideas and institutions, this too is not verified by the facts. For example, why is it that, while the capitalist economic basis did reflect its essence of 'surplus value' to Marx, the same could not be transmitted to hundreds of thousands of European workers? If the above paradox is explained with the help of the well-known Marxian thesis showing the European workers incapacity to see the essence behind the appearance, then it clearly means that the capacity to distinguish between the appearance and the essence rests with the human thinking and not with the transmission of the economic basis.

33. As regards the class nature of the ideas, the experience and logic both point out that if the ideas had actually possessed class character, then Marxism should have easily found a fertile soil in the U.S., Japan and the West European countries and

elementary rationality would have motivated the world working class to carry out its own revolution.

(iv) Class Struggle

34. As regards the Marxian proposition of the class struggle being the source of social development, this too has not been verified by facts, past or present. The whole post-Marxian history shows that the actual proletariat (the most revolutionary class according to Marxism) has hardly waged any serious political struggle against the bourgeoisie. The past historical experience also shows that no class had ever waged class struggle on its own. This is, because the classes are not, and had not been, integrated, compact, disciplined and ideologically motivated social units at any time. In the pre-industrial period, the peasantry, in given conditions, had been siding sometimes with one prince and sometimes with the other, having remained always divided between princely pulls.

The modern working class too has more or less followed a similar pattern—one part swinging towards one trade union and the other tilting to the other. What to say of liberating mankind, the working class had not been able to unite itself and secure even a fair wage, especially in the third world. The communist parties, working in the name of the proletariat, had nowhere been able to motivate and organise the latter as a political unit. Even in the trade union sector, they do not hold any monopoly among the workers. They had been able to secure a political foothold only at places where they had projected a national image of their party.

(v) People As History Makers

35. As regards the Marxian proposition of people being the makers of history, this does not seem to fit within Marxian historical process according to which peoples' ideas come from economic basis that itself must conform to the production forces which themselves form part of the mode of production, the determining factor of social development.

(vi) Man's Distinguishing Feature

36. As regards the Marxian proposition of social production being the distinguishing feature of man from other animals, this represents a partial reality. Man differs from animals on two counts—biological and social. Biologically, he separated from the

animal world when his hands became free and his brain developed to the present human level. That is, when his thinking (brain) and practice (hands) developed close to the modern man. Socially, he differs from the animals in the making and using of tools which enable him to engage not only in social production but also to know more and more about the different natural processes.

(vii) Man—A Social Animal

37. As regards the Marxian proposition of man being a social animal, this too is a partial reality. This is, because human organism exists, moves and changes in accordance with the general biological law of the metabolic assimilation and dissimilation. The process of human birth, growth, decay and death follows the biological course. No doubt, social nature of man has become as important as his biological aspect. For instance, the articulate speech organ represents man's biological characteristic but his language and speech are social phenomena. Thus, contemporary historical man is bio-social—with each aspect, in turn, occupying the primary position, according to the given conditions.

(viii) Labour As The Creator Of Man

38. As regards the Marxian proposition of labour being the creator of man, this deviates from the right course on two points. Firstly, by emphasising labour alone, it ignores human consciousness. Consciousness and labour (i.e., practice) are two inseparable sides of man's nature. Practice produces consciousness and the latter guides the former. This is their inter-connection and inter-action—bringing sometimes practice to the fore and sometimes the consciousness. Secondly, man performs labour in relation to nature. His relation with nature is not a subject-object relation alone, but an object-subject relation too. In this relation of inter-actions, sometimes man transforms nature and sometimes the latter brings changes in the former.

(ix) Technology Being A Neutral Factor

39. As regards the Marxian proposition of technology being a neutral factor, this ignores the fact that every technology enforces its specific labour on man. It is man who adjusts his practice to the laws of the machine and not the other way round. Man creates technology, but is then bound by the latter's requirements.

(J) Theory Of Capitalism

40. The Marxian theory of capitalism is a critique of the contemporary social system as it exists in the western countries. The original theory had been created by Marx in his well-known work *Das Capital* (3 Volumes, 1867) and then further developed by Engles and Lenin.

41. The main formulations of the theory include the following thesis:

- * Capitalism is an exploitative social system. The main contradiction of the capitalist mode of production is that between the social character of its production forces and the private capitalist form of its production relations. It operates on the basis of commodity production. The labour embodied in a commodity determines the value of a commodity. The aim of the capitalist commodity production and the source of capitalist's enrichment is the creation of surplus value by the workers and its appropriation by the capitalist. The surplus value is the value created by the workers' labour over and above the value of his labour power. The production and appropriation of surplus value expresses the basic relations of capitalist production and the basic economic law of capitalism.

- * In the process of the capitalist development, labour is substituted by machinery and the anarchy of production gives rise to periodic economic crises. This results in the material misery of the masses, melting of the middle class and increase in the number of working class. With the development of capitalism, the degree of the exploitation of the working class increases, all the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production sharpen and the class struggle intensifies and becomes more fierce. With the preparation of the objective and the subjective conditions, the capitalist system is replaced by a higher social system, i.e., the communist one, through the proletarian revolution.

- * Lenin developed this theory (1917) by adding that since the beginning of the 20th century capitalism had developed into imperialism—a parasitic, decaying and moribund capitalism reaching its final stage.

- * After Lenin's death, the 3rd Communist International declared that capitalism has arrived at the 3rd stage of its general crisis and become historically outdated.

42. The Marxian theory of capitalism did not work at all in any capitalist country. The cause lies in the Marxian misconception of

capital, which considers capital only as a product of labour extracted through workers' exploitation by the capitalists. This misconception, firstly, ignores the role of technology which plays an equally important role in social production. The importance of technology can be seen from the fact that an automatic enterprise generates more surplus value (or profit) than any labour-intensive factory and that, despite surplus labour, the entire 3rd world (including China and Marxist West Bengal government) is suffering from the paucity of capital and hankering after new technology. In fact, technological resources and the human resources (i.e., mental and physical labour) are two inseparable components of capital—each of which plays the primary role at one time, with the other in the supplementary position. However, despite its one-sidedness, Marxian theory highlighted the role of human resources capital for the first time in history. Secondly, the Marxian misconception of capital overstressed the role of working class (the only creator of wealth according to Marxism) and denigrated that of the creators and promoters of technology.

43. Both these misconceptions failed to motivate the relatively more enlightened people (including the workers) of the Western countries, with the communist parties remaining marginal players. Besides, the technological progress in course of time improved not only social production but also living conditions in the West.

44. In technologically under-developed countries, Marxian theory did work in some countries. Here, the mass motivating factor was neither Marxian theory of capitalism nor working class internationalism, but anti-colonial nationalism and primitive equalitarianism.

(K) State And Revolution

45. The Marxian theory of State and Revolution, originating from the materialist historical understanding, misreads the state as an anti-people institution, prescribes its overthrow by the use of revolutionary violence, asks for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and forecasts the ultimate withering away of the state.

46. As regards the anti-people nature of the state, no anti-people institution can survive for thousands of years. What to say of the past, even the recent ruling communist parties, instead of weakening this institution, had further reinforced it. As regards the use of revolutionary force, it had been always related to a

given place and time in history and is ceasing to be a solution to the present-day problems. As regards the dictatorship of the proletariat, there had been no permanent historical agency to run the state and nor can there be such an agency in future. As regards the withering away of the state, there had been continuous changes in the nature and structure of the state according to the social changes. Even the present-day nation-state is under transformation towards a regional Confederal State—ultimately leading to an international centre. Whatever its nature and form, there is no possibility of the withering away of a democratic nucleus for the management of public affairs in the near future. By the way, nothing is final forever.

(L) Socialism And Communism

47. The Marxian theory of Socialism and Communism is a subjective theory which expects of the working class not only to liberate mankind but also to establish a communist paradise on this earth. It violates the rational principle of viewing everything in a given historical context.

(M) To Conclude

48. The foregoing evidence suggests that the explanation of reality and its various processes as made by Marxism is neither 'scientific truth' as claimed by the Marxists nor a 'falsehood' as advocated by the anti-Marxists. It is one-sided.

49. However, despite its one-sided approach about nature and society, Marx had broken new grounds and made certain useful additions to human thought, e.g., nothing being absolute and eternal in the world; everything being under constant change; universe and its various processes being knowable; contradiction being a (not the only) method of change; economy being an important (not the only) factor in social development; human resources (or labour) as a component (not the exclusive) of capital; social nature of man; and so on. Hence, he would always be ranked among the great thinkers of the world.

50. To accept the irrelevance of Marxism is highly shocking for those who have been treating it as a 'universal truth' and devotedly sacrificing for the Marxist cause. But there is no other way out except to come to terms with reality which always demands the rejection of dogmas, judgement of things on the basis of evidence and reviewing of all such concepts which begin to conflict with new facts and experiences. 26-09-1991

Gandhism—A Theory Of Reformed Hindu Humanism

I. An Extraordinary Personality

(1) “Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such a man as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.” This is what the great scientist, Albert Einstein, said about Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Many eminent non-Indians, among them Romaine Rolland, E.M. Forster, Arnold Toynbee, Aldous Huxley, Louis Fischer, Roosevelt, Churchill, Mac-Arthur, etc., had testified to Gandhi’s greatness. One western admirer described him as “the greatest Indian since Gautama, the Buddha, and the greatest man since Jesus Christ.”

(2) Among Gandhi’s Indian critics as well as admirers, Ram Manohar Lohia said, if I venture to talk of Gandhiji in this way (after criticising him for his Rajkot fast), I look upon him as a man who comes once in 10 centuries. Rabindra Nath Tagore, in an article in 1921, where he criticised the non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi, wrote: “Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the cottage door of the destitute millions, clad a one of themselves and talking to them in their own language. The thing that has happened is nothing less than the birth of freedom. It is the gain by the country itself.” Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on September 6, 1954, Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who often used to criticise Gandhi, said, “I respect him and I suggest (that) in the name of Mr. Gandhi, a Gandhi Trust Fund be created for (the) development or settlement of the untouchables. After all, the untouchables, according to all of us, were the nearest and dearest to him and there is no reason why Mr. Gandhi may not bless this project from heaven.”

II. Secret Of His Greatness

(3) What was the secret of his greatness? How do we interpret the man who began his life as a timid boy, often running home from

school lest the boys tease him; who could not resolve pre-1947 India’s most burning problem, i.e., the question of Hindu-Muslim relations, which led to India’s partition; who himself, after India’s division, openly admitted that his mission in life was a failure and who was assassinated by the bullet of a fanatic co-religionist? The reason lay in his ensemble of boundless personal qualities—utmost devotion to his cause, his conviction to link ends with means and his exemplary renunciation, i.e., self-denial in lifestyle (e.g., his abstinence from using political power and prestige which he enjoyed in total, for personal benefit, not hankering after any office, open admission of errors, humility, self-suffering, self-sacrifice, etc.). Thus, as a human being his virtues were enormous.

III. Real Issue Concerning Gandhism

(4) There has been considerable debate in this country over the greatness of Gandhi and Gandhism. But there has been little debate as to why his end product, i.e., communal partition of India into two parts, turned out to be something very different from what it was intended to be, i.e., freedom for a united India on the basis of Hindu-Muslim unity, why his strategy of national movement could not become relevant to the concrete reality of pre-1947 India and why it has continued to be inconsistent with even the post-1947 Indian reality. Obviously, such a discussion logically demands a critical review of the entire theory and practice of Gandhism.

IV. Its Theoretical Mode

(5) There exists no systemic work on Gandhian Thought. Gandhi wrote at length and touched almost every social topic, but never did he lay down the basic tenets of his theoretical mode. Besides, the whole set of his writings where one concept differs with the other, lacks consistency. The inconsistency remains unexplained as to under what logic—whether due to the unsuitability of a concept in practice or because of changes in the social conditions—did he take different positions.

(6) For example, with regard to his attitude towards Satyagraha, he first applied it as a political technique (calling it the “non-violence of the weak”) by supporting British colonial rule during the 1899-Boer War and the 1906-Zulu Rebellion in South Africa and during the First World War in India (for which the British colonial rule in India awarded him with the Kaiser-e-Hind Medal) and then, after 1920, he transferred it into a supreme

principle, a creed (calling it the “non-violence of the brave”) by upholding that violence in any form was not to be supported and non-violence was to be practised in all actions, thinking as well doing, even in dealing with the adversary.

(7) Again, with regard to his further adherence to non-violence, he adopted contradictory positions, such as, writing in 1928 that “if there was a national government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it”¹; appealing to Hitler’s government in Germany in July 1939 to renounce the method of war ²; advising to Churchill’s government in Britain not to defend the country and hand its control over to Hitler’s forces; not raising the issue of non-violence at the time of his negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps in March 1942, though, if these negotiations had succeeded, the Congress would have actively joined in the prosecution of war on the side of Britain and her allies; emphasising in the August 1942-Quit India resolution that a free India, by throwing all her resources in the struggle against the Nazi and the Fascist aggression, would contribute to the victory of the forces of freedom and democracy, i.e., the Allied Powers.

(8) Similarly, with regard to his approach towards the 1946-Cabinet Mission plan (which represented the last chance to avert the partition), Gandhi even after its acceptance by both the Congress and the Muslim League, propagated against this plan at his daily prayer meetings.³ But when the possibility of partition began to increase, he demanded its application in letter and spirit.

(9) Further, with regard to his posture on the issue of partition, Gandhi made a statement on March 3, 1947, that “if the country wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I, if I can help it, allow Congress to accept it.”⁴ But, only three days later, he began to plead for the partition of India.

(10) More, with regard to his struggle against British racial oppression in South Africa, Gandhi, while upholding the cause of the Indian settlers, remained passive concerning the South African Blacks who had been the main victims of the British racial atrocities and also sometimes helped even the British colonial rule.

¹ *Young India*, 13.9.1928

² Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. V, P-197

³ *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XI, P-106

⁴ Maulana Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, P-87

(11) While various Gandhian interpreters had tried to defend these divergent postures in the name of the developing Gandhian truths, the fact is that these fluctuating positions cannot be justified by any theoretical and practical rationale. However, despite these constraints, what one gathers from Gandhi’s different writings may be summed up as under:

(A) Its World View

(12) Gandhian conception of Reality held that God is absolute truth. He cannot be worshipped better than as truth. To worship God, human beings need to know the relative truths by serving mankind or that absolute truth (i.e., God) can be discovered by knowing the relative truths through moral public practice. All truth concerning the physical universe which did not take man as primary point of reference was false.

(13) As a devoted Hindu, Gandhi accepted Gita as gospel truth which showed to him the battle ground between good and evil in this mythical world. It enjoined that the ultimate object of man’s life is the realisation of God, i.e., Self-Salvation (*Mokhsha*, i.e., to get rid of the cycle of rebirth and become one with the universal spirit). And that, in his effort to realise the goal of life, man is subject to the twin divine laws of *Karma* and reincarnation of the soul. Prayer to God, for him, was the technique of Divine Realisation.

(14) Gandhi was absolutely certain of the truth of *Karma* and Rebirth⁵ and believed that even a little performance of meritorious deed would yield fruit.

(15) Proceeding from his basic thought of divinity, Gandhi was opposed to rationalism, both on the theoretical as well as moral grounds. Theoretically, he held that the ultimate reality can be known only through intuition and faith. At the moral level, he maintained that faith in God alone is the guarantee for the purity of one’s character. He said, “Reason is a poor thing in the midst of temptations—faith that transcends reason is our only Rock of Ages.”⁶ And further “humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life easier.”

(16) From the foregoing world-view, it can be seen that Gandhism proceeds from two confused fundamentals. Firstly, it believes in three differing courses to know the absolute truth or

⁵ M.K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma*, P-6; M.K. Gandhi, *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. I, P-377

⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. I, P-141

ultimate reality or the God, i.e., service to mankind, prayer and intuition and faith. And, secondly, it contradicts its own belief to *Karma* and rebirth by holding that man is not a free agent of his will and action and that he is able to do things only, because God is working through him. It implies that man is nothing except being an instrument of God's will and that, without divine permission, he has no business and no power to change even a grain of sand, what to say of transforming the human world.

(17) Gandhi wrote: "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing and ever-dying, there is, underlying all that change, a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power and Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist. He alone is. And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent, for I can see that, in the midst of death, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence I gather that God is life, truth, and light."⁷

He further stated: "Nothing can happen but by His Will expressed in his eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law, save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope and faith in the future."⁸

(18) Ever since the origin of religious mode of thought, every religion has presented God as the initiator, regulator and controller of everything existing in this universe. Such being the case with Gandhism too, it cannot be called something new, formulated to understand and change the world.

(B) Its Mode Of Action

(19) Gandhian functional conception holds that *Ahimsa* or non-violence is the only scientific method of exploring the relative social truths and thus to achieve self-salvation. It arises from the essential goodness of human nature. It is aimed at winning over the evil by good, immorality by morality and physical force by soul force and truth.

(20) Meaning love for even the evil doer, it does not stand for surrender before him. Making him conscious of his spiritual duty with the non-violent means, it can convert the bad into the good.

(21) Non-violence in action is *Satyagraha* (i.e.. holding

⁷ M.K.Gandhi, *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. I, P-5-6

⁸ M.K.Gandhi, *Harijan*, December 9, 1939

persistently to truth)—a term indicating Gandhian approach for getting justice, civil disobedience and non-cooperation are its well-known forms of operation against an unjust government.

(22) Implying the last to be served first and leading to the greatest good of all (known as *Sarvodaya*, i.e., welfare of all), it alone can remove the social, economic and political evils of society. Thus, it is both a creed as well as a method.

(23) True, violent human behaviour, as shown by various disciplines, is not a basic human need like hunger or sex. But non-violent behaviour as a principled norm can, like every other human potentiality to be transformed into actuality, only be practised and promoted in a given environment, such as a global order characterised by a sufficient level of peoples sense of fairness and justice, rule of law, empowerment of the people, removal of all social disparities, ending of national, ethnic and religious animosities, demilitarisation and disarmament, etc. Otherwise, it can only be viable in limited specific areas or periods or be followed as an expediency, as has happened and is still happening, in various areas of the world.

(C) Its Sociology

(24) The Gandhian sociology envisions that its conceptions of truth and non-violence can lead to the establishment of a supra-human order which was in the common good of both man and society. Its main tenets, i.e., social justice and human development, are too well-known. These are laudable objectives and there can be no doubt about their relevance. But, the main problem arises about his methodology for the attainment of these objectives. The major components of his sociology are as under:

(i) *Swadeshi* Approach

(25) *Swadeshi* denotes a love for ones own country. In its economic sense, it implies a preference for things from one's immediate surroundings and favouring domestic products even if they are dearer than foreign goods. Thus, it is both a political as well as economic concept. In the colonial period, it did work to some extent and at certain times to strengthen the anti-colonial movement of the Indian people. But, in the present day world—where countries are becoming more and more inter-dependent in economic, cultural and political matters, economic competition is becoming highly acute and the modern concept of development is emphasising efficiency-based growth along with social justice—it

does not seem to be a relevant approach. Besides, the experience of *swadeshi* in our process of planning through the strategy of import substitution and self-reliance has shown its unviability. The old slogans of *Charkha* as the main instrument of *swadeshi*, prevalent in the colonial days has lost much of its significance.

(ii) *Sarvodaya And Antodaya*

(26) *Sarvodaya* implies the raising of the welfare of all without depriving others of their welfare. *Antodaya* expresses the last to be served first in the process of bettering the peoples lot. In the colonial period, the *Charkha*, home-spinning and home-weaving formed the main steps towards the social goal of *Sarvodaya*.

(27) In the post-Gandhian era, the *Harijan* uplift and the *Bhoodan-Gramdan* movement have been the two most significant initiatives taken by the *Sarvodaya* movement led by Vinoba Bhave. The *Harijan* uplift programme ended in a collapse, pushing the *Dalits* into the clutches of casteist militancy. The *Bhoodan-Gramdan* movement, after its initial momentum, came to a grinding halt, with Vinoba Bhave retiring to his inner-self and JP adopting the path of Total Revolution.

(28) The cause of the failure lies in its having been a part of the establishment which strove to use it as a tool to cover up its own corruption and crimes.

(iii) *Swaraj*

(29) Literally, *Swaraj* means self-rule. It is an all-encompassing whole which comprises political, economic and social freedom. It is the logical outcome of *Swadeshi* which symbolises the spirit of sacrifice and nationalism. It has no meaning without *Sarvodaya* which expresses the good of all. Thus, *Swadeshi*, *Sarvodaya* and *Swaraj* are interconnected concepts, each dependent on the other two. Gandhi has characterised them all as *Ram Raj*, which cannot be attained without overcoming the Hindu-Muslim split and eliminating untouchability. The ultimate Gandhian concern is to achieve the religious goal, which is the unification of his other goals.

(iv) Concept Of Democracy

(30) The Gandhian concept of democracy is an elitist one. When he became President of the Indian National Congress in 1924, Gandhi pleaded for a qualified franchise instead of the adult franchise and indirect election. In 1934, he again proposed

the qualified franchise and on this very issue he temporarily withdrew from the Congress. His argument was that corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy. Nor is the bulk a true test of democracy.⁹

(31) Gandhi was of the view that “the European Democracies are to my mind a negation of democracy”¹⁰. Under his leadership, the Congress, while conducting any struggle, followed the practice of appointing one dictator, often Gandhi, with full powers to take any decision, even of the withdrawal of the struggle.

(v) Dignity Of Women

(32) With regard to women, Gandhi made no distinction between male and female so far as the spiritual goal and the ways to it were concerned. He observed: “Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering, and her advent into public life should, therefore, result in purifying it. Her moral supremacy will enable her to teach the art of peace to the warring world, thirsting for that nectar, to occupy her proved position by the side of man, as her mother, maker and silent leader.” However, he never raised the question of discrimination against women in political, economic and cultural matters.

(33) He sometimes criticised the atrocities against women but never proposed anything concrete to end them. He had no particular programme for the upliftment of half of humanity. Nor did he ever start any movement for the betterment of women as he did in the case of removing untouchability.

(34) The reason why he did not raise the question of male-female equality in all walks of social life lies in his orthodox Hindu ideas which, like every other religious orthodoxy, allot to woman a place next to man.

(vi) Decentralised Economy

(35) The idea of decentralised economy, as operated by the common people, has been a positive idea for a pretty long time. But, both the colonial and the post-colonial economies had no use of it due to their given centralised natures. Now, its scope has become restricted because of growing integration of the world economic process. Still it is highly relevant in the management of many crucial areas, like forests, and, water,

⁹ Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1946, P-585

¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Vol. I, Ahmedabad, 1948, P-292

primary education, handicrafts, cottage industries, other constructive activities providing employment opportunities in the villages to prevent urbanisation, etc.

(36) However, the Gandhian propositions of the Trusteeship of Property and the Elitist Democracy do not reconcile with the concept of Decentralised Economy.

(vii) Village Self-Sufficiency

(37) The idea of village self-sufficiency, operational in village-based medieval economies, has no relevance in today's global market-related and inter-dependent national economies.

(viii) Use Of Machinery

(38) Gandhi was opposed to the introduction of capital-intensive technology due to its negative effects on employment, labour, traditional industries, etc. On the contrary, he stood for labour intensive technologies.

(39) The experience, however, shows that, in the present national and international situation, both the capital and the labour-intensive technologies have their respective utilities. However, there is a need to restore a proper balance between the two. The only test of a technology—whether modern or traditional—is that it should not be injurious to the environment. All types of pro-ecology technologies are desirable. The one-sided social effects of certain technologies can be negated by a welfare state.

(ix) Trusteeship Of Property

(40) The concept of the trusteeship of property implies that the rich should use their wealth not for their own sake but for the benefit of society. However, the historical experience shows that, at no time, whether in the past or present, the idea of trusteeship has worked. It is totally illogical in an inequalitarian system, based on the maximisation of personal gain and profit. If wealth belongs to the people, as admitted by Gandhi, then why its control should not be vested in the public through the democratisation of the management of capital which requires the ending of the special rights enjoyed by the promoters and the directors of the MNCs and other big corporate companies.

(x) Doctrine Of Want Limitation

(41) The doctrine of Want Limitation is a one-sided proposition which treats the innocent and the guilty at an equal level. Of

course, there is an essential requirement for putting restrictions on the abuse and the misuse of natural and social resources. The prevailing consumerism, i.e., the doctrine of want multiplication through aggressive advertisement, as adopted by the major developed countries and as practised by the rich at all places, has created, and still continue to create, serious natural and social imbalances—leading to the environmental and the developmental crises. Want regulation agenda which should restrict the unlimited desires of the haves and the privileged and enhance the provision of the basic necessities of the have-nots and the deprived is the urgent demand of the hour and not the Gandhian want limitation business which actually pegs the needs of the poor.

(xi) Education

(42) In education, Gandhi laid much emphasis on basic education, by which he meant the learning of 3 Rs and the acquisition of skill, preferably the traditional family expertness. The aim was to make the individual self-supporting. It was seen by him as a practical expression of his idea of Bread Labour. The basic education was to be free and compulsory to all children upto the age of fourteen. It was to be imparted in the mother-tongue. He also stressed the importance of adult education and laid emphasis on education in basic hygiene, sanitation and drainage, well-paved roads, etc. He held that education should be a lifelong process and should not stop with childhood. That is, it should be a process of absorbing knowledge throughout one's life. All these principles were quite positive with the only lacuna that they gave little attention to the study and development of modern science and technology.

(xii) Dignity Of Workers

(43) To improve the workers' lot, Gandhi stressed for proper conditions of work, a fair standard of wages, the rights of labour in production and the means to fulfill these rights. But in the system of enterprise-management and capital-control, he did not deem the worker fit for even an advisory role.

(xiii) Economic Equality

(44) Economic equality is one of the items of the Gandhian constructive programme. To realise this aim, Gandhi wrote: "I do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in *Gita*. The

Gita teaches us that the members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same *Dharma* for the *Brahmin* as for the *Bhangi*. But it insists that the latter should be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning.”¹¹

(45). Thus, Gandhi wanted to ensure economic equality by following the doctrine of Lord Krishna as stated in the *Gita* which, in its essentials, denies even human rights to the 70 percent of the population, i.e., the women and the *Shudras*.

(xiv) *Khadi* Promotion

(46) Gandhian reconstruction programme assigns the most important place to the *Khadi* promotion. In the words of Gandhi: “*Khadi* represents and represented a way of life based on non-violence...Through *Khadi*, we were struggling to establish the supremacy of man in place of the supremacy of power-driven machinery over him. Through *Khadi*, we were striving for equality of all men and women in place of the gross inequality to be witnessed today. We were striving to attain subservience of capital under labour in place of the insolent triumph of capital over labour.”¹²

(47) Man's supremacy over machine or in society can be established only by empowering the people, politically, economically and culturally. Inequality among the people can only be removed by ending all types of disparities—i.e., male-female, rich-poor, urban-rural, literate-illiterate, developed countries-developing ones, etc. For centuries together, the *Khadi* had, at the most, been providing the people employment and cloth.

(xv) Constructive Programme

(48) Gandhian prescription for *Poorna Swaraj* and social transformation was contained in his constructive programme. It consisted of the following main items: (a) Communal harmony, (b) Removal of untouchability, (c) Prohibition, (d) *Khadi* self-sufficiency, (e) Other village industries (f) Village sanitation, (g) New or basic education, (h) Adult education, (i) Upliftment of women, (j) Education in health and hygiene, (k) Propagation of national language, (l) Development of regional languages, (m) Economic equality, (n) Kisan organisation, (o) Workers

¹¹ M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, P-19

¹² *Harijan*, 1947, P-470

organisation, (p) Service of *adivasis*, (q) Leper's service, (r) Students organisation and (s) Daily prayer to God.

(49) Of these constructive issues, the most important ones were the communal harmony and the removal of untouchability in the political field and the production of *Khadi*, hand-spinning and hand-weaving in the economic sphere.

V. Gandhian Practice

(50) How did Gandhi put into practice his ideas? How did he respond to the social reality of his times? How was his Divine Truth and non-violent sociology applied to the then existing social reality?

(51) We begin with the historical context in which Gandhi had to work and the problems arising out of that context had to deal with.

(A) Historical Context

(52) Born in 1869 at Porbander, now in Gujarat, Gandhi came on the scene at a time when British colonialism was at its zenith in the world, with Sun never setting on its empire, spread over vast areas of the world. He grew up in South Africa (1893-1914) where between the white masters and the enslaved Africans, a few hundred thousand Indians, along with Gandhi, were treated like coolies. It was in South Africa that the Gandhian *satyagraha*, i.e. the method of non-violent mass resistance, was forged in defence of the Indian settlers. There is no evidence to show that he ever raised his voice in sympathy with the South African Blacks who then were the main victims of the British colonial oppression.

(53) Gandhi returned to India in 1915 when India was reeling under the heels of British colonialism. The Congress leaders were begging for freedom from the British masters. Blatant communalism and caste oppression were hindering the peoples unity. There was no unity on goal or method. The different parties were pulling in different directions.

(54) For about 28 years (1919-48), Gandhi dominated the Indian scene and that period may rightly be called the ‘Gandhian Era’ of Indian history.

(55) Gandhi sorted out three main problems, i.e., (a) The Hindu-Muslim divide, (b) the caste divisions, and (c) the question of untouchability, which were hindering the building of the national liberation movement against the British colonial rule

and set out to tackle them.

(B) Hindu-Muslim Divide

(56) As regards the question of Hindu-Muslim divide, Gandhi became involved in this problem for the first time during the *Khilafat* movement in 1919. Speaking of this movement, Gandhi said: "For me, it was a chance of a life time. I felt that if I could but show my loyalty to my *Mussalman* countrymen in the hour of their trial, I would be able to secure ever-lasting friendship between the two communities." This was mere oversimplification of the problem.

(57) The problem of Hindu-Muslim divide was concerned less with religion and much more with politics and economics. The question involved the majority-minority share in the future Indian power structure and economic resources. The issue of separate electorates was directly linked with this basic question. Instead of handling the problem on the political-economic basis, Gandhi tried to tackle it through a religious way. He thought that if the two communities are brought together on the principle of the oneness of *Ishwar-Allah*, supplemented by a constructive programme, they would gradually learn to live together. But, the Gandhian *Ram-Rahim* unity formula did not work.

(58) During Gandhi's stewardship of the Congress, a number of opportunities—e.g., 1928-Nehru report about India's future constitution, 1937-possibility of a Congress-Muslim League coalition in UP, 1942-Cripps Mission, 1946-Cabinet Mission Plan, etc.—were allowed to slip when the problem could be sorted out on certain give and take formula. The Cabinet Mission Plan of a loose federation was a quite workable proposal. With a genuine motive, its defects could have been rectified during the course of its application. But, instead of this relatively proper option, a worst solution, i.e., the partition of India, was considered as the best way out for the country.

(59) The main stumbling block in the resolution of the problem of Hindu-Muslim divide was the Gandhian agenda which sought to politicise the religion or vice versa. This agenda stressed *Ram Raj* as a goal of India's new social order, presented *Gita* as an ideal moral basis for human action, selected *Bande Matram*, which had its origin as a battle cry in fighting off the Muslim invaders, as the National Song, characterised cow worship as Hinduism's unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism," stressed the "discovery of caste system as a magnificent

result of the ceaseless search for truth." It projected Gandhi's image as the greatest architect of Hindu revivalism in India.

(60) The Gandhian philosophy (The *Gita*), ideal (*Ram Raj*), methods (his reinterpretation of old Hindu ideas and transforming of them into rationalist and humanist concepts, daily Hindu rituals, idioms, songs, etc.) were all contrary to the resolution of the Hindu-Muslim divide. A person siding with one party to the dispute cannot be accepted as the judge or the arbiter. A leader of varying communities is required to rise above the contending forces. Gandhi failed in this respect. He projected himself as the leader of the majority community. That is why the Indian minorities, especially the Muslim, never accepted him as a supra-communal and non-partisan leader. They looked upon him as the Hindu reformer of the modern age.

(C) Caste Divisions

(61) As regards the question of caste divisions, Gandhian conception gradually moved from the earlier conservative stance to liberal positions. Around 1915, Gandhi firmly supported the caste system which, according to him, Hindu society could not dispense with.¹³ Even in 1921, Gandhi upheld the orthodox law of *Varna*, based on heredity and a given functional basis.¹⁴

(62) After late 1920's, Gandhi disassociated his *Varna* concept from caste concept by dropping the hereditary nature of *Varna*.¹⁵ This version of *Varna* system emphasises an equalitarian structure, drawing its reference points from Hindu scriptures, particularly the *Gita*. It quite fitted with his concern for disproving the idea of inequality which had been the basic feature of the caste system.

(D) Question Of Untouchability

(63) As regards the question of untouchability, Gandhian campaign against it was a part of his movement to reform the Hindu system by eradicating the ugly features of the caste hierarchy.

(64) Pointing out the long-term negative consequences of the evils of untouchability, he expected upper caste Hindus to act with wisdom. He was convinced that untouchability "can only be removed when the majority of Hindus realised that it is a crime

¹³ Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, GOI, 1963, Vol. XIII, P-277

¹⁴ *Young India*, October 6, 1921

¹⁵ *Harijan*, September 28, 1934, P-260-61

against God and man and are ashamed of it.”¹⁶ His efforts to change the caste Hindu psyche and promote fringe reforms, like the entry of the untouchables in the temples, opening of schools and hostels for them, etc., did not work. However, he never realised the need for providing due political and economic rights to the untouchables.

(65) It was only under the situational compulsion that he had to agree on the question of separate representation to the untouchables. And he gave up his fast unto death on this question only when it was agreed between Gandhi, Ambedkar and the British government that separate representation was being given to the untouchables as the most deprived part of the Hindu community. That Gandhi’s campaign against untouchability was launched from the angle of reform in Hinduism becomes clear from his letter to the British Prime Minister, saying that his ‘fast unto death’ was not in opposition to the proposal for the separate representation to the untouchables on political grounds and that his intention was to resist only the separation of the untouchables from the caste Hindus for any purpose.

VI. Was *Satyagraha* Main Weapon For Freedom

(66) Some people hold that *satyagraha* was the main weapon for India’s freedom. Others refuse to accept this assertion. No doubt, the *satyagraha* did play a role in the Indian anti-colonial movement. But was its role decisive? Only facts can show the real position.

(67) The first major anti-colonial movement which adopted *satyagraha* as its main form of struggle was the 1921-22 non-cooperation movement during which many people courted arrests or protested against the British rule in various other forms. But, ultimately, the movement was stopped on the plea that the people have resorted to violence against the police in Chauri Chaura (Bihar).

(68) Although Gandhi took the withdrawal decision without any consultation with other Congress leaders and also the *Khilafat* leaders who had at that time formed an alliance with the Congress, yet, in reality, the movement had already gone out of steam. In the words of Nehru, “The suspension of the civil resistance in February 1922 was certainly not due to Chauri Chaura...At that time, our movement, in spite of its apparent

¹⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *Untouchability*, Ahmedabad, NPH, 1954, P-10

power and the widespread enthusiasm, was going to pieces.”¹⁷ Raising at the same time even the question of the practicality and utility of the non-cooperation type of movement, Nehru observed “Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-cooperation movement, but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out of the way place going to put an end, for sometime at least, to our national struggle for freedom? If this was the inevitable consequence of a sporadic act of violence, then surely there was something lacking in the philosophy and technique of a non-violent struggle. For it seemed to us to be impossible to guarantee against the occurrence of some such untoward incident.”¹⁸

(69) Again, the *satyagraha* was the main form of protest in the second major anti-colonial struggle, called the Civil Disobedience Movement during 1930-32. But, despite its sweep and breadth, it was crushed by the government and the suspension of the movement was merely formal.

(70) The 1940-campaign of individual civil disobedience, the third major anti-colonial struggle, produced no results, although it was planned, directed and executed by Gandhi personally. The 1942-Quit India Movement, the biggest anti-colonial stir in India under Gandhi, despite great sacrifices, fizzled out in 1944 when Gandhi had to take recourse to talks with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, under C. Rajagopalachari formula.

(71) The manner in which India became independent—the communal partition of the country followed by a communal holocaust in which 10 lakh people were killed and over one crore had to migrate from one country to another—does not prove the victory of *satyagraha* or non-violence. The post-1947 developments—India’s cold war policy, militarisation, four wars with neighbours, criminalisation of polity, corruptibility and double standards, etc.—also refute the idea of the role of *satyagraha* in the making of present India.

(72) Besides, the Gandhi-led mass movements, the other factors responsible for the independence of India included: the armed movements led by Indian militants, the Indian National Army’s battles against the British forces on the Burmese front, the 1947-naval mutiny, the US pressure on British government to resolve the Indian problem, the anti-colonial movement in almost

¹⁷ J.L. Nehru: *An Autobiography*, London, 1936, P-85

¹⁸ J.L. Nehru, *Ibid*, P-82

all the colonies. The principal factor responsible for India's independence was the all-round weakening—political, economic, militaristic—of British colonialism during the second world war, making the latter incapable of holding on in India. The termination of the second world war had set in an era of decolonisation in which the majority of the countries gained independence without resorting to either armed struggle or *satyagraha*.

VII. *Satyagraha* As A Weapon For Social Regeneration

(73) The Gandhian claim that the *satyagraha*, besides being a moral force against the foreign rule, represents a wider and higher social truth which stands for radical changes in human conditions does not get any support from the Gandhian as well as the post-Gandhian scene in India or the world.

(74) The state of public and individual morality has not moved towards fairness, justice or truth. Public wrongs—i.e., selfishness, greed, egoism, anger, moral degradation, crime, conflict, violence, etc.—have become more pronounced.

(75) The Indian society has become more intolerant, coercive, violent and dehumanised. In the wake of freedom, it took the life of its messiah of peace and then devoured its two Prime Ministers, besides generating over 20,000 communal riots and over 5 lakh cases of atrocities against the SCs and STs.

(76) The Indian polity today has become the repository of all sorts of social evils. Mafia is running a parallel government at all levels, pushing the state apparatus into irrelevance.

(77) It seems that fairness and justice have become rare things in our society.

(78) The Gandhian truth and *satyagraha* has not yet worked either to change the wrong doer or his victim. The evil order goes on perpetuating itself for the time being.

VIII. Why Gandhism Could Not Work

(79) The foregoing facts denote that Gandhism failed to work both in the colonial and the post-colonial Indian society. Its main failure was to check the spread of communalism and communal hatred. It struggled for the independence of India but got partition. Independence secured at the cost of partition was a very high price the country had to pay. The proposal of a loose federation was much less costly. Obviously, the acceptance of partition was not in the national interest.

(80) The entire behaviour of the Indian National Liberation

Movement shows that Gandhism was not a realistic perception of the Indian reality. That is why its theory and practice were not consistent with India's nature and thus were not in conformity with the national interests.

(81) India, having been a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-casteist and multi-regional country, required a Rational Humanist Agenda, free from all varieties of religious fetishes and miracles which could unite the various types of social groups on a common platform.

(82). Instead of responding to the multifarious social character of India, Gandhi raised the banner of reformed Hindu humanism which he developed by recasting the theories of his traditional Hindu revivalist predecessors. Coining a new slogan of *Ram-Rahim*, he preached respect for all religions but practically advocated the cause of his own religion. He overtly or covertly sided with all types of Hindu organisations, such as *Go Raksha Samiti*, *Gau Seva Sangh*, *Sangathan Shudhi*, etc. Coupled with this was his role in the Hindi-Urdu controversy. Earlier he favoured Hindustani in Devnagari and Persian scripts but later he began to identify Hindustani with Hindi in Nagari script to the near exclusion of the Persian script. The establishment of the *Hindi Paracharini Sabha* further confirmed this change. Some of his comments on Hindu-Muslim relations, having been partial to the Hindus, were resented by the Muslims. His remarks that “Muslims did not regard India as their home” and “the *Musalman* as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward”¹⁹ aroused a great deal of criticism in Muslim quarters.

(83) It is not for nothing that, thirty two years after his assassination by a Hindu fanatic, the BJP, the political wing of the RSS, adopted Gandhism as its guiding thought. The main difference between the Gandhian religious politics and BJP's militant Hinduism is that while the former is non-violent and value-based, the latter is power, money and violence-oriented.

(84) The Gandhian religious agenda created a very damaging effect on the Muslim mind. The Muslim League took full advantage of the situation. With the passage of time, it was communalism of all varieties which got ascendancy in every nook and corner of the country.

(85) The partition was, thus, the logical conclusion of the then prevailing reality. As expected, the partition did not solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. It merely internationalised its

¹⁹ *Young India*, June 19, 1924

certain aspects.

(86) Obviously, the Gandhian perception and response were not compatible with the integration of the Indian society.

IX. Lessons From Gandhian Experiment

(87) Gandhian experiment contains many useful lessons. The main ones are as follows:

(88) Its first lesson is that the present-day world cannot be restructured on the basis of the ethos, idioms and symbols of a religion. All theocratic samples the world over have proved highly damaging. Gandhi's espousal of the Hindu cause damaged the cause of India.

(89) Another lesson is that the Gandhian change of heart approach—transforming evil into good through *Satyagraha* or non-violence—depends on given conditions. The good cannot be grown and the evil cannot be eradicated unless the conditions (the cause) which give rise to evil and which hinder the emergence of good are changed. Unless the nature of the barren land is transformed even the best seed cannot be grown on it. The mistake of Gandhi lies in the fact that, without proposing the agenda of removing the cause, it only stressed to eradicate the effect.

(90) The third lesson is that some of the Gandhian social techniques can be very beneficial if consistently adhered to. Its moral values—renunciation, sacrifice, modesty, simplicity, tolerance, etc.—and above all its principle of linking ends with means can be very advantageous to the building of a fair and just society.

Similarly, its technique of *Satyagraha*—a method for the peaceful resolution of conflicts—though not universally applicable in the contemporary world, can be tried under certain given conditions in some regions at present and under the changed situation all over the world in future.

More, its concepts of *Sarvodaya*, Decentralisation and *Swaraj* can, with needed modifications, be utilised to transfer power to the people.

(91) We earnestly appeal to all types of genuine Gandhiites, who have devoted their whole lives to the service of mankind, to think over the question as to why the Indian reality, whether the pre-1947 one or the post-1947 one, had turned out to be something quite different from what Gandhism expected them to be.

07-11-1995

"Hindutva is the basic identity of this Nation. We firmly believe in its ultimate triumph. All our efforts will be in that direction."

(Prof. Rajindra Singh, Sarsangh Chalak RSS, Frontline, April 8, 1994, P-131)

RSS' Hindutva—A Theory Of Hindu Fundamentalism Truth demands Introspection From Sangh Parivar

I. Problem

1. Perched on a self-proclaimed high moral pedestal, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Parivar, particularly its political constituent, the BJP, has always portrayed itself as a phenomenon that is distinguished by a unique *Hindutva* ideology never found anywhere on this earth or at any time in the world history; by a wonderful programme this country has been searching for throughout ages in the post-Vedic period; by coherent policies, conforming to the contemporary Indian realities which our nation has been lacking ever since 1947; and by an ethical code which, contrary to the corrupt, money and muscle power-based politics of other parties, includes the finest human rules of conduct, such as self-sacrifice, proper ego-management, principled stands, orderly discipline, high quality of leadership, honest, simple and modest living and a style free from corruption, factionalism, jealousy, etc.

2. But how do the facts stand? Do they conform to the Sangh Parivar's claims or reflect a different picture? Sorting out a problem by observing the facts is the most appropriate route to arrive at its truth. There is no other better way to know the reality. That is why facts are more dramatic than fiction.

3. In viewing the relevant facts, we proceed in the reverse

order. That is, starting from the Parivar's ethical code and passing through its policies and programme, we come to its ideology and finally sum up its nature. In adopting this methodology, our reasoning is that the question of ethical code and policies are primarily related to the sphere of practice and organisation and hence are easily visible and understandable, while the programme is mainly concerned with specific concepts and the ideology with the fundamental theory and thus both are chiefly linked to the realm of logic and hence relatively a bit more difficult to comprehend.

II. Parivar's Ethical Code

4. Throughout the Sangh Parivar's long history— which covers RSS' career from 1925 to 1995, BJP's course through its life from 1951 to 1995 (earlier Bhartiya Jan Sangh from 1951 to 1977 and as a part of Janata Party from 1977 to 1980), Vishva Hindu Parishad's process from 1964 to 1995 and Bajrang Dal's from 1970 to 1995—it has nowhere and at no time developed or presented any new exemplary ethical norm through its practice, except the repeating of traditional values. Nobody bothered about whatever it did in the past. But since the last 4 years when its political wing, i.e., the BJP, has been able to acquire the status of a party-in-waiting for the takeover of political power, its movements have attracted a widespread attraction and hence a close scrutiny.

5. Though in the past few years, there had been at times straws in Sangh Parivar's political wind, yet it somehow managed to maintain its image unscathed.

6. The recent happenings, however, have taken the lid off its ethical container.

(A) Allegations Of Corruption

7. In the biggest post-1947 political corruption racket, which has created volcanic eruptions across the entire political spectrum a part of the oozing muck has splattered over the top BJP stalwarts, including its chief L.K. Advani. The CBI-filed charge-sheet says that Advani and a former finance minister, Yashwant Sinha, at present the BJP leader of the opposition in the Bihar Assembly, had received Rs 81.18 lakh from a dubious businessman, S.K. Jain, who was, at the same time, funding the Kashmir and Punjab militant outfits. Thus, the pay-offs issue was not limited to corruption alone. Clear enough, it was, on the one hand, connected

with the criminalisation of politics and, on the other, linked to the national security. Perhaps, it is the exact example of the criminal-politician-business-international militancy nexus.

8. The CBI filed charge-sheet says that Advani received a total of Rs 60 lakh between April 1988 and April 1991 and Sinha Rs 21.18 lakh between March 1990 and April 1991. And according to a public interest petition pending before the Supreme Court, the BJP Chief Minister of Delhi, M.L. Khurana, received Rs 3 lakh between April 1988 and March 1990 and another senior BJP leader of Delhi, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, was paid Rs 1 lakh in the same period. Some other BJP leaders, including former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh S.L. Patwa, have already, accepted of taking money from the same Jains. One of the BJP Lok Sabha members, Saran Singh, has been charge-sheeted by the CBI for harbouring hardcore terrorists belonging to the Dawood Ibrahim gang.

9. Although the party has characterised the case as false and politically motivated, yet its ambiguous responses to this important political scandal raise a series of significant questions: why did not the party make this scandal as an item of its anti-corruption agenda, although it had been in the news for nearly 4 years? What prevented the party from mentioning this scandal in its Delhi Resolution (December, 1995) which lists all old and new illegitimate acts, including even the illegal allotment of subsidised government houses, of the Narsimha Rao government? Is not the BJP's complete silence on this most scandalous question intriguing? Again, how is it that, after the filing of the case in the designated court, the party did, while demanding a speedy trial in the case with its hearings on a day-to-day basis, change its stand only a few hours later, demanding the withdrawal of the 'false' case against Advani? Further, why did the party, while initially taking the position that since Advani had resigned, there was no need for anyone to follow suit (as the family head's token gesture is enough), changed its mind after a few hours, declaring that Sinha will quit his membership of Bihar Assembly and that Khurana would also resign in case a charge-sheet was filed against him. More, how is it that, while Advani and some others had denied the taking of any money from the Jains, some BJP leaders like Patwa, Kailash Joshi, etc., had admitted of accepting large amounts from the same source.

10. In whatever way the party may explain its above inconsistent positions— whether by putting up a brave face or by

accusing Narsimha Rao of machinations—its self-acclaimed clean pulpit has become polluted beyond redemption. Its theme of being different from the rest of the pack stands shattered. The lotus has begun to wither long before coming to full bloom.

11. The facts refute even the logic of the benefit of doubt, assuming that this episode is some mishap in which party has been caught unawares. Justifying the taking of hawala money by Advani, Khurana said that the ‘money’ allegedly received by Advani in the hawala racket was under the head of ‘political expenses’ and did not amount to ‘corrupt practices’ (TOI, 20.01.1996, P-18). Sushma Swaraj, the BJP General Secretary, commented that party’s senior leaders in Madhya Pradesh had taken money for party funds from Jains (TOI, 30.01.1996, P-6). Parmod Mahajan, another BJP General Secretary, remarked: “We do get donations in various forms. What you call Hawala money is donations we receive from businessmen and industrialists here, sent abroad and channelled back to India. It could also include legitimate money earned abroad. The root cause is the lack of transparency in the system. As long as the donations are legitimate, we cannot consider it a crime.”

12. Though it is mandatory for political parties to yearly file income tax returns since 1979, the BJP had not ever done it up to 1995. It is also a fact that the RSS had never disclosed its accounts since its inception either to the public or the Income-Tax Department, despite the fact that it is a violation of the law and that the RSS possesses big financial resources. It may be recalled that only 3 years ago, a conscientious income-tax officer, who dared to charge the VHP for the illegal collecting of crores of rupees (estimated to be over Rs 1,000 crore) without tendering due account to the Income-Tax Department, was promptly sidelined by the Narsimha Rao government for ‘misbehaving’ towards this ‘holy organisation of saints.’ Here it is also worth-remembering that only six years before (1989), when the BJP was part of an opposition alliance which was to bring down the Rajiv government on corruption issue, the then RSS Supremo, Balasaheb Deoras, had said that he could not understand why such a hue and cry was being raised about the Bofors deal when it was known that “all defence deals in the country involve kickbacks and commissions.”

13. This is the type of moral *Yug Parivartan* (i.e., the change of epoch), the Sangh Parivar is aspiring for in this country (‘chosen land of God’, according to the Sangh Parivar).

(B) Dissidence Within The BJP

14. Since 1990 when the Sangh Parivar did achieve a high profile status, inter and intra-dissidence has been plaguing all the Parivar members at various levels. The BJP has been the main victim of this malaise. Each one of its important state units is rocked by factional troubles. The recent upheavals in Gujarat BJP legislative wing, which almost brought down the BJP government there, had exposed the veneer of its much advertised high morality. The industry lobby, adulterators and builders groups and the Congress helping hand (all of whom bore the expenditure of chartered planes and luxury hotels) were too apparent in the whole drama on one side or the other (mainly backing the Vaghela Group). The unity formula worked out by the BJP central leaders for the time being brought about a tenuous turn, but the crisis remains far from resolved. Even a few days ago, Advani was heckled by pro-Vaghela supporters and prevented from addressing the meeting in Gandhi Nagar. Consequently, the BJP has suffered a fall in popularity, as is evident from the recent local bodies elections in the state (by comparison with the last year’s Assembly elections).

15. UP is riven by a conflict marked by casteist overtones between the leader of the legislature wing, Kalyan Singh, who is supported by the backward castes group and the leader of the state party unit, Kalraj Mishra, backed by the high castes people. The 4-month BJP-BSP alliance, supporting the Mayawati government (June-October, 1995) fell through because of the differences between BJP-VHP approaches and between the soft and the hard liners inside the BJP. When the Mayawati government went out, the BJP first demanded the immediate dissolution of the state Assembly followed by the calling of elections, but, hardly after 48 hours, Kalyan Singh was staking his claim to form the ministry with the support of 216 MLAs, forty of whom had been negotiated with from other groups through various shady deals. As reported by the fortnightly *Frontline* (November 17, 1995, p-126), “two industrialists supporting the BJP sent their representatives to Lucknow with the necessary suitcases and they camped in a hotel.” The project failed because the 24 breakaway BSP members wanted, apart from suitcases, a written public assurance that all of them would be given tickets in the next Assembly elections.

16. In three of its core state party units—i.e., MP, Gujarat and Rajasthan—as well as in Punjab, Orissa, Haryana and Tripura,

the BJP avoided the holding of organisational elections due to infighting. MP has been the scene of a prolonged conflict between the Patwa and Kailash Joshi groups. In Rajasthan, the non-*Rajput* section is pitted against the dominant Bhairon Singh Sekhawat's *Rajput* faction.

17. In Bihar, Delhi and Assam, there were factional troubles during party elections, leading to bitterness. An inter-caste feud between backward *Bania* faction (supported by Govindacharya) and the *Khatris* faction (close to Murali Manohar Joshi) has been going on in Bihar. The pro-Vajpayee Khurana group in Delhi is opposed by smaller pro-Advani and pro-Joshi groups. There occurred a split in Assam led by the SCs and STs representatives. Both the RSS *pracharaks* and the 'Ginger Group' of the 12 pragmatists led by Madhu Deolkar in Maharashtra are openly attacking the pro-Advani Pramod Mahajan for imposing a '5-star culture' on the party. Haryana, Himachal and Jammu too are in the throes of factional rivalries.

18. With the RSS acting as the remote control, the Sangh Parivar seems to be a well-knit household. But this is not a real reflection.

19. At the top, the BJP leadership, while being affected by the intra-party power struggle at various levels, is also divided on ideo-political grounds into three main categories—the soft, middle and hard—each represented by Vajpayee, Advani and Joshi respectively. Vajpayee stands for Gandhian socialism which is close to Congress' majoritarian (or Nehruvian) nationalism. Advani is an advocate of the old Jan Sangh line as propounded by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya in his theory of integral humanism. Joshi, like VHP and Shiv Sena, upholds a hawkish line which sees the world divided into two categories—patriots (as represented by Hindus) and traitors (a reference to non-Hindus) and nothing in between. Up to the time of the Hawala blast, the Advani-led middle line was in the ascendancy. But perhaps having the inkling of Hawala trouble in the days ahead, Advani proposed Vajpayee as BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate. And now having been sufficiently discredited after the filing of the charge-sheet against him in the court by the CBI, he can rescue his position from further damage by standing behind Vajpayee. Thus, for the time being, Vajpayee holds the strongest position.

20. Immediately before the Hawala explosion, the factional line-up in the BJP stood as follows. The middle-liner, Advani, enjoys the support of Kushabhau Thakre (senior RSS *pracharak*

and BJP general secretary), Kalyan Singh (former UP CM), Patwa (former MP CM), K.N. Govindacharya (general secretary), M.R. Malkani (BJP Vice-President), Vijayaraje Scindia (working committee member), Uma Bharti (chief of the youth wing), Pramod Mahajan (general secretary), Gopinath Munde (Maharashtra Deputy CM), Keshubhai Patel (outgoing Gujarat CM), Narendra Modi (former BJP general secretary, Gujarat), Om Parkash Kohli (former BJP Delhi chief).

21. The soft-liner, Vajpayee, is backed by Bhairon Singh Shekhawat (Rajasthan CM), Kailash Joshi (former MP CM), Jaswant Singh (BJP Deputy leader in the Lok Sabha), Kashi Ram Rana (Gujarat chief), Sikander Bakht (BJP leader in the Rajya Sabha), Madan Lal Khurana (Delhi CM), etc.

22. The hawkish Joshi's supporters include: Sunder Singh Bhandari (BJP Vice-President), Vishnukant Shastri (West Bengal chief), Rajnath Singh (former UP minister), Pyarelal Khandelwal (ex-in charge of the farmers wing), L.N. Pandey (MP chief), N.S. Pharande (former Maharashtra chief), Tara Kant Jha (former Bihar chief), etc.

23. Is it not clear that, as regards factional intrigues for money, pelf and power, the party-in-waiting is proving itself as the 2nd version of the party in power?

(C) Cracks In Parivar

24. With RSS acting as the remote control, the Sangh Parivar seems to be a well-knit household, but, with its expanding mass base and the emerging new problems, cracks have developed not only within the BJP, but also between the latter and the VHP and the BJP and the RSS.

25. The recent observations of some important leaders of the Sangh Parivar are very significant. For instant, the new working president of the VHP, Ashok Singhal, recently remarked that he considered the Shiv Sena's views to be closer to those of the VHP than of the BJP. He added that he still had 'hope in the BJP since it has a nationwide network' and had made a 'beginning' on the Ram Janambhoomi issue when Kalyan Singh ministry held power in UP. But he pointedly remarked that it was the Shiv Sena which was more ready to accept the VHP's Hindu agenda than the BJP. The Shiv Sena's only deficiency was its restricted mass base. Soon after publishing its 40-point Hindu agenda, the VHP declared that it would support any party which accepted it.

26. Contrary to VHP's aggressive posture, the BJP's prime

ministerial candidate not only disapproves of the Babri Masjid demolition but also opposes VHP's Kashi and Mathura destructive projects. Vajpayee's responses to various recent events—such as the winding up of the enquiry commission on Bombay riots, Uma Bharti's slogan to raise 'death squads' to 'liberate' the Kashi and Mathura shrines, Bajrang Dal's declaration to 'use muscle power to stop cow-slaughter' show that he is more in tune with the moderate political trend in the country than the Hindu fundamentalist outfits. Not only that, Vajpayee differs with even the RSS totalitarian control methodology. In a recent media interview, he has openly expressed his differences with the RSS on a number of issues.

27. The RSS is sore over the growing fissures within the BJP and among the constituents of the Sangh Parivar. The recent developments—naked opportunist fights between the BJP leaders in Gujarat and some other places, knocking out of Advani, BJP's projection of Vajpayee as its candidate for prime ministership, rise of the Congressised leaders in the BJP structure and the widening irritations between the VHP and the BJP as well as between the latter and the Shiv Sena, etc., have put the RSS in a tight spot, constraining its decisive role as the final referee, the ultimate arbiter of the Sangh Parivar. It is obvious that the self-projected paragon of propriety has proved to be no different from any other political demagogue.

III. Parivar's Policies

28. The Sangh Parivar has not defined its policies on the basis of a concrete analysis of the Indian and the world realities. Neither have they been evolved as responses to unfolding events from time to time since its existence. In fact, they constitute a set of measures required to serve its basic aim of establishing a Hindu Rashtra. All the members of the Parivar are committed to them. Briefly, these policies are as follows:

(A) **Defence Policy:** It occupies the top position in the Parivar's list of priorities. It stands to build India as the biggest military power by developing its own nuclear weaponry and other traditional arms, preferably by domestic manufacturing and even by importing if local production is not possible. It emphasises that only by making India a military superpower, can the immense external and internal threats facing India be combated and the Indian interests defended.

(B) **Foreign policy:** It is meant to spread the Hindu influence all over the world. It stresses opposition to the hegemonic policies of

the great powers, isolating and rebuffing of Pakistan at all times and at all places and vigilance from China, while trying to make it neutral in the Indo-Pak affairs. It advocates the adoption of a tough line towards the neighbours and the taking of the strongest measures against anti-Indian terrorism as sponsored and promoted by Pakistan and supported by the Islamic countries (i.e., OIC) as well as Muslim organisations, both domestic and foreign. It demands the introduction of Hindi at UNO. It declares to get back all those territories which India had lost—such as Pak-controlled 'Azad Kashmir', Chinese dominated Aksai Chin, etc.—due to its weak foreign-cum-defence policy under the Congress rule. Earlier, it used to oppose India's non-aligned foreign policy.

(C) **Political policy:** It aims at the Hinduisation of the political structure by all means. It starts with the task of restoring the national prestige by constructing the Hindu shrines at Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura after demolishing the mosques, forcibly constructed by the medieval Muslim rulers at the Hindu sacred places, earlier deliberately devastated by them. It demands an immediate ban on cow slaughter (the venerable mother of the Hindus), the declaration of Hindi as the only official language by withdrawing this status, now also enjoyed by the English, the introduction of Sanskrit (the mother of all Indian languages) as a compulsory subject in the educational syllabus, the prevention of the conversion of Hindus into Muslims and Christians and of bringing the converted ones back to the Hindu fold, adoption of a uniform civil code at once, the abrogation of the article 370 of the Indian constitution without any delay and the bringing of Jammu-Kashmir at par with other Indian states, the forcible throwing out of all *Bangladeshi* infiltrators, the decentralisation at all levels, the promotion of military training to the youth, the regulation of the high growth rate of the Muslim population, etc.

(D) **Economic Policy:** It intends to develop India as an economic super-power by making it self-reliant in all matters through its *Swadeshi* economic planning which stands as an alternative to the economic strategy upheld by the Western institutions, like the IMF, WB, WTO, MNCs, etc.

(E) **Cultural Policy:** It seeks to develop a uniform Hindu culture in the country by educating the people about the Hindu *Dharam* and its values, employing the *Sadhus* and *Sants* to spread the importance of three great Hindu deities i.e., *Bharatnata*, *Gangamata* and *Gomata* and by changing the history books, emphasising Vedic India as the cradle of world

civilization, Aryans as the original inhabitants of India and the creators of Vedic knowledge produced at no time and nowhere in the world, Vedic culture as the national culture, Rama as the national hero, *Hindutva* as Indian nationalism, etc.

29. Obviously, the afore-mentioned policies hardly take up any political, economic or cultural issue from the mass viewpoint. The reason is that the shackles of *Hindutva* always orient them towards issues with an anti-minorities, especially the anti-Muslim, edge. That is, why they have no priority for managing environmental pollution, population control, sustainable development, global peace, world disarmament, gender equality, children rights, education and health-care, social security, poverty alleviation, unemployment removal, curbing price rise, balancing fiscal and revenue budgets, increasing national and per capita incomes and industrial-agricultural productivity, ensuring human rights, minorities rights, urban and agricultural workers rights, rural development, etc.

30. Its foreign policy drives towards the course of war and cold war. In the post-cold war epoch, when all the countries are reducing their defence expenditures, it talks of not only militarising but nuclear arming of the country.

31. Its political policy takes the path of inter-community, inter-ethnic, inter-lingual and inter-regional conflict by forcibly imposing 3,000-year old uniform way of life (prescribing a low status for women, SCs and STs, minorities, etc.) on multi-categories of 20th century Indian people, a way of life which has no relevance to the present Indian and the world realities.

32. Its economic policy goes the way which, in a world of inter-dependent countries, isolates India from the international community, obstructs its due role in the SAARC and hinders its adoption of a sustainable development model.

33. Its cultural policy adopts the route which, with its exaggerated version of Vedic age, distorts the truth of history.

34. On certain crucial specific issues, the Sangh Parivar does not specify its real opinion in a clear-cut manner by either remaining tight-lipped or vague or distorting the fact.

For instance, on the question of violence, it has hardly ever expressed its opinion clearly. But its first priority to India's militarisation, its worship of *Shakti* (i.e., force) and daily military-style training in the use of *lathis* and other weapons at RSS *Shakhas* as well as its fascination for Hitlerite Nazism shows its proneness to violence. Even 46 years after Gandhi's

assassination, it has, while dissociating itself from this ghastly act, not condemned the assassin, a Hindu fanatic, so far.

On the question of social justice, it sometimes vaguely talks of restoring the status of women. But it never specifies the outline of that restoration. While projecting ancient female models, such as Sita, Savitri, Rani Jhansi, etc., it does not at all refer to the core issue of gender equality. Its prejudice against women is obvious from the RSS practice of keeping them out of its organisational hierarchy and the daily *shakhas*.

On the question of Kashmiri militancy, it distorts reality by projecting the migration of Kashmiris from the valley as a matter of minority or ethnic cleansing resulting out of a Muslim-Hindu war and concealing the fact that one-fourth of the Kashmiri Hindus are still staying on in the valley, that the total Muslim killings at the hands of the militants are 100 times more than the Hindus during the past 6 years and that thousands of Muslims have also migrated to Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere.

On the question of danger to the unity of India, the Sangh Parivar's highlighting of the theory of foreign hand and putting the entire blame on Pakistan for causing instability in the country distorts the reality by covering up the factors giving rise to national malaise. That is: the factors of the criminalisation of politics, the non-performance of economy and the degradation of culture. The factor of foreign hand is merely a supplementary phenomenon. The internal political, economic and cultural factors do not fall from the sky or erupt out of nothing. They are, in turn, generated by some basic causes. Unless we find out the basic causes, the trouble cannot be controlled.

In every type of human society, three elements constitute its fundamental forces. That is, its system, the operational or the controlling agency of the system and the people or the base. In every social malady, either the one or the other and sometimes the entire lot is responsible for the social disturbance.

In our case, the existence of a parallel mafia rule, the turning out of India into an economic pigmy on the world scale and the degeneration of the standards of conduct indicate that the disease is highly serious which generally emerges due to the malfunctioning of the three fundamental forces.

Learning from our historical experience, we find that our systemic malfunctioning is due to the systemic vision of a unitary state and the majoritarian nationalism which provide constitutional-legal framework for the generation of serious

troubles, that our operational malfunctioning is due to the corruption-oriented party mechanism which foment all sorts of trouble, and that the malfunctioning of the base is due to the lack of public awareness which is not effective enough to put pressure on the other two forces either to amend or change them.

35. Although, there appears general agreement on all policy issues in the Sangh Parivar, but a close look shows a series of differences on the time and the way of implementation.

On the question of foreign policy, the RSS would like a tough approach in relations with the Islamic countries, but the BJP considers that the foreign policy requires continuity and hence there is little possibility of an immediate far-reaching change.

On the question of shrines, the RSS would like the immediate taking up of the campaign on Kashi and Mathura, but the BJP considers that the forcible demolition can, like the Ayodhya episode, isolate the Parivar and hence the latter should concentrate only on temple building at Ayodhya and go slow on the other two.

On the question of Article 370, the RSS would like its immediate abrogation, but the BJP considers that the matter should be pursued in a low key till the party gets two-thirds majority in Parliament.

On the question of cow protection, the RSS would like an immediate action, but the BJP considers that this may not help the party in the coming electoral campaign.

On the question of uniform civil code, the RSS would like a quick initiative, but the BJP considers that it requires all party consultation and approval.

On the question of Hindi, the RSS would like a powerful campaign at once, but the BJP considers that it is not beneficial for the Parivar because of unrelenting opposition by the non-Hindi speaking states, especially the Southern ones.

On the question of *Swadeshi*, the RSS would like the total rejection of globalisation, but the BJP considers that the foreign capital and technology is beneficial for the core economic sector and hence should not be rejected in toto.

IV. Parivar's Programme

36. The Sangh Parivar's basic aim is the realisation of *Hindutva*, i.e., the establishment of Hindu order first in India and then the world over.

37. This aim arises from the supposition that the Hindu

represents the real native of this sacred land and the true creator of its ancient but unparalleled civilisation and culture, while all others are aliens who had only attacked this holy soil and harmed its unmatched *Sanskriti*.

38. The term *Hindutva* was first used by V.D. Savarkar, a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha in the early 20th century. He explained this concept as synonymous to Indian nation or Hindu *Rashtra* and defined Hindu as "a person who regards the land of *Bharatvarsha* from Indus to the Seas as his Fatherland (*Pitribhumi*) as well as his Holy Land (*Punyabhumi*), i.e., the cradle land of his religion" (*Hindutva: Who is a Hindu*, by V.D. Savarkar, 1923).

39. This definition identified the parameters of *Hindutva*, i.e., its frontiers, its basic forces, allies and adversaries, ethos and symbols, heroes, etc. Thus, the fold of *Hindutva* included all religions, which emerged in India—Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and surely all brands of Hinduism (such as *Sanatan Dharma*, *Arya Samaj*, Shavite, Vaishnavite, *Tantric*, etc.), as well as all its categories (i.e., *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Shudra*, etc.). Naturally, Hindus constitute its basic force, while the Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs become the allies. Hindu values—such as *Puja*, *Arti*, *Dussehra*, *Diwali*, *Rakhi*, *Holi*, etc.—form its ethos, while Rama, Krishana, etc., turn out its national heroes. Muslims, Christians, etc., come in the class of foreigners, for they have their holy lands outside of India. They cannot be true sons of the soil and hence cannot be trusted. Muslims are picked up as adversaries, because, of all the foreigners, they are the most ferocious enemies of *Hindutva*.

40. To establish the Hindu *Rashtra*, Savarkar emphasised the strategy of "the Hinduisation of politics and the militarisation of the Hindus." But he could not put it into practice. It fell to the lot of a contemporary fellow Maharashtrian, Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, to undertake this task by setting up Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925—an organisation which has since been "Hinduising politics and militarising Hindus."

41. The ideological context of *Hindutva* was provided by the long line of the Hindu reformers of the 19th and the 20th centuries.

42. The political context was provided by the continuous communalisation of politics since 1857 by all the main parties, i.e., the colonial rulers, Hindu leaders and Muslim elite.

43. The immediate context was provided by the emergence of

communal riots in India after the collapse of the Congress-Khilafat alliance and the rise of the fundamentalist Hindu platforms (i.e., *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan*) and the die-hard Muslim fronts (i.e., *Tabligh* and *Tanzim*) in communally sensitive areas, while its local context was marked by the origin of the *Dalit* movement in Maharashtra under Ambedkar, inheriting a powerful movement of backward classes led by Jyotiba Phule from 1870s.

44. There is no properly formulated a single programme of the Sangh Parivar. However, the various documents of its constituents give us the following broad picture.

45. **State:** The Sangh Parivar stands for a state that is based on Hindu *Dharam*, not merely rule by majority. In its view, *Dharam* is a very wide concept which is concerned with all aspects of life. It is a combination of religious, ethical and social principles which sustain society. All these principles or laws constitute the *Chiti* (or the soul) of a society. *Dharam* emphasises how man realises his worldly needs of *Artha* (wealth) and *Kama* (sex) and how he attains *Moksha* (salvation). Thus, *Dharam*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* form the four kinds of human effort (*Purushartha*). *Dharam* alone is supreme and the state is subject to it.

46. **Political Structure:** The Sangh Parivar opts for a unitary state, because, a unitary state, according to it, controls the emergence of parochial tendencies. In order to avoid the possibility of the emergence of narrow regional aspirations, it is necessary that India's political structure provides a vision of one nation of which the different states are organic parts. Such a unitary political structure must be based on a strong military power.

47. **Economic Structure:** The Sangh Parivar advocates a *Swadeshi* and decentralised economic structure, based on appropriate technology, proper use of resources, participation of labour in the management of production process and defence as its first priority. It stresses for the development of *Bharatiya* technology. It wants large production but through small and medium industries. It favours planning from the bottom and not from the top.

48. **Cultural Structure:** The Sangh Parivar believes that the *Hindutva* culture, with dharma as its foundation, is unique in the world and must be pursued in all human activities and by all humans.

49. **Official Language:** The Sangh Parivar upholds sanskritised Hindi as the only official language of India.

50. **On The Partition Of India:** The Sangh Parivar maintains that the existence of India and Pakistan as two separate entities is an artificial state. It wants the union of the two countries on the basis of an *Akhand Bharat*, not a Confederation of the two sovereign states.

51. **On The World Government:** Deen Dayal Upadhaya held that "nationalism or patriotism is the first step towards the welfare of humanity and that it is absurd to ignore one's mother and serve others."

52. From a perusal of the above programme, it can be seen that by defining a permanent majority, it subverts the basic principle of democracy according to which the question of majority-minority is determined from issue to issue. Next, its mixing of majoritarian religion and culture with the state threatens to transform India into a Theocracy which at all times rejects every democratic trait of human civilisation—i.e., liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, human, women and minority rights, etc.—and which has, always and everywhere, relied on violence. Further, its championing of the majoritarian interests and the reducing of the minorities to a status of perpetual subordination is liable to boost internal strife and increase minorities' alienation from the national mainstream—thus threatening the unity of India.

53. Apparently, it seems that the whole Sangh Parivar is in harmony with the basic principles of its programme. But, there are marked differences on a number of points. These are:

On the nature of nationalism, while the RSS emphasises the concept of *Hindutva*, the BJP generally speaks of positive secularism, characterising other parties' nationalism either as minorityism or as pseudo-secularism and uses the term *Hindutva* only in a formal sense.

On the nature of the state, while the RSS upholds the concept of *Dharam Rajya*, the BJP has in its Manifesto (November 1993) used the term *Ram Rajya* (as done by Gandhi).

On the question of gender equality, while the RSS conceals its anti-women feeling by keeping silent on women's issues, like *Sati*, infanticide, child marriage, dowry, reservations, equal rights with men in all respects, etc., the BJP often demands certain rights for them within the framework of a male-dominated patriarchal system (which assigns a second class status to women).

On the question of Muslims, while the RSS in general looks down upon them as suspects, the BJP declares that the pro-BJP Muslim voters get out of this category.

On the question of the *Dalit* and the Backward reservation, while the RSS disapproves of all types of reservation, the BJP has, in order to woo the *dalits* and the backwards, mandalised its *Hindutva*.

V. Parivar's World View

54. The Sangh Parivar's World View or ideology is based on the belief that *Hindutva* is eternal and all-pervading truth, representing the highest world order. The term order has been expressed by the ancient Vedic and Sanskrit texts as *Dharam* or way of life, which develops both society and the individual. It symbolises the entire existence, unlike religions which denote only their specific ways of worship.

55. But the term *Hindutva* or Hindu does not find any reference in any world history. Nor it occurs in the Vedic and the Epic Literature, the Buddhist and the Jainist Texts or even in the pre-Muslim era records. The first written mention of the word can be traced to the Moghul period. After that, it became a popular word during the Colonial Raj. It seems to draw its origin from the word *Sindhu*, the old name of the river Indus. The incoming Arabs and Turks might have pronounced it as Hindu and subsequently applied it for all those living beyond the river *Sindhu*.

56. The argument that Hinduism is something omnipotent and beyond comprehension is not supported by the facts of its history.

57. The history of Hinduism, a religion that today claims some 75-crore followers, began in India about 3,500 years ago. Evidence of its earlier antecedents can be derived from archaeology, comparative philology and comparative religion.

58. Hinduism consists of the beliefs, practices and socio-religious institutions of the people who call themselves Hindus. They primarily live in India and Nepal and in certain areas of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, Fiji, Mauritius, Surinam, Trinidad and in many other countries of the world.

59. The complexity of the definition of Hinduism arises from the fact that the scholars of Hinduism, including the Hindus themselves, have emphasised different aspects of the whole. Some have stressed it as a way of life. Others have highlighted its religious nature. Some others have covered its social aspect. This is because it is not a monolithic religion like Christianity or Islam but constitutes a complex amalgam of doctrines, cults and ways of life.

60. There are, however, some characteristics which are

recognised as the essentials of Hinduism.

(a) The belief in the eternal principle that the sole reality which comprises in itself being and non-being and the ultimate cause and good of all existence is the *Brahman*. He is the creator, preserver and transformer of everything. Though this Supreme Power is impersonal and singular without attributes and qualities, He is conceived of as being represented by three forms, i.e., *Trimurti* (*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*).

(b) The belief in the recognition of the Vedic literature as an absolute authority, revealing fundamental and infinite truth or the Eternal Reality as Word.

(c) The belief in the doctrine of soul, *karma* and transmigration. Soul is the kernel of being. *Karma* is one's deed which brings in fortune or misfortune. Transmigration is one's next condition determined by acts (i.e., *Karma*) performed by a being in a given life-span. The next condition denotes whether one will be reborn as a human or a non-human being (expressing the cycle of soul's passing through an endless series of births and deaths) or achieve final liberation (i.e., *Moksha*) from the bondage of births and deaths with the reintegration of one's soul with the *Brahman*. Final liberation of the soul can come through the worship of one of the three Gods.

The way to final liberation (i.e., *Moksha*) runs, as presented by *Bhagwadgita*, through three routes: (i) the path of duty (i.e., the *Karma Marga*), (ii) the path of knowledge (i.e., the *Gyan Marga*) and (iii) the path of devotion (i.e., the *Bhakti Marga*).

(d) The belief in respect for the cow (*gomata*).

(e) The belief in Ganga as the most sacred river (*gangamata*).

(f) The belief in *Bharatvarsha* as the chosen land of Gods (*Bharatmata*).

(g) The belief in *Puja* or *Arti* which protects one from evil spirits.

These seven basic beliefs constitute the ideology of Hinduism.

61. The main forms of Hinduism may consist of the following categories: (i) *Vaishnava*—a cult that regards Vishnu or his earthly incarnations as the Supreme Being, (ii) Shaivism—a cult that regards Shiva or his various forms and manifestations as Supreme Being, (iii) Tantrism and Shaktism, esoteric, magical and devotional developments within various religious forms, (iv) Folk Hinduism—practised in varying ways in different regions, (v) Modern Hinduism—as represented by various Hindu Reform Movements, i.e., *Brahmo Samaj* by Raja Ramamohan Roy (1772-

1833), *Arya Samaj* (1875) by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), Ramkrishna (1836-1886) Mission, Vivekananda (1862-1902), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1914), B.G. Tilak (1856-1920), M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948) and Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950).

62. Rituals, social practices and institutions: Vedic rituals included, private rites (*grhya*) concerning birth, marriage, disposal of dead, etc., and social ceremony (*yajna*). Post-Vedic and post-Epic ceremonies comprise: temple worship, *puja*, various forms of initiation (*Diksha*), *yoga*, festivals, sacred times and places, pilgrimages and fairs, the different rituals and social status of varying castes, establishment of four great monasteries by Shankaracharya, etc.

63. Cultural expression of Hindu values: the traditional Hindu view of the world affected all forms of culture—literature, art, sculpture, painting, architecture, theatre, dance, symbols, images, etc.

64. Hindu sacred literature consists of numerous texts, i.e., the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*, *Upanishadas*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *Bhagwadgita*, *Puranas*, *Dharma Shastras*, *Tantras*, sacred literature in regional languages, etc.

65. The above-stated view of polytheistic Hinduism and its pluralistic cultural ethos as represented and further developed by Hindu *Rishis*, Buddhist-Jainist *Bhikshus*, Sikh *Gurus*, Muslim *Sufis*, etc., are being refuted by the monolithic *Hindutva* of the Sangh Parivar today. The following lines from M.S. Golwalkar's writing reflect the cultural ethos of the Sangh Parivar's *Hindutva*. "...the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion... or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation...claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights." (*We or our Nationhood Defined*, Nagpur, 1938, P-52)

VI. Parivar's Network

66. The Sangh Parivar consists of a network of organisations which may briefly be stated as follows.

RSS

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, founded by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar in 1925, represents the mother of the entire Sangh Parivar.

Today, the RSS holds its daily *shakhas* at more than 30,000

places, weekly gatherings at about 10,000 places and monthly meetings at another 11,000 places. At all these gatherings, it tries to Hinduise the mindsets of its members (called *swayamsevaks*) and to militarise their behaviour patterns.

Besides, its own close-knit militant monolith, the RSS controls scores of organisations or fronts, now collectively known as the Sangh Parivar at the public level.

BJP

The Bharatiya Janata Party, the political front of the RSS, is a mass party with its ideology and cadres taken from the mother organisation. Organisationally, the BJP has a curious history. It was formed in 1951 under the name of Bharatiya Jan Sangh, which functioned upto 1977 and then merged into the Janata Party. The Jan Sangh, despite projecting itself as a highly nationalistic Hindu Party, met with a little success as an All-India entity. Even in the Hindi belt, it had done somewhat well only as part of all opposition combines (both in 1967 and 1977 elections) but not on the basis of its own ideology or organisation.

In the Janata Party phase, the Jan Sangh group had accepted the JP theory of Total Revolution, based on Gandhian ideology. In 1980, it broke away from the Janata Party on the 'dual membership' issue. But, neither did it revert to its old name, nor to its old hard political posture. Under Vajpayee's leadership, it tried to carve out a more acceptable image of itself under a new name, the BJP, and a new Hindu humanist ideology, the Gandhian socialism. It tried to present itself as a moral alternative to the corrupt and authoritarian politics of the Congress and the endemic factionalism of the non-Congress parties. But in the early 1980s, the BJP found that first Indira Gandhi (during the Punjab, Jammu and Delhi elections) and then Rajiv Gandhi (in the 1984 General Election) could capitalise on the Hindu political card, whereas the BJP got marginalized (with only two Lok Sabha seats in the 1984 Elections). It was this realisation that prompted the BJP to revive the old Jan Sangh line under Advani's leadership around 1986.

VHP

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the social front of the RSS, was founded in 1964, with the specific purpose to unite all Hindu religious sects under a single umbrella, to employ *Sadhus* and *Sants* for the propagation of *Hindutva* and to prevent the

conversions of Hindus into Muslims and Christians. Its two top bodies—i.e., *Marg Darshak Mandal* and *Dharam Sansad*—act as unity platforms to bring Hindu leaders together. *Shankar-acharyas*, the heads of the highest monasteries, are also given prominent role within the two top bodies. The Bajrang Dal, which mainly emphasises cow protection and looks after the training of young boys, is a department of VHP.

The VHP derives all its *pracharaks* from the RSS. Its entire ideological and organisational apparatus remains under RSS supervision. It uses advanced technology—video films, audio cassettes, stickers, etc.—to popularise the communal appeal.

ABVP

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad was floated in 1948. Its programme is to restructure relations between teachers, students and college managements on the family model. Teachers and administrators can also become its members. Its main utility has consisted in recruiting RSS cadres from the student community.

RSS (Women)

The Rashtrasevika Samiti, the women's front of the RSS, was set up in 1936, closely modeled on the RSS which still continues to be an exclusively male organisation. It orientates the women towards the RSS gender principle of family supremacy in all their actions—marriage, career choice, etc.

BMS

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, the labour front of the RSS, was set up in 1955 to counter the left influence in the labour movement. Its motto is "labourise industry, industrialise the nation and nationalise labour." It rejects international unity of labour.

Kisan Organisations

The Rayat Sangh set up in 1971 and the Kisan Sangh founded in 1979 are organisations to mobilise peasants and agricultural labourers and to enlist RSS support from the peasant community.

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67. The Sangh Parivar assumes that, for the first time in the post independence era, a new vision of our national future in the

form of a rejuvenated Hindu *Rashtra* is fast emerging and the coming period is going to offer an immense possibilities for its realisation.

VII. Parivar's Possibilities

68. A study of the theory and practice of the Sangh Parivar naturally raises certain questions which demand proper answers.

69. The first question is that if the various *Dharam Sansads*, *Margdarshak Mandals*, *Yagnas* and *Yatras* launched by the Sangh Parivar are in the interests of the Hindu community, as claimed by the sponsors, then what benefits the Hindus have derived.

70. The facts show that since 1980, when the Sangh Parivar decided to engage *Sadhus*, *Sants*, *Mahants*, *Acharayas* and *Maharishis* to unite and mobilise the Hindus for the attainment of the goal of a Hindu *Rashtra*, there has occurred rapid deterioration in all walks of our national life.

71. Indian politics has become more and more criminalised. Money-cum-muscle power has emerged as the main regulator of the Indian society. Violence has claimed the lives of India's two Prime Ministers. Violence and crimes against women, i.e., half of India, are on the increase. All the VIPs in India could not move without the protection of the commandos.

72. Communal riots have broken all records. The minorities have been further alienated. They have taken up arms in all such regions—Jammu-Kashmir, Punjab and North-Eastern States where they are in majority.

73. Casteism has reached unprecedented heights. Caste riots have multiplied at an unprecedented rate. Today, the sharp conflict between the caste Hindus, on the one hand, and the dalits and the backwards, on the other, has created an unbridgeable rift within the Hindu community. This is the type of unity which the *Samajik Samarasta* (i.e., social harmony) campaign initiated by the *Dharam Sansads* led by *Shankaracharyas* has created in the Hindu community.

74. Economically too India has been confronted with more trouble than at any time since independence. All the economic indicators show its worsening condition, adversely affecting the poor.

75. Culturally, a corrupt and double-dealing lifestyle has become a normal feature of the top politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and all those who count in social life.

76. The next question is that, if the people have not obtained

any gain from the Sangh Parivar's agenda, then what explains the fact of its advance in recent years.

77. The reason does not lie in any mass tilt towards Sangh Parivar's *Hindutva* agenda. But it squarely rests with the absence of effective national model choices before the Indian people. The failure of the post-1947 Nehruvian model which the Indian people had opted for by shedding the communal partition mindset has created a vacuum in the Indian political process. The other available national model alternatives, i.e., the Communist, the Socialist (as represented by the casteist JD model today) as well as the Western Liberal model, having suffered setbacks in various countries of the world, have also lost certain credibility in the eyes of Indian people. A newly-emerging Global Model is yet to take its final shape and prove its utility. Nineteen Eighty Nine was the cut-off year when the Nehruvian paradigm and the other world models suffered a setback, while the *Hindutva* model began to rise, step by step moving to the status of an alternative. But, the *Hawala* earthquake has again shaken it to the core.

78. The above explanation is also reinforced by the historical fact that the post-1947 *Hindutva* model hovered around the political process for nearly four decades. All its catch-phrases of pseudo-secularism, minority appeasement, call against cow slaughter, aggressive anti-Pak posture, common civil code, making the study of Sanskrit compulsory, Ayodhya Masjid demolition, *Ram Bhakti*, etc., did not get it anywhere.

79. Again, the above explanation gets further support from another historical fact that the *Hindutva* paradigm (whether the old or the new) has, with its inequalitarian caste structure and force-oriented style, been deficient in social cohesion throughout its history—thus unable to beat socially more integrative rival forces, foreign or domestic.

80. Another question is that if communalism has been an anti-people agenda, why did it remain a powerful dimension of the Indian politics.

81. Both ideological and material factors have contributed to this phenomenon.

82. Before 1947, the ideological communalisation of the masses came from two main sources, i.e., (a) the communal interpretation of history by the Hindu and the Muslim religious reformers as well as the British historians during the 19th and the 20th centuries, and (b) the communalisation of politics by the Gandhi-led Congress and the Jinnah-led Muslim League as well

as the British colonial regime. The material factor which contributed to the mass communalisation comprises the conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim elites on the question of the distribution and control of the political power and the economic resources. Gandhian theory of nationalism failed to convince even the liberal Muslims of the justness of its case and win them over to its side. Similarly, the Muslim League theory could not establish the justness of its logic among any section of the Hindu elite. Thus, both types of communalism gained ascendancy and fed into each other—ultimately leading to the 1947-communal partition of India.

83. In the post-1947 phase, the use of communalism by the mainstream parties to serve their politics of corruption and criminalisation has, in the context of the continuing traditional anti-Muslim prejudice and an increasing Indo-Pak confrontation, resulted in the perpetuation of the old communal thinking and some new communalisation of the peoples mindsets (mainly on the old Hindu-Muslim basis). And materially, the perspective of unitary system and majoritarian secularism has led to discriminatory policies against minorities, especially the Muslim.

84. In both the pre-1947 and the post-1947 situations, the continuation of Indian peoples traditional community and caste-based approach and the lack of a new democratic consciousness among the masses has provided a social soil for the implantation of the new varieties of communalism and the perpetuation of its old types.

85. The last question is: Will the Sangh Parivar's *Hindutva* agenda work? Or is it viable? Or can Hindu cultural nationalism (or Hindu revivalism) unite the Indian people into one national entity as claimed by the Sangh Parivar's new doctrine: "culture unites, while politics divides."

86. The situation is so fluid today that nothing categorical can be said about India's future. But, in the given state of things, a dominant possibility is that the Sangh Parivar's *Hindutva* agenda will not work. The reasons may be varied—national, international and historical.

87. Nationally, the first impediment in the workability of the *Hindutva* agenda is the inner weakness of the Sangh Parivar which is not a monolithic entity as it poses to be or as analysed by certain observers. It is riven with sharp ideological, political and organisational conflicts and tussles within each and among the members of the Parivar.

(a) Ideologically, the Sangh Parivar is characterised by four conflicting ideological orientations.

That is, (i) the aggressive neo-Hinduism (modelled on German Nazism of the 1920's) as represented by the RSS core, (ii) the Integral Hindu Humanism of Deen Dayal Upadhaya (very much closer to Gandhian Hindu Humanism, with the principal difference that the former is vehemently opposed to the Muslim community) as held by L.K. Advani group, (iii) the Gandhian Hindu Humanism (called Gandhian socialism which formed the official philosophy of the BJP from 1980 to 1986) as maintained by A.B. Vajpayee faction, and (iv) the aggressive Manuwadi Hinduism as projected by a section of the *Sants* and the *Maharishis* inside the VHP (resembling Shiv Sena type *Hindutva*). Thus, ideologically, the RSS core and the VHP leaders stand on one side, while Advani and Vajpayee trends form another combine.

(b) Politically, the two ideological sides also take two different stands. The RSS-VHP side, faced with the needs of a religious-cum-cultural movement, adopts an aggressive *Hindutva* agenda, while the Advani-Vajpayee side, confronted with the compulsions of an electoral politics, pursues a non-*Hindutva* agenda which is primarily related to mass problems and issues of governance, and uses the *Hindutva* agenda to only reinforce its politics (just like Congress) and not for the sake of any *Hindutva* movement. Naturally, this causes conflicts between the two sides which many a times remain hidden due to the specific functioning style of the RSS and sometimes are reported in the media.

(c) Organisationally, the existence of four conflicting approaches and the pursuing of the two sets of agendas, each with its own priorities, have given rise to factions and factional fights inside the BJP as well as among the constituents of the Sangh Parivar.

(d) Since the very beginning of the Sangh Parivar (with its various constituents emerging at different times), the RSS has been running the entire show. But today this overall domination has, due to certain changes in the given balance of forces during the last four years, undergone a change. That is, the BJP, with its expanding mass base in terms of membership (now over one crore), electoral support and the affiliation of various mass organisations (both RSS-related or independent), has acquired a new identity confidence, with Advani-Vajpayee combine constantly asserting the BJP's independent position in managing the party affairs. In the last fortnight, a further shift has occurred

in the power equation inside the Sangh Parivar where Vajpayee has come to acquire a key position in the BJP leadership due to Advani's discredibility for his involvement in the *Hawala* case and the Advani group's full backing to the former.

Despite RSS leading core's displeasure over the Vajpayee phenomenon, the former has limited options except to come to terms with this change at this moment. May be, this uneasy relationship undergo another alteration in the post-election context. The experience, however, shows that, under the ongoing parliamentary democracy and in the age of newly-emerging people-empowered democracy, the RSS system of authoritarian and hierarchical control (whether in polity, economy or culture) cannot sustain for long.

88. The second impediment in the workability of the *Hindutva* agenda is the just emerged mass perception (after the filing of the charge-sheet against Advani in the *Hawala* case and the revelations about other BJP leaders accepting money from dubious sources) that the Sangh Parivar is not at all different from the lot, thus leading to a fall in its moral stature (or ethical credibility).

89. The third impediment is the BJP's lack of a national campaign issue which has the potential to dominate the election scenario. As shown by the November, 1993 State Assembly elections, the BJP has saturated the support that can be derived from stressing an aggressive Hindu agenda. Now, it has been robbed off its recent agenda of exposing the ruling party's role in the criminalisation of politics and high power corruption by the *Hawala* episode.

90. The fourth impediment is the BJP's overstress on India's unitary system which constrains its chances of electoral alliances with the regional parties, all of which are characterised by regional aspirations and agendas.

91. The fifth impediment is the current balance of forces in the country, with none of the three major contestants for political power, i.e., the Congress, NF-LF combine, BJP, is in a position to win absolute majority on its own.

92. The sixth impediment is the existence of a Mandalised politics which dissuades the *Dalits* and the backwards from joining the high caste led Sangh Parivar or any of its constituents which has forced the BJP to Mandalise its *Hindutva*.

93. The seventh impediment is the social structure of the Hindu community which lacks a single cultural, ethnic or

linguistic basis and is multi-coloured in all aspects.

94. The eighth impediment is the absence of any feeling among the people in the South or the *dalits* and the backwards all over India that their security and political-economic interests are under threat from the Muslims, majority of whom are as much impoverished as the former are.

95. The ninth impediment is the non-existence of an appeal to the Sangh Parivar's anti-Muslim agenda among the upper caste elite who do not have any idea of challenge to their concerns from the Muslim elite.

96. The tenth impediment is the Indian Constitutional vision of majoritarian secularism (or nationalism) which, by adopting majoritarian idioms and symbols as state ethos, satisfies the urges of only the Hindu fundamentalists.

97. The eleventh impediment is the fact of the living-style of the national leaders, whether, those of the Congress or the communist and socialist parties, who follow the same Hindu traditional patterns as are observed by the leaders of the Sangh Parivar.

98. Internationally, three basic principles of *Hindutva* stand in contradiction to the global realities.

99. Firstly, the *Swadeshi*, one fundamental pillar of the *Hindutva* agenda, does not reconcile with the process of global integration of the national economies, a task now being carried on by every country (whether in an appropriate way or otherwise). Nobody had yet defined what *Swadeshi* means. But if it means a way to strike deals with Enron and other MNCs, use multinational products in place of shoddy domestic goods at home everyday, and send one's children to English-medium schools in the country and to get degrees abroad, then this slogan is nothing but a double-dealing game with the people. It is commonly known that the Sangh Parivar was, during Nehru's days, opposed to his policy of self-reliance which too means nothing but *Swadeshi*.

100. Secondly, the other fundamental pillar of the *Hindutva* agendas, i.e., the authoritarian and hierarchical methodology (where the whole structure of the RSS is run on the nomination basis from the top down below and then this nominated hierarchy controls all those organisations, including the BJP, which claim to ensure democracy in the country) violates the basic principle of even the 19th century democracy what to say of the unfolding peoples' controlled and led global system.

101. Thirdly, another fundamental pillar of the *Hindutva* agenda, i.e., the cultural nationalism, did not find any support from the global development, new or old. The new fact is that the recently-emerged regional communities, EC, NAFTA, APEC, ASEAN, etc., are not based on any monolithic cultural principle but mainly economic and security considerations. An old fact is that a single culture has not been an exclusive or dominant element of the development of nation states. For instance, the 21 Arab states, with a common language, same religion and similar culture, could not establish even a confederal unity, what to say of a one-unit integration. The whole of Europe, characterised by the Christian faith and a similar type of liberal culture remained divided into different states. Similar had been the case with the overwhelmingly Buddhist-populated states in the Far East and the South East Asia. A recent fact is that the cultural factor has often proved unviable to keep a country together. For example, Czechoslovakia split into two republics, i.e., Czech and Slovak, despite having the same religion and identical culture only three years ago. A similar thing had happened between Norway and Sweden, despite a similar culture in early this century. The break-up of the former Soviet Union was primarily caused by its Slav-cum-Christian cultured three republics, Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia, at their Minsk meeting in December 1991. Pakistan could not maintain its one unit on the basis of religious culturalism.

102. The argument that *Hindutva* is something extraordinary and unusual and hence is incomparable with other cultures is negated by its 3,500 years long history of internecine conflicts and wars in the *Hindutva* camp.

103. Historically, two glaring instances provide us sufficient information about the nature and viability of the *Hindutva* theory.

104. One has been the RSS' role during the pre-1947 anti-colonial movement against the British colonial rule. In whatever roundabout way or quibbling expression, the RSS may try to explain the propriety of that role, it cannot be justified by any standard. The basic point in that movement was not whether the Gandhi-led Congress' way of struggle against the British rule was right or wrong. The basic point was: what was just and what unjust at that time in India? Obviously, everyone does, and should, accept that the British colonial rule was not then justified on any count. Flowing from this logic, the proper task at that time for everyone in India was that he should stand with the Indian people against the British colonial rule.

Where did RSS stood at that time? All available record, written as well as oral, shows that the RSS sided with the colonial rulers. Was not this a hostile act against the Indian people? If the RSS did differ with the Congress line, the proper course for it was to offer its own alternative to resolve the independence question. It did not do that but in its place offered its cooperation and services to the British government.

Now, the tragedy is that, instead of being modest and self-critical about its pre-1947 mistakes, it irrationally defends that blunder and counter-attacks all those who remind it about its sample of Hindu patriotism.

105. The second glaring fact has been RSS' approach towards the Congress which too does not reflect any moral principle in its behaviour style.

Everyone knows that Sangh Parivar characterises Congress secularism as pseudo-secularism or minorityism (i.e., undue appeasement of minorities). Even before 1947, it had opposed Gandhism as a pro-Islamic and anti-Hindu doctrine.

But what has been RSS' actual practice towards the Congress and Gandhism. Not going into lengthy details, we refer here to a few facts which indicate a way of saying one thing and doing another.

One is that M.S. Golwalkar, the RSS supremo from 1938 to 1973 and its foremost theoretician, made a tacit agreement with Sardar Patel, the then home minister, in September, 1949 that the members of the RSS (then a banned organisation on charges of its involvement in Gandhi's assassination) would be allowed to carry on their 'patriotic' endeavour if they formally join the Congress and not by keeping an independent identity. This understanding was reached between the then RSS General Secretary Eknath Ranade who was negotiating on behalf of the RSS and Sardar Patel.

The Congress historical record shows that the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution allowing RSS men to join the Congress as primary members on October 9, 1949 (when Nehru was abroad). After, Nehru's return from his foreign tour, this resolution was rescinded on November 17, 1949. And the Congress-RSS secret deal broke down.

Again, it was not for nothing that, during the 1975-77 Emergency regime, Balasaheb Deoras, the then RSS chief, addressed two letters to Indira Gandhi, assuring her of RSS' cooperative approach towards her administration and begging of

her to lift the ban on the RSS (imposed after the declaration of Emergency in 1975) and release him on parole. These letters were placed on the table of the Maharashtra Assembly on October 18, 1977.

In 1977, the Jan Sangh, the then political front of the RSS, merged into the Janata Party, guided by Jai Parkash Narain, holding Gandhian socialism as its basic philosophy at that time.

In 1980, the BJP at its inaugural session (after the Jan Sangh members' break from the Janata Party) adopted Gandhian socialism as its ideology, upholding it up to 1986.

In 1983 Assembly Elections, the RSS supported Indira Gandhi when she displayed her 'Hindu card' to get votes in Jammu, Punjab and Delhi.

In 1992, Bhaurau Deoras, the brother of the then RSS head, Balasaheb Deoras, made a proposal (widely reported in the Press and never denied by any side) to Narsimha Rao that both the Congress and the BJP form a coalition government or at least cooperate with each other to handle the complex problems facing the country.

Does, or can, any moral principle justify the stand of an alliance between *Hindutva* and Minorityism?

106. We earnestly appeal to all types of members of the Sangh Parivar, many of whom have pledged their lives for the *Hindutva* cause, to undertake a serious review of the identity between the Sangh Parivar's thinking, saying and doing as well as between the Sangh Parivar's goal and the actual Indian and the world realities. A genuine introspection always helps one to see the truth of the process under one's examination. 01-02-1996

Mandalism—A Caste-Based Theory Of Fake Justice

The six-week old Mandalised reservation order, fixing 27 percent quota of central jobs for the socially and educationally backward castes, has not only incited a serious turmoil all over the country but also deeply divided the Indian people into two opposing camps—for and against the said order.

Prior to the issuing of this highly sensitive order, neither the Mandal report had ever been discussed at any social level during the past ten years of its public existence (1980-90), nor the new reservation order has been properly considered by any political or legislative forum and nor the said order been arrived at after taking into account the responses of various state governments to whom the report had earlier been referred. Thus, the whole process had been contrary to the consensus style, daily recited by the Prime Minister.

The timing of the coming out of this hastily conceived order—just on Devi Lal's rally—was a clear indication of its being a political gimmickry to secure mileage over anti-V.P. Singh faction inside Janata Dal than ensuring any social justice.

What is worse is that this shabby order, while claiming to establish an egalitarian society, is itself based on an irrational foundation, i.e., the Mandal report, both logically and factually.

Firstly, the Mandal report is distinguished by the inconsistency between its cause and solution. That is, while blaming casteism for the social and educational backwardness in India, it, at the same time, adopts caste as the central unit to dispense social justice or recognises casteism as the basis of removing social and educational backwardness.

From this caste analysis arise two distortions in our social process. One social distortion is that the Mandal report motivates people to view things from a casteist angle and act in the interests of their respective castes as against the rival castes,

just as a nation-based theory orientates people to consider phenomena from a nationalist angle and work for the interests of their respective nations in contrast to other nations. The other social distortion is that it obscures current Indian social reality by making age-old castes synonymous with the modern classes.

The historical evidence, however, shows that the age-old castes and the modern classes are two distinct social phenomena. While the castes had been related to the social division of labour of a primitive agriculture and its self-sufficient village community, the modern Indian classes are connected with an advanced scientific-technological mechanism and its international-cum-national commodity division of labour, linking through exchange the 5 billion world population as a single economic unit. Next, while in pre-modern times various Indian regions, based on the caste division of labour, derived their respective incomes from primitive agriculture, the 1990-India gets only 34% of its national income from agriculture, the rest coming from urban industrial and service activities. Again, while the caste, according to tradition, did emerge from God, the modern classes, as affirmed by modern sociology, have sprung from the economic division of labour. Further, while the labour process of the castes was regulated by force, that of the modern classes is run by the rule of law. Furthermore, while caste hierarchy was hereditary and permanent under which no one had the right to change his caste during his lifetime, the class identity is a changeable social category. As a whole, the caste mechanism constituted a full-fledged social system which included the governing executive, bureaucracy and judiciary, i.e., the Brahmin caste, the fighting force, i.e., the Kshatriya caste, the trading and farming community i.e., the Vaisya caste, and the physically serving force, i.e., the depressed caste, while the modern class structure (i.e., the capitalist, middle and working classes) represents the economic mechanism—with the political sphere being managed by the political parties and the cultural domain by the cultural bodies.

Though casteism still survives as an influential force in our social life, yet it is merely a remnant of an old reality, going step by step out of existence. Had the Nehruvian model worked well, the residual caste institution would have by this time become almost irrelevant.

Secondly, the Mandal report is marked by the inconsistency between its aim and methodology. That is, while it claims to stand for an egalitarian society based on social justice and equality, its

action plan, by admitting as many castes as possible into the OBC category (numbering 3,743 and constituting 52 percent of India's total population), swamps the really backward (actually forming half of the commission's estimation) by several advanced and undeserving groups—such as Lingayats and Vokkaligas in Karnataka, Yadavs, Kurmis and Banias in Bihar, Ahirs, Koeris and Yadavs in UP, Jats in Ajmer, Kunbis in Maharashtra, Rajputs in Gujarat, etc. The study prepared by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay for the Commission shows that the Vokkaligas are a dominant landed gentry caste and the Kurmis, Koeris and Yadavs own substantial lands and employ labour. Politically, the OBCs constitute 40 percent of the Bihar Assembly, 30 percent of the UP Assembly, more than 50 percent of the Karnataka Assembly, 25 percent of the V.P. Singh's cabinet, 40 percent of the present Lok Sabha members with rural background, etc.

Thirdly, the Mandal report is inconsistent with the basic spirit of our constitution. It negates secularism by upholding caste identity. It weakens national integration by generating intra-caste strife. It violates democracy by introducing new caste discrimination. While the Indian constitution recognises two basic identities, i.e., the nation and the citizen, and the two transitional identities, i.e., the SCs and STs and the socially and educationally backward classes, it establishes an extra-constitutional identity, i.e., the socially and educationally backward castes.

Fourthly, the Mandal report ignores the post and the pre-1947 India's caste and religion-based reservation experience. The post-1947 caste-based reservation experience as contained in the various reports of the Commission for SCs and STs, Planning Commission documents and the data released by the CSO, shows that only advanced sections of the SCs and STs have cornered the fruits, while 90 percent of them still remain in the same old miserable condition. The pre-1947 religion-based reservation experience is full of communal estrangement and separatism. The uplift model, based on reservation and not basic structural change, has proved ineffective.

Fifthly, the Mandal report, by weakening competition, breeds vested interest in the system of reservation—thus hindering efficiency and innovation. Social justice, unrelated to merit and efficiency, becomes unproductive. The all-round inefficiency created by the single party monopoly of power in the socialist countries is a case in point.

Sixthly, the Mandal report is based on a defective data-base.

The estimated population of the OBCs is worked out by taking the population percentages for the SCs and STs and non-Hindus (22.56 and 16.16 respectively) from the 1971 census and for the 'forward Hindus' (17.8) from the incomplete 1931 census, then adding them and, subtracting the sum (56.3) from 100—thus estimating the population of Hindu OBCs (43.7) and finally adding to the latter half of the population percentages for the non-Hindus (8.4) as OBCs and a total figure (52.1) for OBCs. The report also does not contain any independent data on the political, economic and cultural-educational conditions of the different communities from which alone their advanced or backward positions could have been determined. The commission's information is mainly derived from its survey carried out in selected two villages and one urban block of each district. The report admits that its survey has no pretensions to being a piece of academic research. In the ultimate analysis, the OBCs identified by the report have been determined on the basis of OBCs lists, prepared by the states, motivated more by political than social realities. Consequently, the application of this defective data at the national level will only distort the social reality of backwardness. Interestingly, all the three technical experts associated with the working out of the commission's methodology have openly repudiated the conduct, findings and conclusions at the Mandal report.

The foregoing irrationalities point out that the Mandal report is not only devoid of social and natural justice but is also a misdirected theory, both nationally and internationally.

Nationally, it relegates our number one current priority, i.e., the national unity, to the secondary place and adds the caste virus to the communal venom that partitioned India in 1947. It has already created intra-caste strife not only among the common people but also within every political party, in the official coalition and the ruling National Front—thus disrupting our entire social fabric. It is under its divisive orientation that the JD president threatens of a bloodbath to all anti-reservationists and the two central ministers call upon the pro-reservationists to come out on the streets and give a befitting reply to the opponents—a clear-cut call for caste riots.

Internationally, it conflicts with the spirit of our times whose two principal features—trans-nationalism and common-marketism—are irreconcilable with the nationally disruptive theory and practice of casteism.

Theoretically, Mandalism, deriving its inspiration from

backward equalitarianism, views India as a jumble of forward and backward castes and upholds the simplistic strategy of establishing an egalitarian society by making the backwards forwards and vice-versa.

Historical experience, however, shows that the Mandalist strategy of equalitarianism has worked nowhere. Many pro-poor movements, like Owenism in England, Proudhanism in France, Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in China, Paris Commune, socialist regimes in Russia, China, etc., could not achieve their ends. The reason lay in their one-sided emphasis on preferential treatment to the have-nots, without enabling the latter to become more efficient and also without taking advantage of the then available talent among the advanced sections. This one-sided emphasis naturally hindered their social development—a two-sided process which, on the one hand, demands continuous flourishing of efficiency and innovation and, on the other, requires constant dispensing of social justice. Without continuous improvement in efficiency and innovation, which leads to the expansion of social cake, no social justice, which creates the conditions for the growth in efficiency and innovation, can be imparted and vice-versa. All one-sided pro-poor theories, such as classes and class struggle, caste and caste conflict, imperialism and world revolution, third worldism versus super powers, laying stress only on struggle, have proved ineffective. The entire historical movement for social equality and justice—from human herd to clan, to tribe, regional kingdom, nation-state and now towards a world government—has been a two-sided process through interaction of unity and struggle between nature and man, on the one hand, and between man and man, on the other.

Proceeding from this historical experience, the process of our correcting the historical wrongs and bringing the deprived to the national mainstream, demands a two-sided action-plan—short-term as well as long-term.

The long-term planning requires that in order to develop their native endowments and environmental factors, the socially disadvantaged be provided the following multi-pronged facilities:

(a) free education and medical-care, (b) development of rural housing, water-supply, power, transport, tele-communications, marketing and credit, (c) implementation of land reforms' laws, the liberation of bonded labour, ensuring of minimum wages to the agricultural labourers and immediate shifting of 20 percent rural population from agriculture to industry, and (d) national level

changes to federalise and decentralise the Indian polity, economy and culture, make a proper use of capital resources, raise labour productivity and remove poverty and unemployment.

The short-term measures are: (a) all those living below the poverty line, i.e., nearly 40 percent be given the right to reservation in central, state, public sector and private sector jobs.

(b) out of the 40 percent total reservation quota, 22.5 percent be the limit as at present, for the SCs and STs, (c) the special rights granted at present to the SCs and STs be provided only to those of their members who fall below the poverty line. Those going up that line be removed from the official category of SCs and STs, (d) the remaining 18 percent of jobs be reserved for those citizens whose per capita incomes are under the poverty line. With the crossing of the poverty line, everyone be removed from the below poverty list of this category, (e) the lists of those below the poverty line, having been finalised around 1988, are officially available in most of the states, and (f) a five member block committee consisting of the concerned MLA, Block Pradhan, BDO, Tehsildar and Education Officer, in the rural areas and a similar committee substituting Block Pradhan by the Ward Member and the BDO by the Municipal or Town Area Chairman, in the urban centres, be formed to scrutinise the officially available lists and issue below poverty certificates to the eligible persons.

Developments following the unjust reservations order, culminating in the mighty student movement characterised by great sacrifices demonstrate that, while the obstinate stand of the Prime Minister on Mandalism is an expression of his crude opportunism, the double-speak of the Congress, BJP and the left parties—i.e., in private opposing the new reservation order, but in public demanding a linkage between the casteist recipe and the economic prescription—is an evidence of their putting the partisan interests above the national ones.

The current caste polarisation is going to have a great impact on our social life. A new political alignment is in the offing. Sharpening communal and caste strife and worsening economic position are going to be the other fallouts. This developing situation can properly be met if all internationalist and national democratic forces forge a broad front against issue and personality based political opportunism, communalism, casteism and secessionism.

27-09-1990

Caste Hierarchy—An Outgoing Unjust And Oppressive Theory

I

1. Does caste hierarchy constitute the basis of social backwardness in India, Mandalism answers this question in the affirmative and so do all its adherents, such as Janata Dal, National Front, all varieties of Indian Communists, Lohia Socialists and casteists, including the protagonists of caste collectives.

2. The Casteist school's case, in brief, is that the caste hierarchy is India's dominant reality which, by keeping prosperity, progress and even simple human dignity beyond the reach of a vast section of our population, keeps us socially and educationally backward. According to it, caste still remains the medium of individual identity and marriage. Members of the higher castes neither inter-dine nor inter-marry with members of the lower castes. They still molest women belonging to the lower castes, extract forced labour, refuse to recognise tenancy rights and heap indignities on the low-caste people.

A casteist ideologue has gone to the extent of ascribing a modern democratic role for the lower and backward castes, organised into caste collectives, such as Dalits, OBCs, etc.

3. Do matters actually stand in the way the pro-casteist school believes? To find out the exact position, it is necessary to look at certain basic realities in India.

II

4. Let us start with the reality of social backwardness in India. Briefly defined, it denotes one's lagging behind in the three main components of the category of social, i.e., politics, economics and culture. According to this definition, there is no precise estimate as to what part of Indian population is socially backward. Compared with Western countries, some estimate that 90 percent of Indian population is backward. By the 3rd world standards, some put the

figure near 70 percent. On the basis of India's poverty line, some suggest that 2/5th of India is backward.

5. From where does this backwardness arise? There is much vagueness on this question. Even the Constituent Assembly debates do not offer a clear explanation. Judicial pronouncements on the question are also divided. Some decisions take the view that backwardness should be determined on the economic basis, while others consider that caste is the most important consideration.

6. Today, the whole world, particularly the developing countries, accepts that backwardness is an outcome of multiple causes—political, economic and cultural—the principal being the poverty. This means that, while the general cause of social backwardness is lack of democratic politics and culture, the particular cause is economic or poverty.

7. The reason why poverty constitutes the main dividing line between the backwards and the forwards is that, despite its shortcomings, the Rule of Law in India ensures the same political and cultural rights to every Indian citizen—whether belonging to a high or a low caste. No one enjoys any privilege in politics or culture, excepting the SCs and STs.

8. The inequality exists in the economic sphere where some own wealth worth millions of rupees, while many at times sleep hungry. The economic clout enables the economically advanced to occupy high positions even in the political and cultural spheres.

9. The reason why the caste hierarchy does not form the main source of social backwardness lies in its conflict with the basic principles of our nation-state, namely, the commodity economy, parliamentary politics and money-cum-religion oriented culture. Had casteism been the main generator of our social backwardness, there would have been no backwardness in caste free Pakistan, Bangladesh or Bhutan. The overwhelming backwardness in about 100 developing countries clearly points out that there is a common cause, i.e., the poverty, of the similar malady.

III

10. Next, let us examine some questions concerning India's economic reality, namely, the questions of India's occupational patterns, asset ownership, labour process, poverty and unemployment, etc.

11. As regards the question of occupational patterns, (i.e., the industrial, trading and agricultural sectors), it generally denotes the various types of activities (or professions) people engage in

to earn their livings. Now, who determines what the people should do in India? In the ancient times, the caste hierarchy had assigned a particular job to each caste. For instance, the lower castes—Sudra and Vaisya—constituting the various categories of peasants and workers, were bonded either to the lord or the land. But, today, there is no legal or social binding and every one is free to pursue any profession.

The traditional caste occupations have undergone basic changes. They are at present being determined, mainly by the market mechanism under which the rich rush towards the most profitable sectors, while the poor try to fetch whatever is available. If, for instance, it is more profitable, a Brahmin businessman would unhesitatingly invest in shoe-manufacturing, despite its traditionally having been a low-caste profession. A depressed caste member is fully entitled to run an advanced educational institution, a profession traditionally reserved for the Brahmin caste. The rising unemployment market forces the poor (may he belong to a high or low caste) to undertake whatever job is available. Working at menial jobs by high caste persons provides instances contrary to caste rules. Workers who sell their labour power do so not because they belong to lower castes but because they lack money, sufficient enough to engage in other lucrative activities. All transactions in industry, agriculture and trade are regulated by none else than the consideration for money—the chief medium of the market.

12. As regards the question of asset ownership, it generally denotes the position of economic control in any economy. Now, who controls the industrial, trade and agricultural sectors in India? In the pre-modern age, the two top castes (the Brahmin and the Kshatriya) held full sway over the economy. Today, the state sector, the biggest sector in our economy, is fully owned by the state. In the private corporate sector, nearly 40 percent is also owned by the state financial institutions, while the ownership of the rest vests in the small share-holders. The big corporate houses control between 1 to 10 percent in various corporate enterprises. In the individual or partner ownerships, a mixed picture, including certain owners belonging to the backward castes (such as Yadav, Ahir, Gujjar, Kurmi, Koeri, Lingayat, Vokkaliga, Kamma, Bania, Ramgharia, etc.), prevails.

Today, the biggest industrialist in India is the House of Tatas, traditionally belonging to Parsi community, having no relation to the caste hierarchy. Also, none of the first ten Indian industrialists comes from the two upper castes and all of them belong to the

Bania caste, recognised as backward by Mandal Commission in Bihar. Some years back, the richest man in India was not any upper caste member but the ex-Nizam of Hyderabad. All branches of MNCs in India are controlled not by India's upper castes but foreign owners, almost all belonging to the Christian community.

13. As regards the question of labour process, it generally denotes the process of working for achieving certain economic, political or cultural ends. Now, who dominates this process in India? In the old days, it was regulated by the two upper castes—the Brahmin and the Kshatriya—with the Vaisya constituting the working force and the Sudra, serving them all. Today, it is overall organised by the government, followed by the individual entrepreneurs and the land-owners in their respective domains. All individual enterprises are supervised by their respective owners. With the passage of the law on the participation of labour in the management, the workers, generally belonging to the lower castes, would also become partners in the regulation of their labour process.

14. As regards the question of poverty and unemployment, it generally denotes the totality and the growth rate of poverty and unemployment. Now, who is responsible for the prevalence of poverty and unemployment in India? In the period of village self-sufficient economy, every caste held responsibility for carrying out certain specific and unchangeable tasks and received remuneration according to its status in the caste hierarchy. Hence, there was no question of absolute poverty and unemployment under that fixed and hereditary system, despite the poor living standard of even the top castes.

The old village self-sufficient division of labour began to lose its rigour with the introduction of the economic system of commodity production and exchange along with its two basic tools, the market and money, by British colonialism. This, in course of time, led to the creation of a new class structure—with princes, land-owners, businessmen (later industrialists too), civil servants, etc., as upper classes; tenants, landless and workers as labouring classes; and petty-traders, small land-owners and babus as middle class. While in the heyday of the caste hierarchy, every one's share was fixed according to one's hierarchical status, the unequal market exchange gave rise to the process of concentrating money in a few hands, on the one side, and of turning the rest into poor and middle categories, on the other—thus giving rise to the questions of poverty and

unemployment. In the post-1947 period, the poverty and unemployment position could not be improved due to the misuse of India's economic resources. And today, the question of poverty constitutes a very important national problem creating inequality and backwardness not only in our economic sphere but also the political and cultural ones.

IV

15. Further, let us discuss some questions pertaining to India's political reality, namely, the Rule of Law, Parliamentary Democracy, Administrative Functioning, etc.

16. As regards the question of the Rule of Law, it generally denotes a system in which every one is treated as equal before the law in every social activity. Though Indian Rule of Law is characterised by certain weaknesses, yet its fundamental and common laws are irreconcilable with the caste rules which justify caste hierarchy as a divine institution, bestow privileges on upper castes and deny even human rights to the lower ones as well as women. Obviously, the Rule of Law and the caste hierarchy are two mutually exclusive concepts.

17. As regards the question of the Parliamentary Democracy, it generally denotes a rule of the people, by the people and for the people—a rule which is based on universal suffrage and competitive politics, is managed by the democratic parties and constantly undergoes governmental changes in accordance with the peoples electoral verdict. Obviously, such a parliamentary democracy in India, despite its drawbacks, conflicts with the caste hierarchy which derives its authority not from the people but the god and which is eternal irrespective of climes and times. In the electoral process, all activities from the filing of nomination papers to the vote-purchasing and the booth-capturing depend on the money-power, with caste and religion in the supplementary role.

18. As regards the question of administrative functioning, it generally denotes the working of the permanent administrative machinery. The Indian administration, despite its constitutional and legal obligations, lacks any social motivation and thus suffers from certain maladies—the main being the money consideration. With the use of money as gratification, one can get administrative redress to any problem, big (such as license, permit, etc.) or small (like the recording of girdawari, the registration of first information report with the police, the securing of copies of judgment in the courts, etc.). Here, caste hardly makes any difference.

V

19. Furthermore, let us consider some questions related to India's cultural reality, namely, the current values and mores.

20. As regards the question of cultural values and mores, it generally denotes the prevailing norms of behaviour. Now what sets forth Indian norms of behaviour? Is it the caste hierarchy? No one bothers about caste, if money and power are the available alternatives.

Upheld by the given ruling group in general and satisfying the individual interests in particular, the twin norms of money and power have become the end-all and be-all of social life for the overwhelming number of Indian people. Money, whether black or white, has come to command respectability in all walks of life. Now, Brahmins regard money more important than Vedic knowledge and the Kshatriyas consider money more attractive than weapon. Power, money, whether secured through fair means or foul, has become the main symbol of social status. The family relations—between father and son, brother and brother and brother and sister—have come to be regulated by money consideration. The institution of marriage too has become a market-deal under which the upper and middle class female side has to pay the contracted dowry to the male side, while the reverse is the case among the poorer classes where the bridegroom's family pays the settled amount to the guardian of the bride.

Black-money holders and power-brokers have come to hold the centre stage of Indian social scene. Under such a social orientation, manipulation and double-dealing have become common norms. And smuggling, drug-trafficking, foreign exchange racketeering, export of black money to foreign banks, tax-evasion, forged currency noted, food adulteration, etc., are not considered as dishonourable activities.

VI

21. The foregoing facts show that the pro-casteist school's perception of India is at variance with Indian reality.

Its fundamental thesis that castes are modern classes in India is a misreading of the Indian reality.

As is evident from the Indian historical evidence, the caste had been related to the pre-industrial division of labour which had arisen from primitive agriculture and its village self-sufficient community. Contrary to this, the modern classes in India—the industrial entrepreneur, trader, big and small farmers, tenant,

industrial and agricultural workers, unorganised labourer, etc.—have originated from the commodity division of labour related mainly to industry, supplemented by agriculture. Roughly, beginning along with the British colonial rule (in the late 18th century), India's commodity division of labour today has reached a stage where it has become inter-dependent with the international commodity division of labour which itself has originated from the post-1945 scientific-technological revolution in the world.

Caste characterised village self-sufficient economy derived its entire income from primitive agriculture, but India of 1990 gets only 34 percent of its national income from agriculture, the rest coming from urban industrial and service activities.

Caste hierarchy believed in its divine origin, but the modern classes locate it in the economic division of labour.

The labour process of the caste hierarchy was run by force, but that of the modern classes is regulated by rules and regulations.

Caste hierarchy was hereditary and permanent under which no one had the right to change his caste during his life time, but the class identity is a changeable social category.

As a whole, the caste mechanism constituted a full-fledged social system under which the Brahmin caste represented the executive, legislature and judiciary, the Kshatriya caste, the military force, the Vaisya caste, the trading and farming community and the Sudra caste, the all-serving force, but the modern class structure (i.e., the industrialist, the trader, the land-owner, the middle and the working classes) represents the economic mechanism, with the political sphere being managed by the political parties and the cultural sphere by the cultural bodies.

VII

22. The conclusion drawn by the Mandal commission that social and educational backwardness in India can be identified on the basis of caste is highly misleading as can be seen from the 11 indicators*, employed by him to determine backwardness.

Firstly, the social and educational backwardness can be

* These are: To be socially backward, a caste should mainly depend on manual labour for its livelihood; at least 25% females and 10% males above the state average should marry at an age below 17 years in the rural areas and at least 10% females and 5% males do so in urban areas; and when participation of females in work should be at least 25% above the state average. (contd....next page)

properly determined by the employment of three indicators—political, economic and cultural (that includes education too)—which together make up the category of social. The literal meaning of social is mutual relations of men or classes of men. That is, the totality of relations in a given society or social system. And every social system broadly consists of three components—the political (which includes foreign and defence matters too), economic and cultural.

Mandal commission deals only with economic and a part of cultural factors (i.e., education), while leaving out politics and half of culture altogether. Experience teaches that politics, economy and culture play equally important role in society with the only difference that, at a given time, only one of them plays the primary role, while the other two remain in the secondary position. If one is economically advanced but culturally backward, one cannot be categorised as backward because the economic means enable one to remove his backwardness. Similarly, if a person is a legislator but happens to be poor economically as well as culturally, he too cannot be treated as backward because his legislative status enables him to overcome his economic and cultural weakness. Also, if someone is highly cultured but politically and economically weak, he cannot be considered as backward by virtue of his cultural talents.

Secondly, under the social head, it discusses only two matters, i.e., the participation in physical labour and the custom of marriage. The first matter forms part of the economic category and the second of the cultural one.

Thirdly, it allots 3 points each to the 4 matters placed under the head, social, 2 points each to the 3 matters under the head, education, and 1 point each to the 4 matters under the head, economic. This means that the commission ascribes 12 points to the 2 matters, i.e., the participation in physical labour and the

For a caste to be educationally backward, the number of children in the age group of 5-15 years who have attended school should be at least 25% below the state average; the rate of school dropouts in the age group of 5-15 years should be at least 25% above the state average and the number of matriculates should be at least 25% below the state average.

For a caste to be recognised as economically backward, it had to ensure that the average family assets is at least 25% below the state average; number of families living in Kuccha houses is at least 25% below the state average; the source of drinking water is beyond half a Km. away for more than 50% of the households; and the number of households having taken consumption loans is at least 25% above the state average.

custom of marriage; 6 points to the rate of literacy, dropouts, etc.; and only 4 points to the equally important, if not more, the 4 matters, i.e., the assets, indebtedness, housing and water availability. It totally excludes the two most important matters, i.e., the poverty and unemployment, internationally accepted as the cause of social backwardness today. Also, it does not take into account another economic indicator, i.e., the per capita income.

Fourthly, backwardness is not a uniform feature of any caste today. Parliamentary democracy and the market have brought about changes within each caste—leading to distinctions between its advanced and backward sections. For instance, many barbers have set up modern hair-cutting saloons, tailors up-to-date cutting units and dhobis modern laundries. Similarly, some Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris, Ahirs, Gujjars, Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Kammas, Banias, Ramgharias, etc., have become ministers, MPs and MLAs and many of them are rich land-owners and have invested in urban housing, buses and lorries, rice-mills, cinema houses, etc. Can these well-to-do persons be called backward? Thus, backwardness today is an individual peculiarity and not confined to any particular caste—with each caste splitting itself into different sections of modern classes, rich and poor.

VIII

23. Why a large chunk of our population still remains backward after 43 years of independence? This, in our view, is mainly due to the fact that our post-1947 national developmental model has not worked well in transforming India from a pre-modern to a modern society. It has proved ineffective, because it was based on a centralised polity, state bureaucratic economy, caste and religion-linked culture and hegemonic foreign and defence approach. These negative features characterise not only our official Nehruvian model, but, with variations, are contained by every major non-official brand, i.e., the Janata Dal's caste-oriented or backward equalitarian model, BJP's Hindutva-based model and Left Parties' command-based model, etc.

If any one attributes to the caste hierarchy the main reason for our social backwardness, then he exonerates the Nehruvian model for its poor performance and shields the irrational features of the Janata Dal, BJP and Left models.

24. What is the way to get out of our backwardness? The proper way, in our opinion, is that we, firstly, proceed in accordance with the spirit of our times, i.e., trans-nationalism and common

marketism, which demands the adoption of an internationalist approach to appraise all phenomena; and, secondly, we behave in accordance with Indian reality which requires a fully federal structure, decentralisation of power at all levels, an environmentally sustainable, equitable and competitive democratic economy adhering to the concept of global capital and world market, secularism de-linked from caste and religion, ending of all disputes, including Kashmir, with Pakistan and China and the establishment of a confederation with all SAARC members in the near future.

IX

25. Theoretically, the pro-casteist school derives its inspiration from the traditional vengeful view of history which, while raising slogans of equalitarianism and social justice and posing itself as the saviour of the poor, revengefully puts one caste against another or one class against another or one religious community against another. By arrogating to itself the role of a messiah of the poor, it neither helps the latter to become capable of enforcing a social change or of properly utilising the fruits of change and nor takes advantage of the available talents among the advanced sections—resulting in social trouble. Many one-sided equalitarian movements, laying stress only on revengeful struggle such as Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in China, Paris Commune, socialist regimes in Russia, China, etc., had failed to achieve their respective ends. Because, by laying stress only on vengeful equalitarianism, they flouted the natural process of human development—a 2-sided process which, on the one hand, demands continuous flourishing of human efficiency and innovation (that leads to the expansion of social wealth), and, on the other, requires a constant dispensing of social justice through a fair, not vengeful, distribution of the social wealth. This 2-sided process of human innovation and social justice has expressed itself throughout human history—from human herd to clan, to tribe, regional kingdom, nation-state and now towards a world government.

26. Summarising all that has been stated above, we may say that the continuation of certain casteist features in our social life even today indicates only a historical pattern by which remnants of a by-gone age march alongside the newly-emerged social forces, while going towards their final extinction. 31-10-1990