

Major Parties' Credibility Crisis And Our Option

1. The existence of an unprecedented national crisis and the criminalisation of politics have brought about a new situation in our country.

I. Indifferent Mass mood

2. The new situational feature is that the people seem to be weary of unscrupulous politics. Peoples indifference to opposition sponsored movements and slogans—like the stir against GATT, NEP, Mandir-Masjid controversies, campaign for *Swedeshi*, anti-Pak hysteria, etc.—on the one hand, and their support for the movements against corruption and crime (as initiated by T.N. Sheshan, G.R. Khairnar and others) clearly verifies this fact. This trend gets further confirmation in the recently held 10 Assembly elections in which people showed no special liking for any party. Despite the subtle scheming—official schemes for the poor, campaign for a common civil code, etc.—by every mainstream party to attract the mass attention, the public mood remains passive and sullen. The public non-preference for any party, having started in the late 1980s as reflected in the 1989 and 1991 general elections, seems to have now become more pronounced.

II. Parties—Chips Of Same Block

3. Why has the public mood become indifferent? This is, because the people, groaning for long under the ever-increasing miseries and troubles since 1947, have become fed-up with the double-speak and the double-act style of the mainstream parties and come to look upon them as chips of the same block. It becomes evident from the broad similarity in the respective objectives, records and agendas of these parties.

4. For example, as regards their respective objectives, every

one of them hankers after power and money by hook or by crook. Always sticking to unlimited power and maximising of wealth has been their only motto. They do not differ much even on their respective methodologies. The 4-Cs—Crime, Corruption, Communalism and Casteism—are their common weapons, with variation only in emphasis on one of these four evils. The Congress mainly relies on the politics of crime and corruption (money-cum-muscle power), supplemented by all types of communalism and casteism. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) primarily depends on militant Hindu communalism, reinforced by casteism, crime and corruption, while the National Front-Left Front (NF-LF) combine chiefly uses oppressed militant casteism, supported by minority communalism and crime-cum-corruption.

5. Their post-1947 political record too does not present any dissimilar picture. If the Congress' performance had been bad enough, that of the BJP and the NF-LF combine was dismal. While the 44 year long post-1947 Congress rule had brought miseries and troubles for the masses and turned India into the most criminalised, corrupt, inefficient, quality poor, impoverished, illiterate and sick society, the other two combines, during their three year reign, followed the same route with the similar parameters. The two opposition experiments at the central level during 1977-79 and 1989-90 collapsed before completing even the 1/3rd of their due terms. After nearly 70 years of their existence under various names, none of the three non-Congress parties (i.e., BJP, JD and Communist) had been able to extend their political influence all over the country. The Communist and Left Parties (working since early 1920s) remain confined to West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and few other small pockets in the country. The BJP (having its earlier incarnation in the forms of Jan Sangh and RSS) does not command much influence in the entire non-Hindi speaking regions. After six decade preaching of its religion oriented politics, it was severely thrashed by the public in the 1984 general election when it could hardly get two seats in the Lok Sabha and again in 1993, it was voted out by the people of the three states where it had ruled for two years. The JD led National Front, mainly composed of different brands of former Socialists operating since late 1920s, has always been a victim of splittism and, holds influence only in a few regions by virtue of the personal influence of a few of its leaders.

6. Neither of the four mainstream parties has any consistent

agenda, nor any of them takes a principled stand on any national issue. The Congress, on the one hand, upholds the new economic policy of liberalisation, and, on the other, continues to declare its allegiance to the government controlled Nehruvian economic strategy. While always parroting its shibboleth of secularism, it has no remorse in continuing the Kerala coalition in alliance with the Muslim League since late 1950s. While the NF-LF combine and the BJP characterise each other as the principal national threat, both have the same programme in regard to the NEP, MNCs, IMF, WB, self-reliance, etc. While the Communists and the BJP denounce each other as the villain of piece, they had no compunction in joining hands in the 1989 undeclared coalition with the National Front. One day, the BJP emphasises the need for a strong centre and demands the termination of Article 370, and, the next day, asks for granting wider powers to the states. A strong centre-oriented Left Front has no hesitation in forming a close alliance with the federalist JD. On the one hand, the BJP, Left Front and the JD oppose the indiscriminate import of foreign capital, and, on the other, their respective state governments undertake tour upon tour to foreign lands to negotiate all sorts of deals with the MNCs. The BJP, the Left and the JD had earlier denounced the Nehruvian economic strategy as anti-poor and anti-national, but by opposing the NEP without offering any alternative, they are today indirectly accepting the worth of their formerly rejected model.

III. Why Public Reacceptance Of Discredited Parties

7. The reason for the public reacceptance of the same discredited parties rests with two factors.

8. One is the prevailing general outlook which, on the one hand, considers the perspective of opportunist power politics as the criterion of distinguishing right and wrong in society, and, on the other, upholds the orientation of consumerism, stressing the maximisation of self-interest as the primary purpose of one's life. Perpetuated by the 4-Cs of the mainstream parties and compounded by the Western rationality of one sidedly stressing the self-interest along with the persistence of the power worshipping feudal approach, this two sided general perspective creates an environment in which the government is characterised as the peoples guardian, social sector spending is considered as government charity, government is equated with the ruling party, values and principles are regarded as mere preaching and

personal interest becomes the only priority. So long as this perverted perspective is not changed, the motion of the Indian society will continue to move in a mechanical order, bringing about up and down changes in the fortunes of the traditional mainstream parties.

9. The other reason for the public reacceptance of the same discredited parties is that there is no viable alternative to them. In the absence of any practicable choice, the people, as soon as they are fed up with one of the opportunist parties, sometimes turn to the second one and sometimes repeat the same one after being manipulated by the latter's new trickeries.

IV. Our Option

10. To meet such a tricky situation is a highly complex task. But still it is not an impossible. To initiate and carry its process forward, three things are essential. The first requirement is to have an appropriate agenda. The second one is to forge the broadest possible United Front (UF) to meet the present situation created by the nexus between crime and politics. And the third one, but the most important one, is to build a new type of democratic party-cum-movement.

(A) Agenda

11. An appropriate agenda, corresponding to the existing realities, provides two programmes—that of the democratic party-cum-movement and that of the UF.

12. The two agendas are mentioned on pages 104-106 of this Book. The entire agenda constitutes the short-term and the long-term programme of the democratic party-cum-movement in its summarised form. The part titled 'Breaking the criminal-politician nexus' comprises UF action plan.

(B) United Front

13. The forging of the broadest possible UF demands the taking of following steps.

(a) Framing of an appropriate agenda.

(b) Formation of the UF on the basis of a proper agenda and suitable rules of conduct and organisation as agreed to among the constituents of the UF.

(c) Motivating and mobilising of the masses on the above agenda.

(d) Avoiding of the possibility of any sponsored or self-

misconception about the formation of UF as another device for the creation of a new vote bank platform in order to hoodwink the masses by deciding not to go in for contesting the Lok Sabha or Assembly elections and only work for rousing the masses and serving them selflessly at least up to the next general election.

(e) Providing of the right to contest elections in their own individual or group capacity to all UF constituents or members.

(C) Democratic Party-cum-Movement

14. The building of a new type of democratic party-cum-movement requires, in accordance with its programme and rules, the adoption of a two sided general task—one, on the party front and the other, at the mass level.

On The Party Front

15. The situation demands certain urgent initiatives as given below.

(a) To ensure the upholding of scientific realism or rational humanism as a general and social approach, the adoption of a democratic behaviour and the following of a sustainable lifestyle by the party as a collective as well as each of its members.

(b) To undertake its own transformation as well as each of its member by raising the motivational level, getting free from the politics of opportunism and consumerism, inculcating the habit of open to learning from all quarters and processes, proceeding from facts and not preconceived notions and, more importantly, by taking a self-critical introspection and managing the ego in a proper way on every occasion.

(c) To secure the employment of party's whole capacity into productive use.

(d) To help every member balance his various obligations, i.e., individual, family, party and people.

(e) To make a concrete plan for improving the quality and quantity of party membership, with particular emphasis on transforming every member into an effective mass communicator.

(f) To conduct a constant review of party's policies, procedures and practices with a view to adopt to the new realities.

(g) To develop the party culture of learning new knowledge and skills, developing work attitude, utilising available opportunities, giving positive response to criticism, sharing the troubles of the woe-worn members.

(h) To be always on guard in the linking of ends with means and theory with practice.

16. The afore-mentioned initiatives enable the party to democratise itself and each of its members in a thorough-going way.

At The Mass Level

17. The situation requires that in order to change the mass consciousness of power worshipping-cum-self seeking by a rational humanist consciousness, the below noted steps, as befitting the ground realities, be taken.

One, to identify the people among whom one has to work and know their ideological, political, economic and cultural situation in general and the priority problem, if any, in particular.

Two, to involve the people in the discussion of approach and policy on every important issue related to a village, block, district, state, country and the world, namely, sustainable development, environment, population, human rights, minorities, poverty, unemployment, price rise, caste reservation, education, women, industry, trade union, agriculture, rural uplift, communal riots, caste oppression, judiciary, panchayati raj, media, law enforcement, constitutional issues, war, cold war, NPT, GATT, MNCs, UN, etc., at rural and urban seminars, group meetings, indoor sittings, social functions, cultural occasions, or any other activity.

Three, to involve the people in the discussion of cause and solution concerning different types of social evils, such as criminalisation of politics, money-cum-muscle power dominated electoral process, corruption, scams, frauds, black money, smuggling, drug trafficking, public harassment by *goondas*, tax evasion, theft of public property, unhygienic conditions, women and child beating, arrogance, sycophancy, double dealing, etc., in various types of gatherings.

Four, to involve the people in the management of various types of constructive activities, like water protection, prevention of land degradation, forestation, combating of pollution, literacy campaign, organising of health-care centres, arranging of mass help to poor, orphans and destitute.

Five, to involve the people in the discussion and the formulation of their area development plans concerning the advancement of environmental, human and material resources, like water supply, education, health, electricity, transport, postal service, telecommunication, agriculture, agro-industry, rural

credit, combating floods, desertification, develop traditional technologies, and invite the concerned MP, MLA, government departments, technicians and specialists, etc., for interaction with the masses.

Six, to involve the people in the discussion of traditional authoritarian culture and its traditional forms of subordination and develop them into a rational humanist culture and a democratic behaviour, holding cultural conferences on the issue relating to the history and development of the ethno-regional national and international art (language, music, drama, architecture, literature, science and culture).

Seven, to involve the people in the electoral process by setting up voters associations which should cultivate the people to put up any proper candidate if available among the people and broadly acceptable to the voters and cast their votes on a programmatic basis, covering issues like corruption, criminalisation of politics, human rights, openness of candidate's wealth and assets, public service record, contribution to society.

Eight, to organise the masses, particularly women, poor, deprived, unemployed, minorities, etc., according to their inclination either in some mass organisation, cultural body, trade union, etc.

Nine, but very important, to achieve constitutional and legal empowerment of the people, giving them a final say in policy framing and decision taking by (a) the holding of plebiscites, at different levels—i.e., village, block, district, state and country—on every important issue related to that level, (b) the making of whole machinery accountable to the people, (c) the providing of people's right to information, (d) the ending of Official Secrets Act, Contempt of Courts Act, special privileges to legislators, army power of Court Martial, detention laws, etc., (e) the federalising of the state structure and the decentralising of power from top to bottom, and so on.

18. The above noted measures enable the party to communicate its vision and mission to the masses and integrate with them—thus resulting in the democratisation of the masses as well as the party.

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Still An Inequalitarian And Irrational World

1. Human society is just on the threshold of the 21st century. This century is expected to be a great turning point in human history. Because the unprecedented development of science, technology and sociology by man in the past 100 years has opened new vistas of social progress.

I. New Visions Of Nature And Man

2. It is this new perception of reality that has been fastly replacing the millennia old human beliefs about nature and man by new visions.

3. For instance, the ecological knowledge teaches us that nature is not to be conquered (as stressed by Marxism and Liberalism) but rather preserved and promoted. It informs us that human greed to abuse and misuse the natural phenomena brings forth pollution and poisoning of environmental resources—i.e., air, water and land—which has already put our planet in trouble and can in time result inhuman destruction and also the ruination of all bio-life on this planet. It teaches us to always balance human needs with natural preservation and uphold the coexistence of different types of phenomena.

4. The knowledge of space teaches us that the people everywhere are faced with similar and common problems and thus have identical concerns. It gives us the vision of global humanism which demands of us to adopt a rational humanist approach as the ordering principle of human society.

5. The theory of relativity shows us the interrelationship between matter, energy, space and time. It tells us that matter and energy are interchangeable and space and time are not absolute. It demolishes the theory of social absolutism, pointing out that social truths, like natural laws, are relative and partial.

6. The mechanics of quanta shows that both light and matter

have wave and corpuscular properties which coexist together in each of them. They do not obey deterministic laws of motion as they would in classical mechanics. It shatters the theory of social determinism or the concept of historical inevitability, showing that every developing process is marked by certain probabilities, any of which may, corresponding to the changing balance of forces, outpace the others.

7. The science of micro world gives us the knowledge of the fundamental constituents of matter and energy. The bio-science shows us the genetic characteristic of life—a discovery leading to effective changes in the treatment of many diseases. The materials science tells us the specific properties of various material phenomena. All these sciences reveal that there is no unbridgeable dividing line between inorganic and organic processes.

8. The whole series of technologies extend the faculties of our sense organs, helping them to perceive reality in a more concrete form, on the one hand, and provide us more effective ways to deal with them accurately and precisely, on the other.

9. All this varied knowledge of the different processes of reality demands appropriate changes in our ways of imagination, thinking, analysing, saying, doing and organising different processes. Without such changes, a full utilisation of the new knowledge is not possible.

10. Essentially, it requires a two sided fundamental social transformation, i.e., a new harmony between nature and human society, on the one hand, and a new harmony between society and its member and between one person and another. Without establishing this two sided harmony, human existence today cannot be ensured.

11. However, the establishment of a two sided harmony is not an easy job. Because, such a basic change involves the replacement of the old norms of disharmony by the new harmonious ones. The principles of disharmony were based on one sided domination—that of society over nature, that of society over its member or vice-versa (in case of despotic social heads who ride roughshod over the collective) and that of strong person over the weak one. The one sided domination of society over nature was due to human ignorance and greed, while all forms of social domination were based on the supremacy of the powerful, moneyed and privileged over the weak, poor and deprived.

12. The process of the establishment of two sided harmony is interrelated. Unless there is simultaneous harmony in society, the

nature-society harmony cannot take shape. But the question of establishing harmony in society is basically a question of transforming the present unfair and unjust system into a fair and just one. Naturally, such a fundamental change demands an all-sided transformation in human approach, style and organisation.

II. Serious Challenges And Dangerous Threats

13. At a time when society needs immediate appropriate changes in its relations with nature and, also within itself, it is confronted by numerous serious challenges and two very dangerous strategic threats, affecting in one way or the other the series of events occurring in various parts of the world.

14. The first serious challenge is the growth of minority struggles in the form of either ethnic or religious uprisings against the dominant majorities. According to a 1993 estimate, nearly 73 countries are affected by such confrontations. Another estimate says that of the post-1992 conflicts in the world, only three were between two countries while all the remaining 79 are being fought within various countries.

Most of these minority struggles have been confined to the developing countries. As the 1991 UNDP report noted: “there have been over 120 conflicts in the Third World since 1945, with 20 million deaths, more than in the second world war.” In the ongoing civil conflicts, human society has been suffering devastating effects with 10,00,000 dead in Sudan, 5,00,000 in Somalia, 5,00,000 in Afghanistan, 2,00,000 in Bosnia, etc. Still, there seems no immediate possibility of bringing this lengthy bloody process to a final close.

15. The second serious challenge is that, in the post-cold war period, the bipolar superpower contention has been replaced by a simmering competition for supremacy between the five big powers—US, Russia, China, European Union and Japan—having divergent positions on a wide range of issues to further their respective national interests. The most significant example of this competition has been the Sino-US controversy over the question of human rights in China, mutual trade problems, Peking’s nuclear tests, etc. This controversy has become further inflated by the Taiwanese President’s visit to the US and US citizen, Harry Wu’s detention in China. The continuing Washington-Tokyo trade dispute is another example. The Washington-Paris tension over latter’s trade with Iran, French nuclear tests and American video films; the US threat to European Union to impose \$1 billion in trade

sanctions if the European Union does not eliminate the quotas which US says are unfair to its banana companies; the Washington-Moscow differences over nuclear matters, Bosnia and Chechnya; the US-EU different positions on many European issues; Moscow-Tokyo differences over Kuriel islands; China-ASEAN controversy over Spratly islands; etc.; bring about a complex world picture. In all high power estrangements, the US stands as the principal party and indeed the biggest one among the big five. With every party trying to maximise its self-interests, there seems the possibility of an increase in the big power tension.

16. The third serious challenge is the economic downswing of the Western Liberal model. This is evident from the stagnating meagre growth rate and the high unemployment rate prevailing in all the OECD countries, except Japan, for the past 15 years. But, since three years Japan too has entered this downturn phase. The unemployment in Europe as a whole is as much as 11.8% and in the OECD countries about 8.5% of the work force is out of work. The economic downswing has, in turn, led to increase in crime. The persisting economic deterioration in the developed countries is contrasted by the steady thriving East and South-East Asian economies which have been enjoying an average annual growth rate of 7% for the past one and a half decades.

The traditional Western economies' proposition—upholding West as the engine of world economic growth—seems to have become inoperative because of its growing ineffectiveness not only in the developed countries but also in many Western oriented African and Latin American economies and more importantly, because of the rise of a new East and South-East Asian 'Functional Model', blending the market and the state interventions together.

17. The fourth serious challenge is the growing inequality and poverty in the world. The recently released World Development Report, 1995, says: "corporate executives earn at least 149 times more than the factory worker and the world's 358 billionaires have a combined net worth equal to that of 45% of the world's population."

In 1993, some two billion people, well over half of the world's working age population, lived in low income economies and had an annual per capita income below 695 dollars and about 1/3rd of the working age population unemployed.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), hunger and malnutrition remain the most devastating problems

facing the people of the world. The 1995 FAO Report says, about 20% of the developing world population, i.e., about 780 million people have insufficient food intake and over 192 million children are suffering from protein energy malnutrition.

Despite the growing demand for the eradication of world poverty in various international enclaves, the possibility of any concrete action in this regard does not look very promising due to various existing economic and political distortions in the world and the quite different priorities, unrelated to the issue of poverty eradication, of the ruling circles in various countries.

18. The fifth serious challenge is the emergence of international gangs of criminals. The 1994 UNDP report shows that such gangs now control about one trillion dollar of world trade that included drug and arms trade and gold smuggling.

19. The number one dangerous strategic threat is environmental degradation. It has been mainly caused by the over-production of the green house gases which are resulting in the depletion of the ozone layer, on the one hand, and an increase in global warming, on the other. The depletion of the ozone layer is causing serious human ailments and having bad effects on other bio-species by producing genetic changes, while the increase in green house gases, by trapping the Sun's heat, is adversely affecting our climate, bringing in changes in the pattern of seasons, food chain, melting of snows, rising of sea levels, acid rains, etc. If the current environmental degradation rate continues, our planet, according to experts, will become uninhabitable for bio-species in about one hundred years.

20. The number two dangerous strategic threat is the population explosion. During the past 200 years, the world population had increased five times. It is now reaching near the figure of six billion, with a growth rate of 100 million per year. Very soon, our world population is going to outstrip the carrying capacity of our planet. Due to the growing population's encroachment on natural resources, the earth is losing 25 billion tonnes of its top soil and 17 million hectares of tropical forests every year. Nearly 70% of the world's forests have already been cleared. Due to the shrinking of forests cover, many species of birds and animals have either become extinct or less in number.

21. All the above-mentioned immediate serious challenges and destructive strategic threats reflect disharmonies within human society and between the latter and the nature. Essentially, they show the imbalanced state of human society.

22. This state of affairs demands that the human community, both collectively as well as nation-wise, makes a determined effort to set things right. But nothing of this sort has since attained priority in the global agenda nor become the passionate concern for any country.

III. A World Of 'Dog-Eat-Dog'

23. Why is the human society so unconcerned about such life and death questions?

24. The reason is multi-dimensional. But the most important one is that we are still living under an unfair and unjust social order where big fish eats the small one and where might, money and privilege constitute the accepted norms of justice and truth, both in the world as a whole as well as in each country.

On The World Scale

25. The existing social reality is explained by the fact that when every international forum, country and individual accepts universal franchise—i.e., one entity-one vote as the basic principle of the rule of law, the highest world body, the UN, is regulated and dominated by the military based five veto holding big powers who have reduced the role of the remaining 180 UN members to nullity. Similarly, the two international financial institutions—the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—have been the financial fiefdoms of a few rich countries who hold the weightage due to the donor related voting principle operating in these institutions. More, the recently endorsed Non-Proliferation Treaty by nearly 180 countries gives virtual monopoly of nuclear weapons to five big nuclear powers who are, instead of proceeding towards the total elimination of these deadly weapons, conducting new experiments to improve the destructive capacity of this weapon. Further, a handful of the developed countries, with 1/4th of the world population, consume 80% of the world resources, leaving the remaining 20% for 3/4th of the world population living in over 125 developing countries. Furthermore, one half of the world population, constituting the female part of the human community, continues to be the victim of ill treatment and misbehaviour.

On The Country Level

26. The situation is not very much different from the prevailing international order. Despite variations among the 185 countries

due to their different physical settings, historical backgrounds and socio-economic conditions, there is a great deal of similarity in the quality of social life in many countries. The political process in almost every country (whether developed or developing) remains dominated by money power which, in case of developing countries, is also compounded by muscle power and primordial norms. The economic process in general operates through cut-throat competition, speculation and black money. The unscrupulous norms constitute the common behavioural forms everywhere today.

27. In almost every country, the legislators enjoy certain immunity from common laws under the law providing special parliamentary privileges. In the developing countries, the politicians, especially those belonging to the ruling party stand above law. Nowhere the judiciary is accountable to the people. The universally prevailing contempt of court law empowers it to silence every critic. The official secrets law, existing in nearly all countries, authorises the bureaucracy to cover up all deals and rule roughshod over the people. The law enforcement agencies enjoy wide ranging powers the world over. In the Third World, they behave as law unto themselves. At every place the law favours the capital owning and the property possessing classes and is biased against the poor and the deprived.

It is a world where politics, black money and yes-boss culture have become the most profitable professions and the self-seekers, liars and deceivers the most successful performers. Every authoritative human fora, whether international or national, is guided by the parameters of the prevailing unfair and unjust social order.

28. The second reason that constrains our attitude towards attending the serious threats faced by humankind is the prevalent national approach—being now more aggressively pursued by each national government and mainstream party—which conflicts with the supra-national plans concerning common human issues, like environment, population, poverty, social justice, minority rights, etc. The national priorities logically clash with the core items of the human agenda.

29. The third reason that hampers our attitude towards meeting the common challenges to mankind is our approach towards social development which, with its consumerist orientation, misuses and abuses both the material and the human resources by its unfair and unjust international and

national order under which a few rich countries and a few rich people in each country appropriate the lion's share of the world's natural resources and dominate the human resources.

30. The fourth reason that hinders our attitude towards tackling the disharmonies between society and nature is our human centric approach which tries to advance human interests at the cost of non-human phenomena—thus causing damage to environment and harming the strategic human interests.

IV. Our Option

31. How do we brace up to meet the problem of disharmonies within human society and between the latter and nature? The logical answer is that by creating harmony within and between the concerned processes. Harmony at every place and time is, and can be, achieved by balancing the interests of the factors involved in any process.

32. In order to balance the interests of various social groups in human society, on the one hand, and of human society and nature, on the other, we need to replace the existing anti-poor, anti-common people and anti-nature structure by a poor and common people friendly (both at the international and the national levels) and a nature friendly model through various reforms.

For Reforming The International Order

(a) To accept the vision of a single human community and the approach of rational humanism for sorting out social problem.

(b) To restructure the UN on a fully democratic basis.

(c) To resolve all regional disputes between countries through peaceful negotiations, either bilaterally or with the UN help.

(d) To initiate the process for the complete banning of all nuclear arms and other deadly weapons under the UN control.

(e) To settle all civil conflicts in different countries through dialogue, with an obligation on the part of each country to provide full information to the UN.

(f) To observe all the UN covenants, such as concerning human rights, environment, gender equality, population, minorities, poverty eradication, social cohesion, etc.

For Reforming The National System

(a) To rationalise the Constitution and law by ending all biases in favour of elite classes.

- (b) To federalise the state structure.
- (c) To decentralise power at all levels and empower the people with regard to policy framing and implementing.
- (d) To repeal all undemocratic laws, such as Official Secrets Act, Contempt of Courts Act, special privileges to legislators, army powers for a court martial trial, detention acts, etc.
- (e) To reform the law enforcement and law interpreting agencies to providing speedier and genuine justice to the people.
- (f) To reform the electoral law with a view to ending the role of money and muscle power and other undemocratic practices.
- (g) To adopt the freedom of information act.
- (h) To manage all types of media through an autonomous and democratic agency.
- (i) To reorganise the administration, reform the jail manual and abolish the capital punishment.
- (j) To develop the human resources by providing rights to poverty alleviation, work, need based living wage, housing, maintenance in old age and also in case of complete or partial disability, universal elementary education, primary health-care, 35 hour work week, weaker sections, especially the women, gender equality, prohibition of child labour, special attention to mother and child care, etc.
- (k) To develop the material resources by globalising the economy through a proper mix-up of market and state interventions.
- (l) To organise regional defence system.
- (m) To cultivate rational thinking, democratic behaviour and sustainable lifestyle.
- (n) To manage the population problem through the empowering of women, democratising of society, conserving of environment and adopting of sustainable development and lifestyle.

For Improving And Protecting Environment

- (a) To create awareness among the masses about the problem of conserving environment and adopting sustainable development and lifestyle.
- (b) To ensure the implementation of Agenda-21, adopted at the Rio Earth Summit, under the supervision of the UNCED and setup a high power UN Sustainable Development Council to act as a global authority for the development of natural and human resources by enacting fundamental economic reforms in regard

to environment and development (such as codes for MNCs, currency exchanges and stock markets, forests, natural resources, pollution, etc.) and monitor their implementation.

* * *

33. No fair and just society can arise anywhere today if the concerned people remain unaware of the need for such a society. A fair and just society is, and can be, the product of peoples' consciousness alone and not of any constitution or institution. No law, court, party or press can create or save a fair and just society if there is no fairness or justice in peoples hearts and minds.

15-09-1995

Jammu-Kashmir Problem— Exploring It From A New Angle

I

1. The problem of Jammu-Kashmir, which arose along with the birth of the two new countries (i.e., India and Pakistan) in 1947, is as old as are these two nations, each of which lays its claim over the entire Jammu-Kashmir state.

2. It has been on the UN agenda for the past 46 years, thus perhaps forming the oldest item of its business, without any breakthrough.

3. Constituting the core issue of the national agendas of India and Pakistan during the past 48 years, it has bedevilled their mutual relations with tension and conflict—thus resulting in three wars and a perpetual armed stand out.

4. With the rise of militancy in Kashmir since 1989, Jammu-Kashmir problem has once again come on the world agenda and activated the dormant Indo-Pak contention.

5. At a time when the diverse regional and civil conflicts in the world—like the Arab-Israel, Black-White in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Cambodia, Ireland, Peru-Chile, etc.—are either nearing or on the midway towards solution, the Jammu-Kashmir problem has assumed the most serious world challenge. With the stalling of the official level Indo-Pak talks and the positioning of the armed forces of India and Pakistan in an eyeball to eyeball posture and of engaging in daily armed skirmishes on their borders, the risk of another Indo-Pak war has today become a probability—thus causing anxiety all over the world. Such a war, if it comes, can, with its nuclear dimensions, devastate not only India and Pakistan but also harm South Asia and hamper the social development of world people. Before this likely happening turns into reality and involves the human community into a catastrophe, it is time for all saner elements the world over to defuse this last flashpoint of cold war.

II

6. It goes without saying that the non-resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir problem by New Delhi and Islamabad as well as the world community for 48 years has produced harmful result for the people of Kashmir in particular and Jammu, Ladakh and the “Azad Kashmir” in general, besides negative sub-continental regional and international effects.

7. At the state level, the Kashmiris have, during the six years of militancy, suffered thousands of killings, apart from custodial deaths, rape, arson and loot at the hands of the security forces. Jammu has been subjected to a number of bomb blasts with great human and material losses. Ladakh too has its share of woes, like disruption of material supplies. Sometimes, the militants too have committed excesses in some cases. As a whole, the 48 year record of New Delhi and its local cohorts in Jammu-Kashmir has been quite dismal—abounding in the abuse of political power and economic resources, the violation of human rights and the creation of animosities between the three regions of the state. The wrongs perpetrated by Islamabad—e.g., the curbing of democratic rights and the denial of due share in the developmental funds—on the “Azad Kashmir” people since 1947 have been also equally painful.

8. On the sub-continental plane, the Indo-Pak contention on Jammu-Kashmir state has perpetuated the politics of confrontation in the two countries—leading to the militarisation of their structures, the fomenting of three Indo-Pak wars, the throttling of their bilateral trade, neglect of social development needs, criminalisation, communalisation and corruptibility of their political processes and the lowering of their global statuses from average to marginal players.

9. On the South Asian scale, it has hindered the development of SAARC as a viable common market and a regional defence regime.

10. Globally, the non-resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir problem has contributed to the accentuation of cold war politics, militaristic economy and authoritarian tendencies.

III

11. Why has the Jammu-Kashmir problem remained unresolved for such a long time? Two main factors—i.e., the international situation in general and the national approaches of India and Pakistan in particular—have acted as the basic roadblocks.

12. As regards the international situation, the 44 year long spell of cold war (1945-89), distinguished by the contention of the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, almost throttled every attempt to get any important problem resolved, whether through the UN or some other medium.

13. The post-cold war world, while marked by the newly emerged general trend of conciliation and compromise in contentious matters, has been also facing certain remnant black holes (such as Indo-Pak region, former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, etc.), as bequeathed by the bygone age. The UN and other international bodies (i.e., IMF, World Bank, nuclear non-proliferation mechanism, missile control regime, etc.)—which continue to be dominated by the five veto wielding powers and a few other rich countries, each of which is striving to extend and consolidate its sphere of influence in the new world disposition in competition with others—lack the cohesion and the capacity to effectively deal with such critical spots. This irrational world structure, oriented by the norms of might, money and privilege as the deciding factors in distinguishing right from wrong in the world arena as well as in each country, is bound to obstruct all just and fair solutions to the controversial regional and international issues. It needs to be restructured on a democratic basis, standing for the removal of all political and economic disparities.

14. As regards the national approaches of India and Pakistan, both are rooted in the pre-partition communal mindsets.

15. The Indian theory of nationalism, while vociferously claiming to be secular and democratic, is guided by a two sided constitutional vision, i.e., a centralised state and the majoritarian domination. This vision tries to forge national unity on anti-Pak chauvinism, past Vedic glories and the observance of majoritarian ethos (i.e., *Puja*, *Arti*, etc.) on all important official functions, on the one hand, and to build social organisation by upholding the interests of all types of creamy layers, on the other—thus discriminating against all the deprived people, particularly the minorities and the socially weaker sections, both psychologically and materially.

16. The Pakistani theory of nationalism, while officially standing for an Islamic state is, in fact characterised by Sunni nationalism which, on the one hand, discriminates against all non-Sunni minorities (i.e., Shia, Ahmadiya, Zikri, Mohajir, Christian, Sikh, Hindu, etc.), and, on the other, strives to create national cohesion by resorting to anti-India hysteria.

17. Both these nationalisms resort to money and muscle power in order to protect and reinforce the levers of their power structures.

18. Proceeding from their respective irrational national theories, both New Delhi and Islamabad continue to mislead their respective public opinion about Jammu-Kashmir problem. New Delhi, supported by all mainstream parties stresses that the separation of Jammu-Kashmir from India would spell disaster for the country, while Islamabad, backed by its main national parties, emphasises that, without securing the control of the entire Jammu-Kashmir the national unit of Pakistan would remain incomplete.

19. Taking an illogical position, New Delhi has continued to declare Jammu-Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Union, on the one hand, and swear by the 1972 Simla Agreement (whose clause 6 refers to Jammu-Kashmir as a dispute), on the other. Concealing the reality of Kashmiris deep alienation from the Indian mainstream, it has been projecting the Kashmiri militancy as Pak-sponsored terrorism. Violating the human rights in the valley, it has been characterising its military action in the valley as a step to defend the democratic order.

20. Similarly, proceeding from an irrational premise, Islamabad has continued to owe its allegiance to the Simla Accord (which prescribes bilateral talks for the peaceful solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem), on the one hand, and to demand the invocation of 1948-49 UN resolutions (which ask for a plebiscite to resolve this question). Violating its earlier declarations on resolving its Jammu-Kashmir problem through unconditional bilateral talks, it has now been imposing certain pre-conditions for starting such talks.

IV

21. The primary reason for the acceptability of these misconceptions rests with the public lack of information about the real nature of the Jammu-Kashmir problem and its ground realities.

22. As regards its nature, the entire post-1947 history shows that the Jammu-Kashmir problem has, in accordance with the international legal norms, been a bilateral problem between India and Pakistan, while the rules of politics and the ground realities make it a trilateral problem between India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir people.

23. As regards the ground realities, three major facts deserve close observation.

24. The first one is that, at the international plane, all countries, while accepting Jammu-Kashmir problem as a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, at the same time demand the involvement of the Jammu-Kashmir people in any future settlement of Jammu-Kashmir state—thus virtually transforming this problem into a trilateral question. Even India and Pakistan accept this international demand, though in a diluted form. The 1948-49 UN resolutions too, by accepting the two options of India and Pakistan with the plebiscitary right to the Jammu-Kashmir people, give the impression of a three sided problem.

25. The second one is that, at the Indo-Pak level, both New Delhi and Islamabad have put their respective national honours at stake on making Jammu-Kashmir as a part of their nation-states and created mass frenzy to defend their respective national prestige at any price.

26. The third fact is that, at the local geo-political level, the Jammu-Kashmir state, having been a multi ethno-regional entity, is marked by varying aspirations. While the overwhelming number of Kashmiris are struggling to opt out of India, the other identities have their own concerns.

V

27. Given the foregoing realities, it follows that a reasonable, desirable and viable solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem is, and can be, the one that adopts the strategy of trilateral talks between India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir people in order to determine the future of this state. The core of this trilateral strategy is, and should be, the reconciling of the interests of the three concerned parties, giving satisfaction to each one that its aspirations and interests have been met within the limits of possibility.

28. The trilateral strategy thus demands a three sided reconciliation. That is, (a) the balancing of the national interests of India and Pakistan, (b) the matching of the interests of India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and the Jammu-Kashmir people, on the other, and (c) the harmonising of the interests of the Jammu-Kashmir's eight ethno-regional identities, i.e., the Kashmiri, Dogra, Pathwari, Pahari (i.e. ,Gujjars and Bakarwals), Ladakhi, Kargili, Gilgiti, Balti, etc.

29. The national interests of India and Pakistan should, and can, be balanced by establishing a joint Indo-Pak Condominium over the entire Jammu-Kashmir state.

30. The interests of India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and of Jammu-Kashmir people, on the other, should, and can, be matched by entrusting Jammu-Kashmir's defence, foreign affairs and currency to the Indo-Pak Condominium, on the one hand, and by leaving the rest within the jurisdiction of the Jammu-Kashmir state, on the other.

31. The interests of Jammu-Kashmir's different ethno-regional identities should, and can, be harmonised by adopting a federal Constitution of the Jammu-Kashmir state which should, on the one hand, give maximum possible autonomy to each ethnic region, with a provision for further devolution of power to the district, block and village councils, and, on the other, stand for a single Jammu-Kashmir state, having a common Head of the State to be elected by the ethno-regional councils and a common High Court, a common Election Commission, a common Public Service Commission, a common Environmental Commission and a common Human Resources Developmental Commission, all to be appointed by the ethno-regional councils, with one representative from each.

32. The Indo-Pak Condominium will be a new experiment of a new global oriented sustainable development model, showing how the divergent national interests of various nations be reconciled and the different aspirations and concerns of various ethnicities be harmonised by empowering the people and removing all social disparities. It would benefit not only India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir people, but also provide a powerful impetus to the development of SAARC.

VI

33. Obviously, the trilateral option rules out all unilateral or bilateral options which can, by favouring one side or the other, not be fair and practicable solutions.

34. For instance, the option of Jammu-Kashmir's accession with one country goes against the national interests of the other. By keeping the Indo-Pak tension intact, it boosts the cold war politics.

35. Again, the option of an independent Jammu-Kashmir cannot help in creating a spirit of friendship between India and Pakistan and bringing about a conflict free South Asia. It will keep not only the Indo-Pak tension alive but also make it a contentious issue among the big powers. Lacking a common perspective, the divergent ethnic forces will, like Afghanistan, vie

among themselves for gaining supremacy.

36. Next, the option of the division of Jammu-Kashmir on the LOAC or according to the Triest model, being more advantageous to India, is unacceptable to both Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

37. Further, the option of holding elections in Jammu-Kashmir at this juncture is neither rational nor practicable. It is irrational, because the first step in a conflictual situation is a meaningful dialogue and not the money and muscle based electoral contest.

Every electoral process primarily requires an agreement among the contending parties on the fair conduct and supervision of that process. Where this agreement is missing, the electoral process loses all credibility. It is impracticable because, firstly, the All Party Hurriyat Conference (a representative platform of the Kashmiri people) has rejected this course of action, and, secondly, all non-Congress mainstream parties have expressed doubts about its feasibility at this juncture.

VII

38. The most appropriate starting point of the tripartite option is that its process should be initiated in the form of dialogue at two levels—one, at the Indo-Pak level, and the other, at the level of various ethno-regional identities of Jammu-Kashmir.

39. At the Indo-Pak level, both India and Pakistan should, by proceeding from the global vision of their common and shared future and by learning from the bitter experience of their extremely painful and highly costly post-1947 confrontationist past, try to sort out their differences on the basis of a formula that brings them closer to each other, upholds their respective national prestige, meets the respective national urges of their people and also satisfies the aspirations of the various ethno-regional identities of Jammu-Kashmir.

40. At the state level, all the ethno-regional groups should, by starting from the perspective of viewing their future in the Indo-Pak friendship and cooperation, strive to chalk out a political framework that fulfils not only their respective aspirations within the framework of a single state of Jammu-Kashmir, but also maintains the national esteems and the public impulses of the two countries.

41. The first type of dialogue (i.e., Indo-Pak talks) does not at this moment seem possible because both India and Pakistan, conditioned by their 1947 partition mindsets, fettered by their post-1947 cold war politics and constrained by their present vote

bank compulsions, are unable to undertake this course.

42. Thus, the circumstances have placed the responsibility of exploring and resolving the Jammu-Kashmir problem from a new angle on the shoulders of the Jammu-Kashmir people.

43. The first step in this regard should be the carrying out of meaningful talks on the nature of the Jammu-Kashmir problem and its ground realities between the representatives of various ethno-regional identities on the Indian side of Jammu-Kashmir.

44. After an agreement on the first point the second step should be the formation of a united front in order to mobilise and organise the people on this side of the state on the agreed points, on the one hand, and the forging of a similar united front on the basic and the existing facts of the Jammu-Kashmir problem with the representatives of the "Azad Kashmir" people.

45. The third step should be the mobilisation of mass support in favour of the agreed principles of the united front in both India and Pakistan.

46. After due consultations with all concerned and proper preparations, the fourth step should be the convening of a representative conference of all ethno-regional identities living in the two parts of Jammu-Kashmir so as to thrash out an agreed solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem.

47. The fifth step should be the ensuring of the involvement of all just and fair-minded people in India, Pakistan and the world in the implementation process of the agreed solution.

48. Such a democratic course will halt and reverse not only the respective dehumanisation processes (as symbolised by the criminalisation of politics, increasing inequality and poverty, degrading norms of behaviour and the anti-human perspective of nuclear war in the national processes of India and Pakistan) now underway in the two countries, but also strengthen the rational humanisation process (i.e., a pro-nature and pro-people movement which upholds the empowerment of the people, removal of all social disparities and, the conservation and protection of nature) now unfolding all over the world.

49. It is high time for the Jammu-Kashmir people to rise to the occasion and explore and resolve the Jammu-Kashmir problem from a new angle.

27-10-1995

Gender Equality— A Top Item Of World Agenda

I. The Problem

1. The question of gender equality, an issue concerning half of humanity (which had been a taboo in history for thousands of years), constitutes one of the top items of world agenda today. It is not an act of any generosity by the UN or certain saner elements or a sudden realisation of the male foul play with the female gender by some good natured philanthropists, like the NGOs. For thousands of years, all the traditional schools of thought, religious, cultural, moral, economic, political, etc., treated women as a second class human being and could not think of gender equality. Why? Because, the then prevailing social reality was not ripe for this change.

2. Today, the agenda of gender equality has arisen out of the changed social reality where the development of scientific-technological knowledge requires a new participatory social division of labour, necessitating women's partnership in social development at an equal level. This is why women's issues have today become the human issues.

3. In the past, the scientific-technological mechanism (STM) and its social division of labour during the food gathering phase of human history was characterised by the prevalence of the matriarchal system, i.e., the rule by the "great mother". Thereafter, with the rise of the STM of hunting, the matriarchal social division of labour was replaced by the patriarchal one (i.e., the father or male domination). The same situation continued under the STMs of the pastoral and the agricultural social divisions of labour. Only the industrial STM and its social division of labour brought forth the conditions enabling women to come out of the household confines and enter the broader social spectrum. The post-second world war STM and its social division of labour demands equal partnership between woman and man in every sphere.

II. UN World Initiatives

4. In the course of last 50 years, the United Nations has taken several initiatives that aim at ensuring equal rights to women. The 1945 UN Charter proclaimed equality between woman and man. But it took 20 years to UN to assess the state of gender gap. The first UN sponsored World Conference on Women was held in Mexico in 1975. It launched the UN decade for women. The second UN Conference on Women took place in Copenhagen in 1980, followed by the third in Nairobi in 1985 and the fourth in Peking in 1995.

5. A highly important initiative was taken by the UN General Assembly in 1979 when it adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The scope of CEDAW was further extended when the UN General Assembly defined the violence against women as “any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” That is, it turned the women’s individual problem into a societal concern. Though the CEDAW is an important step forward, yet 41 countries have not so far signed it, 6 have signed but not ratified and 43 have ratified with reservations.

6. In 1993, the UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna recognised the violation of women’s individual rights as a violation of human rights. Meanwhile, a series of UN convened international conferences, like the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the 1995 Social Development Summit in Copenhagen addressed themselves to the women’s concerns, though their primary focus was not female question. Yet the Cairo Conference placed the women’s needs at the centre of all discussions on population and recognised the centrality of women’s health and reproductive rights in population planning.

III. UN Conference’s Varying Emphases

7. The 1975 Mexico and the 1980 Copenhagen Conferences were dominated by the Northern Agendas. The 1985 Nairobi Conference was marked by the arrival of the Southern Women’s Movements. In Peking, the agenda was mainly set by the South. Economic issues—structural adjustment, reforms in Communist

and post-Communist societies, new technologies, environmental degradation, poverty, property rights, employment, wages, sustainable development, exploitative work conditions, growing trafficking in women—dominated the show. Other significant issues, such as political participation, violence against women (war related, domestic), reproductive rights, the girl child, religious fundamentalism, oppression due to sexual orientation, racism and neo-colonialism, also occupied the participants.

8. The successive UN Conferences on Women have shown marked shifts in emphasis. The 1975 Mexico and 1980 Copenhagen Plans for Action gave little priority to women's economic issues. The 1985 Nairobi "Forward looking Strategies", though referring to the principles of equality and of integrating women in the development process, made no mention of gender equality in economic resources. The Peking Platform for Action highlights the gender gaps in economic power, property rights and the issue of poverty. It applies the principle of equality to property inheritance—thus requiring equal shares for daughters and sons. It also recognises the link between political and economic factors.

9. The 1995 Peking Declaration and the Platform for Action—which set out measures to improve women's health, education, employment, human rights and environment and also the rights of the girl child—were adopted through a process of consensus by the 190 participating countries, with 31 expressing reservations on specific paragraphs in the document and another ten countries clarifying how they would interpret some sections of it.

10. The majority of countries registering reservations were Islamic, with a few Catholic ones. The areas of disagreement were narrowed down to three paragraphs and the fourth which only a few Islamic countries stated that they could not accept. Two refer to sexual rights and reproductive rights in different contexts and one is concerned with the desirability of not punishing women forced to have illegal abortions. The fourth objection raised by a limited number of countries pertains to equal rights for girls and boys in issues of inheritance—a new section "on the rights of the girl child" included in the Platform for Action which has never before been a part of an internationally endorsed document. A major area of disagreement was resolved when the paragraph in the chapter on human rights which referred to the need for "legal safeguards" to "prevent discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or lifestyle" was dropped altogether.

11. Like every other international gathering, an important

question related to women's upliftment has been the question of finance in every UN Conference On Women on which the developed and the developing countries have often taken divergent positions. The UNICEF which allocates resources for the welfare of world's children out of the UN Children Fund observes: "It is inexcusable that the world can spend \$800 billion on the military and not find resources for women and children."

12. The UNICEF estimates that worldwide \$40 billion a year is spent on golf, \$85 billion on wine, \$160 billion on beer, \$400 billion on cigarettes, \$250 billion on advertising and \$800 billion on the military. Yet only \$13 billion was spent on basic child health and nutrition, \$6 billion on primary education and \$9 billion on safe water and sanitation.

IV. World Social Reality

13. In the past two decades, the various countries have enacted new legislation, modified the old law and started development schemes to improve the women's lot. But not much has been achieved. In most of the countries, women still work longer hours and earn less than men, have hardly any representation in political and economic institutions, lag behind on all social development indicators from education to health and are un-welcome from birth.

14. The existing social reality the world over is that women constitute the most oppressed part of the human society. They are discriminated against in all fields—political, economic and social.

15. The 1995 UNDP development report makes revelations on the appalling conditions of women in the world. It says: Women contribute \$11 trillion to the world economy every year, perform two-third of the world's work but earn only a tenth of its income, comprise two-third of the world's illiterates and, along with children, 80% of the 15 million refugees (mostly victims of armed conflicts), and are nowhere equal to men, not even in the developed countries.

16. The undervaluation of women's work undermines their purchasing power and reduces their already low social status in many countries. The four Nordic countries come out on top in terms of gender equality, while some African and Islamic nations have been the most gender biased, according to the 1995 UNDP report.

17. The figures disclosed at the Peking Conference tell a

similar story saying that, out of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty worldwide, 70% are women. The number of women living in absolute poverty in rural areas has increased by 50% in the last 20 years. According to a survey of 100 countries by the Washington based Population Action International (PAI), in over half the countries surveyed, a woman faces more than one in 100 lifetimes risk of dying from pregnancy related causes. In some African countries, the risk is as high as one in sixteen. Women in the developed countries also suffer from poverty. In the US, while women constituted 40% of the poor in 1940, their number went up to 62% by 1980.

18. A 1994 UN report shows that a quarter of women worldwide are violently abused in the privacy of their own homes and the assaults on them by their husbands and male partners are world's most common forms of violence. In the US, the rape, muggings and road accidents account far more than other hospital admissions. The Third World graph of women's abuse stands very high going up to 80% in Pakistan and Chile, 60% in Papua New Guinea and 50% in the Korean Republic. The children of battered women too suffer in consequence. A mother, who is a victim of domestic violence, is twice likely to have a miscarriage and four times more likely to have a low birth-weight baby. Her children are more likely to drop out of school and become violent in their turn.

V. Indian Social Reality

19. The question of de-jure gender equality in India is enshrined in its Constitution, but the social reality is something quite different. De-facto gender injustice goes on escalating every year. Despite India, having been a signatory to the 1979 UN CEDAW, the abuse of women is on the increase.

20. The 1995 UNDP development report shows that, according to its Human Development Index (HDI), India ranks 134 out of 174 countries, below China and Pakistan. Using the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the report places India in the 99th position among 130 countries in relation to the status of women. In the matter of underweight children below five years, India is one of the worst performers. But in the case of pregnant women, aged 15-49, with anaemia, India's 88% is the worst in the world.

21. According to the 1991 census, the female literacy rate in India is 39.42%. In India's organised sector, only 4% of all the Indian working women is employed, with the rest engaged in the

unorganised sector, including agriculture.

22. According to a study by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), 30,000 more girls die annually in India than boys and an estimated one in every six female deaths is due to gender discrimination and gross neglect. It notes that every year 12 million girls are born in India. Of this, 25% do not live to see their 15th birthday. Female foeticide is a growing menace in the country. It remarks that male "land ownership and concomitant lineage system would be an important factor in high fertility rates and low status of the girl child." It says that India is one of the few countries in the world where sex ratio is adverse to females. The 1991 census has registered the lowest ever sex ratio of 929 (to 1,000 males) since 1901.

23. The 1995 UNICEF report says that one in 3 infants in India is born with low birth weight which is a symptom of malnutrition inherited from a mother who herself is malnourished. Malnutrition continues despite India's emergence as a country self-sufficient in food. The report remarks that 90% of infant deaths can be attributed to a birth weight below 2 kg. The low birth weight is rooted in material malnutrition and anaemia which contributes to premature births and pre-natal mortality. 24% of Indian women weigh less than 38 kg and 16% are less than 145 centimetre in height, which is compounded by early marriage. Early marriage results in early child bearing—43% of girls in the age group 15-19 get married and 8% bear children before even turning 19.

24. The incident of crime against women has increased all over the country for the last few decades, but, in some states, including Delhi, the crime jump is alarming.

25. According to the National Crime Record Bureau of the Home Ministry, the crime against women has more than doubled in the past one decade, with the crime rate being at one incident every 6 minutes. A woman is raped every 47 minutes, another is kidnapped or abducted every 44 minutes, while a third is subjected to cruelty by her husband or his relatives. Nearly 17 dowry deaths are reported every day. The number of reported crimes against women was 82,818 last year.

The all India average of the crime rate being 9.1 per lakh, Pondicherry heads the list as the most risk prone state with 760 cases and an index of 91.6. Delhi is placed second, with 3,482 cases and index of 37.3.

Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of registered cases at 14,048 of crime against women in 1993, followed by

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan with 13,913, 11,378, 8,335 and 7,160 cases respectively.

In the past two decades, the rape reported cases have increased nearly 400% from 2,962 in 1974 to 11,117 in 1993 and kidnapping and abduction have gone up nearly 30% from 9,980 reported cases to 11,759 during the same period.

Most of the cases of atrocities on women are reported from the rural areas where the literacy level is absolutely low and the women are unaware of their rights. Several victims do not lodge a complaint fearing ostracism.

26. The prevailing deplorable state of women's health, education and employment coupled with increasing crime against them point out a further shift to the gender inequality—reflecting in the decline of female sex ratio.

27. In spite of certain recent official moves—the setting up of the National Commission for Women in 1992, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987—the situation has not undergone any basic change. India's women rights record continues to give it a poor image. Whatever little assistance is now available to the needy women is mainly due to the efforts of some voluntary organisations or public spirited workers. But such support lacks continuity and sustenance due to paucity of resources.

VI. Main Obstacles

28. Why does, despite the universal demand for gender equality and in spite of the UN international conferences, the plethora of laws, rules, judicial rulings, development plans and politicians' rhetoric to root out gender injustice, the atrocities against women do not cease even in a single country?

29. The main reason lies in the persisting stranglehold of the obscurantist and traditional ethos and attitudes—all of which are biased against the women. Our world still lives under a patriarchal order (a male dominated system) which is characterised by primitive male instinct for female subordination in every walk of life. Biologically and socially, woman is still considered to be inferior to man. Worldwide, especially in the Third World, she is considered fit for only household work. With the whole social environment inimical to her, a woman is denied to choose her career. When a girl child grows up, the only career she is told about is of a housewife. She is trained in house work and little else. She is given the impression that her parental home is only a temporary abode. And that, after her marriage, she will move to her real home. Even

in the developed countries, she is considered junior to man. Her work is sometimes underpaid and there are few choices.

30. The other reason is that all social authority, i.e., the power of decision making in all decisive matters, rests with men.

31. In India, the social environment is more prejudicial to women than perhaps other countries. It cannot be otherwise in a country in which various varieties of casteism and communalism have attained the positions of national models (i.e., *Hindutva*, Mandalism, majoritarian nationalism, etc.), legislation remains full of loopholes and even judges are often not gender neutral. A former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, had, while heading the Indian judicial system, exhorted women “to stay at home and leave their offices” and “not to compete with men.” He asserted that the “Constitutional mandate of gender equality was the anti-thesis of the human process because God has not created man and woman as equal.”

VII. Approach And Initiatives

32. The question of gender equality is a highly essential need for the sustainable development of our society. It is an issue of establishing an equal partnership between the two sexes. Being the most important issue of the development of human species, it demands to be handled in a way which, while giving equal rights to women in theory and practice in all matters, strengthens the bond between man and woman. History shows that only within a cordial relation—which creates a feeling of affection between wife and husband and among the family members—human species can grow and nourish. For a very long time in the past, the woman-man relation has, in fact, been a relation of subordination of the former to the latter. To overstate it as a confrontationist issue or a “battle of sexes”, etc., would be ahistorical and irrational.

33. The process of the establishment of gender equality needs a two sided initiative: the framing of a proper agenda for ending the dependence of woman on man and the empowerment of women and the adoption of a suitable method for the enlightenment and involvement of the people.

(A) Empowerment Of Women

(i) Political Empowerment By

* Ending the patriarchal system and adopting the principle of recognising parenthood, descent and dynasty in the joint names

of the father and the mother.

- * Restoring the status of the girl child equal to that of the boy child.
- * Providing 50% reservation to women in all political institutions from the lowest to the highest level (including the cabinet, parliament, Supreme Court, etc.) for 20 years, and confining 10% of the reservation to those below the poverty line.
- * Giving 30% reservation to women in administrative services and as students in educational institutions.
- * Overhauling all existing laws, based on inequality between woman and man and incorporating gender justice in the personal laws of all religions.
- * Changing the concept which gives all the responsibilities to the mother and all the rights to the father.
- * Making both the father and the mother as the joint guardians of the minor child and, in case of their separation, recognising the mother as the sole guardian of a minor child in respect of person and property.
- * Defining women's human rights as to include the right to basic reproductive choices, information and health services, especially related to child bearing, menstruation and contraception.
- * Enacting law concerning sexual assault, violence against women (including family violence).

(ii) Economic Empowerment By

- * Adopting a statutory provision which stipulates the joint ownership of the husband and the wife of all the family property, both immovable and moveable (including membership in any enterprise, bank, cooperative society, etc.).
- * Granting equal rights to sons and daughters in ancestral and parental property in law.
- * Including the unremunerated work by women in computations of the GDP of all countries.
- * Recognising the unpaid work being done by women within the household as being equally important for the survival and welfare of the family by law for joint matrimonial property.
- * Facilitating access for the women to economic resources, opportunities and benefits of development.
- * Improving the women's nutritional standards through the strengthening of the poverty alleviation programme, employment generation schemes, public distribution system, etc.
- * Increasing access for women to credit.

- * Providing old age pensions to women, help to female-headed families, widows and women, who have been abandoned and homes for women in distress.
- * Imparting training to maid servants in handicrafts, toy making, knit garments, etc., and arranging the sale of their produce.
- * Rehabilitating prostitutes and their children.

(iii) Cultural Empowerment By

- * Providing universal female education (including vocational one), health-care, effective role in environment and population management, etc., and free education and medical help to those below the poverty line (generally coming from slum workers, agricultural labour, *dalits*, tribals, etc.).
- * Changing the old value system and norms which devalue women's capacity and status (e.g., holding woman as inferior to man, man as the sole bread winner, etc.).
- * Portraying a real image of woman in media and society.
- * Sharing home responsibilities together by the wife and the husband.
- * Raising the marriage age.
- * Changing defective family planning methods—like injectables and implants, RV 486 tablets, etc.—having harmful effects on women's health and supplying essential and proper drugs.
- * Ensuring the supply of clean drinking water and proper health facilities in the rural areas.
- * Guaranteeing equal rights and equal participation to children, eradication of child labour (involving 100 million children in India alone), child prostitution, female infanticide, upliftment of street children, etc.

(B) Changing Of Peoples Mindsets

- * Propagation of the programme for gender equality through mass media, both official and non-official.
- * Holding of seminars, meetings, workshops, etc., from the village to the national level on the theme of gender equality.
- * Publication of proper literature and organising of cultural activities, exhibitions, film shows, dramas, folk dancing and music concerts, sports, etc.
- * Planning of the grassroots level work village-wise and urban ward-wise by joint teams of women and men.
- * Inclusion of the principle of gender equality as the top item in the programmes of all the political parties as well as the NGOs

with the necessary condition to propagate it through every activity.

* Combating of fundamentalism, communalism and casteism, all of which reinforce the stranglehold of obscurantism and traditionalism, talk of the inner power of woman (*nari gaurav*) for sacrifice as a daughter, sister, wife and mother, glorify customs, like self-immolation, confinement to homes, motherhood as the basic characteristic of woman, etc., and raise objections against family planning, monogamy and humane civil codes in the name of traditional morals.

* Organising of countrywide campaign to break the politician-police-criminal nexus.

* Arranging of special training classes for the judiciary, bureaucracy, police and army on gender sensitisation.

* Making certain of the role of National Commission for Women in each country as a watchdog body to monitor the implementation of the pro-women policies and to get the anti-women policies changed.

* Undertaking of the campaign to smoothen the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law.

34. The above-stated measures are needed not only for gender equality, but also for establishing a sustainable, just and fair social order—an order which stands to eliminate not only woman-man inequality but also the entire series of social distortions, such as those between rich and poor, rural and urban, whites and blacks and above all between nature and man.

10-11-1995

Punjab Today—Standing Between Chaos And Order

I. An Uneasy Calm

1. Apparently, it seems all calm and quite, but, beneath the surface, a fear psychosis, though in a subdued form, prevails in today's Punjab. This is because the people in general feel that things in their state are not moving in a proper way.

2. At the political level, a police regulated democracy prevails in Punjab. Its main feature is the violation of human rights in every walk of life. The other distinction is that the Punjab government and the administration have become corrupt to the bone. Its third mark is the breaking of all past records in nepotism.

3. In the field of development, the problem of water pollution and land degradation, caused by their misuse and the overuse of chemicals and other inputs has become more acute—giving rise to new human diseases and the decrease in land productivity (i.e., high cost production). Infrastructural issues—i.e., supply of pure drinking water, construction and maintenance of rural roads, management of power, telephone, transport, etc.—remain as usual neglected. Prices of essential commodities continue to rise. Increase in unemployment goes on haunting the people. A high level of illiteracy and mismanaged primary and secondary education persist as usual. The condition of health-care has been deteriorating day by day.

4. No less irritating is the neglect of long delayed Punjab's grievances. Prominent among these grievances are the following. Firstly, the belief that the Punjab farmer is denied his rightful share of river waters for irrigation; next, the conviction that Chandigarh and some other Punjabi speaking areas contiguous to the Punjab borders are wrongly lumped with non-Punjabi speaking states; third, the view that a major portion of electricity, generated in Punjab, is transferred to other states, ignoring the requirements of the local industry and agriculture; fourth, the idea

that, despite its great contribution in the field of agricultural production, the question of development of relevant agro-industry and big industry in Punjab, has been continuously ignored; fifth, the impression that the total restriction on the export of its surplus agricultural production has been causing a financial loss to the Punjab farmers.

II. Sikh Feeling

5. The most disturbing aspect of the Punjab situation is that the Sikh community continues to nurse the feeling that New Delhi has always been unfair to its case.

Firstly, the community (i.e., the overwhelming number of Sikhs) feels that New Delhi had not acted justly in regard to the Punjabi language and the Punjabi Suba which the former had always upheld as two of its important political distinguishing marks. To obtain the right of Punjabi as the principal language of the Punjabis (instead of the dual Punjabi-Hindi language existing in the 1950s) and the right of the formation of the Punjabi Suba on the basis of the Punjabi language (instead of a bi-lingual Punjab-Haryana state of the earlier post-1947 period), the community had to wage perpetual struggles and make many sacrifices in human and material terms, although the Congress leaders had promised the formation of such a state in the pre-independence period. For instance, on July 6, 1946 Jawahar Lal Nehru, at his Calcutta press conference, said: "The brave Sikhs of the Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area or a set up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom." ¹ While the reorganisation of the rest of the states in India on linguistic basis was mainly completed within 10 years after independence, the formation of the Punjabi Suba was consistently rejected by the centre for 20 years, finally to be formed in 1966 and that too after many atrocities on the Sikh Morchas.

Secondly, the community holds that New Delhi has deliberately and improperly reduced the percentage of Sikhs in the Indian Army and other strategic official sectors on the basis of its presumed suspicion of the Sikhs loyalty to the Indian state—thus turning the community out of the Indian national fold and totally forgetting the fact that among those executed by the British colonial regime and killed by that government's atrocities as well as those deposed for life in the Andamans

¹ *The Statesman*, Calcutta, July 7, 1946

Islands, the Sikhs were more than 75%.²

Thirdly, the community maintains that New Delhi has been constantly creating a wedge between the Sikh and the Hindu communities in Punjab by falsely projecting the danger of Sikh domination and by subtly orienting the Hindu's on the communal basis through the pro-Hindu bodies and media.

Fourthly, the community regards that contrary to its improper treatment of the Sikhs in Punjab, New Delhi has always been trying to woo the Sikhs settled in other parts of India through certain concessions in the administration, army and business—thus creating the impression among them that their interests lie with the centre.

Fifthly, the community considers that every agreement made by New Delhi with Punjab—whether on river waters, Chandigarh or Rajiv-Longowal accord—had been deliberately disrupted by the centre.

Sixthly, the community is of the view that the 1973-cum-1978 Anandpur Sahib resolution, seeking autonomy for all the states, including Punjab, had been unjustifiably rejected by the centre,

Seventhly, the community thinks that the “Blue Star” offensive on the Golden Temple in Amritsar—in which thousands of lives according to unofficial estimates, and hundreds of lives on the basis of official figures, were lost and ancient Sikh literature, paintings and artefacts were destroyed—was a well-considered attempt of New Delhi to demoralise the Sikhs.

Eighthly, the community is of the opinion that the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in India—openly provoked by the then GOI leaders and the latter's shielding of the alleged killers (named H.K.L. Bhagat, then a Cabinet Minister, and Sajjan Kumar, then an MP, among others by the Justice Narula Committee)—represents New Delhi's increasing bias against the Sikhs.

Ninthly, the community's feeling is that, ignoring the ground realities, the majority of the Punjabi Hindus has not acted in a realistic way in the post-1947 period. According to the former, the latter has continuously backed the New Delhi regime and blindly supported every unjust move of the centre—going to the extent of disowning even its own mother tongue, i.e., Punjabi and

² Of the 2,175 Indian martyrs, 1,557 or 75% were Sikhs. Out of 2,646 Indians sent to Andamans for life imprisonment, 2,147 or 80% were Sikhs. Out of 127 Indians who were hanged, 92 or 80% were Sikhs. Out of 20,000 who joined the Indian National Army under Subhash Bose, 12,000 or 60% were Sikhs. And the Sikhs constitute only 2% of India's population.

opting for Hindi during census operations. Even now, it continues to pursue the old track.

All this has created inter-community strains in Punjab, despite the fact that the Sikh-Hindu relations have always remained free from any communal tension. Although the Khalistani militants did commit atrocities on common Hindus (far greater on innocent Sikhs), the Sikh community as such has not acted in an anti-Hindu manner. Moreover, while a majority of Hindus are linked to trade, industry and finance, especially the rural credit, and the overwhelming numbers of Sikhs are engaged in agriculture, there is no serious economic antagonism between the two communities.

6. The proof of all the above beliefs is evident from the Sikh community's declaration that Sant Bhindrawale, Indira Gandhi's assassins, General Vaidya's killers and all the Sikh militants killed at the hands of the Indian security forces are martyrs to the Sikh cause and that the Sikh militancy is part of the Sikh Panth. Contrary to this, the general feeling among the Sikhs (including the various Akali Dals) in Punjab is that New Delhi is an anti-Sikh centre?

7. Can the reality of such a mindset of the 60% of Punjab population be termed as normalcy in Punjab?

III. Question Of Sikh Identity

8. The question of a distinct Sikh religious identity is a historic fact, existing both in the past and the present.

9. Traditionally, the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), when asked whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, replied: "Neither. I am just a human being." The tenth and the last Sikh Guru Govind Singh (1666-1708), was the first to conceptualise the two sided duty—the *Piri*, i.e., the spiritual realisation, and the *Miri*, i.e., the attainment of the political power (the two swords put on by the sixth Guru)—of every devoted Sikh. He himself, along with his followers, fought for the securing of political power.

10. Historically, it was only after the death of Guru Govind Singh that one of his followers, Banda Singh Bahadur, the great Sikh General, fought against the Moghul Empire and succeeded in establishing the first Sikh Rule at Sirhind and the surrounding area (1710-1716). After a hundred years of military struggle, the Sikhs were able to set up an independent state in Punjab (1799) under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839).

11. Following the occupation of Punjab by the British in 1849, the Sikhs made great sacrifices for the cause of Indian freedom

(See para 5, Secondly).

12. During the Indian independence struggle, the Congress leaders (Gandhi, Nehru and Patel) made promises to ensure the identity of Sikhs in the post-colonial India. In July 1947, the Hindu and the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly met at Delhi and passed a unanimous resolution supporting the partition of United India and the providing of special treatment to the Sikh community in the following words: "In the divided Indian Punjab, special constitutional measures are imperative to meet the just aspirations and rights of the Sikhs."

13. In the post-1947 period too, the Sikhs remained in the forefront of struggle whenever any crisis confronted India.

IV. Centre's Shabby Treatment Of Punjab

14. However, New Delhi's post-1947 policy—making the Sikhs as a part of the Hindu community under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, dilly-dallying on forming a Punjabi speaking state in which Sikhs might acquire political dominance for 20 years, depriving Punjab of some Punjabi speaking areas in the Punjab Reorganisation Bill 1966, rejecting 1973-cum-1978 Anandpur Sahib Resolution, launching the 1984 "Operation Blue Star" and "Operation Woodrose", promoting 1984 anti-Sikh riots, etc.—meted out a very shabby treatment to the Sikh community, thus shattering the latter's high expectations of the Indian leaders and alienating them from the Indian mainstream. The January 1986 declaration from the *Akal Takht* for an independent Sikh state and the results of the 1989 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab (in which 9 seats were won by the pro-Khalistan supporters out of a total number of 13 seats) were an indication of the Sikh alienation. The 1992 memorandum signed by 12 main Akali leaders (seeking UN intervention for a plebiscite among Sikhs on the issue of a Sikh state in Punjab) presented to the UN Secretary General and the May 1994 declaration (demanding a confederal status for Punjab and, in case of refusal, the raising of the slogan of an independent Sikh state) by the United Akali Dal Amritsar (which was not joined by the Badal group) were a further expression of the continuing Sikh alienation.

V. Causes Of Militancy's Setback

15. It is true that the Khalistani militancy suffered a serious setback in 1991-92. But the basic cause of this setback rested with the wrong theory and practice of Khalistan and not in any

lessening of the Sikh alienation.

16. Theoretically, it is a misconceived slogan which, firstly, splits Punjabis on religious grounds into two parts, i.e., the Sikhs and the Hindus, and, secondly, divides the Sikh community into two factions—one residing in India and the other confined to the independent Sikh state. Thirdly, it ignores the worldwide experience of the unviability of a theocratic nation-state—whether in the South Asian Pakistan or the North African Sudan. Hence, it could not secure a foothold among the broad masses of the Sikh community.

17. Practically, the setback to the Khalistani militancy is related to seven main factors.

(i) Adoption of the inhuman strategy of indiscriminate killings of the innocent Hindus and Sikhs, including children, women and old—a strategy which ran counter to the humanist ethos of Sikhism and which lacked every sense of right and wrong.

(ii) Failure of Khalistani strategy to motivate the Sikh masses.

(iii) Its opposition by the Punjabi Hindu community.

(iv) Its rejection by the Sikhs living in other parts of India.

(v) Its lacking in winning any sympathy of the democratic minded people in India and the world.

(vi) The inter and intra-factional and egoistic conflicts between different Khalistani militant groups.

(vii) Deployment of a large number of Indian security forces.

VI. Two Sided Punjab Problem

18. Can it be said that normality has returned to Punjab after the setback to the Khalistani militancy and that Punjab has now become a militancy free state? So long as the disenchantment of the Sikh masses from the Indian mainstream continues, the basis of Sikh militancy cannot be eradicated. The latter may pass through various adverse or retreating phases, but it cannot go out of existence.

19. New Delhi has not so far taken even a single step to remove the long accumulated grievances of the Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular. In fact, its perception has been that the Khalistani militancy is a Pak instigated movement and that the Sikhs are against it. But two recent occurrences again show the inconsistency of its assumption.

20. One was the World Sikh Conference at Amritsar (September 1995) which advocated the establishment of Khalistan, honoured all those militants, particularly the killers of

Indira Gandhi and General Vaidya, who were killed at the hands of the Indian Security Forces. It asked for the preparation of a list of all those who were killed for upholding the cause of Khalistan and did not have a word of sympathy for the innocent people killed by either the one or the other combatant. The main objective of this conference was to establish the supremacy of the Akal Takht not only in religious matters but also in political affairs. No Akali leader, even anyone belonging to the Badal camp, differed with the line adopted at this Conference—an open signal of the level of Sikh alienation.

21. The other happening was the cool reaction of the common Sikh masses on the assassination of Beant Singh in contrast to the highly sorrowful-cum-worrisome Hindu reaction which generally reflects a feeling of personal loss—a clear sign of the psychic Hindu-Sikh divide.

22. Thus, the facts point out that the principal issue in Punjab today is a two sided problem—that of the alienation of the Sikh community and that of the psychic gap between the Punjabi Sikh and Hindu communities.

VII. Centre's Line Of Destabilisation

23. Where do we go from here? New Delhi and the mainstream parties, upholding the vision of unitary-cum-majoritarian nationalism, have been pursuing the line of suppression and discrimination against the Sikhs in general, on the one hand, and of perpetuating the Sikh-Hindu cleavage, on the other. The experience of the line of suppression and splittism shows that, while in Jammu-Kashmir and the North-Eastern states, it has perpetuated the alienation of the ethnic minorities, in the rest of India, it has, by boosting communalism and casteism, strengthened a sense of insecurity and deprivation among the minorities and the weaker sections. Obviously, such a line, contrary to the ethnic, religious and cultural diversities of India, is destined to move towards destabilisation and disintegration of the country. No democratic and rational person can support this chaotic course.

24. Going by the past experience, it can be safely said that the Akali politics will also contribute some share to complicate the situation. Its two old politically sectarian slogans—i.e., *Panth* is in danger and under the Khalsa Rule, there will be no dissent—are as usual likely to strengthen various varieties of communalism, the Khalistani case and the vote bank politics.

VIII. Agenda For Punjab

25. A just and fair solution of the Punjab problem demands a new agenda that ensures the distinctiveness of the Sikh community, strengthens the fraternal relations between the Sikhs and the Hindus and opens the way for the development of Punjab and India.

(A) For Sikh Identity

(i) Convening of a Conference of the representatives of the Punjab related parties, including the Khalistani militants, to resolve the issue of Sikh identity by New Delhi with the declaration to the effect that a special status will be accorded to Punjab within the Indian Union, like the one enjoyed by Jammu-Kashmir before 1953. This can be easily accomplished even within the present Indian constitutional framework, but it would be better if, together with this change, India itself undergoes a federal transformation.

(ii) Guaranteeing and safeguarding of the Sikh religion as an independent and separate faith. To reinforce this assurance, New Delhi should express regret over its past act of "Operation Blue Star".

(iii) Solving of the boundary disputes between Punjab and the adjoining states as envisaged in the Rajiv-Longowal accord.

(iv) Accepting of Punjabi as the second regional language in the neighbouring states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

(v) Amending of the Gurdwara Management Act on the basis of the recommendations made by the Minorities Commission and the Sikh religious bodies.

(vi) Announcing of a general amnesty to all those (whether in government custody or underground) connected with the Khalistani militancy.

(vii) Prosecution of all those found guilty by various commissions in the killings of the Sikhs during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

(B) For Sikh-Hindu Fraternity

(i) Upholding of Punjabi as their mother tongue.

(ii) Demanding of a special status for Punjab within the Indian Union.

(iii) Standing for a fair solution to all the Punjab problems.

(iv) Appointment of a commission of enquiry (like the one appointed by South Africa) to find out how the innocent people

had been killed and the law violated by both the GOI forces and the Khalistani militants in the post-1980 Punjab crisis—as demanded by certain quarters to bring into light the excesses committed by the two sides on the different groups of Punjabis.

(C) For Development of Punjab

(i) Handing over of the question of river waters to the Supreme Court for a decision within a specified time as demanded by all the Akali Dals.

(ii) Handing over of Chandigarh to Punjab and providing of proper compensation to Haryana.

(iii) Completion of the Thein Dam on an emergency footing.

(iv) Setting up of proper agro-industries and big industries in Punjab.

(v) Appointment of an independent commission (including the representatives of the agricultural community in Punjab) to go into the various problems of agriculture in Punjab, i.e., land degradation, water pollution, availability of water, power and other agricultural inputs, agricultural finance and prices, export of agricultural commodities, etc.

(vi) Fulfilling of New Delhi's promise of an economic package for Punjab as referred to by the three Prime Ministers.

(vii) Defending of the human rights of the people.

(viii) Combating of criminalisation, corruption, communalism, casteism, etc.

(ix) Mobilising of the people for the solution of their immediate problems.

IX. Need For A Consensus

26. The above agenda may serve as an outline for discussion among all fair minded people, irrespective of their party affiliations, to arrive at certain consensus for resolving the festering Punjab problem. If we do not act, the problem will take its own course.

27. The ongoing peace in Punjab has been foisted through the barrel of the gun. The basic cause of the militancy remains totally unaddressed. While the old wrongs in Punjab have not yet been righted, further wrong doing still continues. Punjab today stands between chaos and order. New Delhi's line can only plunge it into a new disorder from which it may not be possible to get out. This is the last thing that Punjab and India ever need.

19-11-1995

India's Moment Of *Satyamev Jayate*

I. Things Are Not Going In A Proper Way

Is the universal law, *Satyamev Jayate* (i.e., Truth always triumphs), which we have adopted as our national motto in the Indian Constitution, asserting itself in case of our own nation? The question arises from the new situation that now prevails in our country. Alarm bells are sounding in all directions that things are not going in a proper way in our Union. Executive, legislature, judiciary, political parties, press and the people—all seem to be in a topsy-turvy condition.

There is rarely any national institution that is not marked by its own sectarian interests. Overwhelming number of our countrymen are conditioned by their specific group or individual interests. The few who think in human or social terms too could not make any dent due to their subjective or objective constraints.

All formulae, traditional and modern, have failed to work. There is no consensus based new national perspective which may guide us in our national process, no national style which may improve our performance, no national value code to make us justice loving and fair minded, no organisation to create consensus on any national question, major or minor.

Uncertainties are now plaguing all walks of our social life. Hope in the future has given way to general despair. Obviously, this state of affairs is qualitatively different from all earlier situations in the post-1947 India.

The perception of despondency which engulfs our people today is not a sudden eruption. It is the outcome of given realities now characterising our national process.

(A) Threat To National Unity

The chief reality of our national process is that its polity, while claiming to be the biggest democracy of the world, is in fact

characterised by five serious social evils—like criminalisation, corruptibility, communalism, casteism and violence—thus posing a grave threat to the unity of our country.

By the criminalisation of Indian polity is meant the managing of Indian political process either by criminals or by those in league with them.

The crudest form of this criminalisation is the one where the criminals themselves become the wielders of power either by entering the legislature (including the local bodies and panchayats) or the holders of important positions in the mainstream parties. It is now estimated that about 10% of the Indian legislators are composed of shady elements of various hues.

Another form of the criminalisation of politics is the formation of politician-criminal-police nexus existing in all spheres.

The third form of the criminalisation of politics is the emergence of power-brokers and ultra-constitutional centres at different levels.

The fourth form of the criminalisation of politics is the misuse and the abuse of power by those in authority at different levels of the polity, particularly at the top.

The fifth, but not the least important in any sense, form of the criminalisation of politics is the use of money and muscle power to get undue advantage from the polity, particularly in the electoral process.

Starting from the beginning of the first post-1947 regime under J.L. Nehru and continuously flourishing during the 9 succeeding regimes under various Prime Ministers, the criminalisation of Indian politics has today assumed unprecedented dimensions. The 1994 official Vohra Committee report has commented: “Mafia is running a parallel government, pushing the state apparatus into irrelevance.” The other major points of the report included: (i) Organised crime syndicates have acquired astronomical monetary resources which are invariably used in quantities of packed “suitcases and gunny bags” to develop a network of contacts with politicians, bureaucrats, media persons and other influential individuals for carrying on their criminal activities unchecked, (ii) Such crime syndicates “have become law unto themselves”... “seriously jeopardising the smooth functioning of the administration and the safety of life and property of the common man,” (iii) The crime syndicates, “graduated to big business”, run a parallel economy which forms a major component of the Indian economy, especially of its corporate sector, (iv) The official crime dealing agencies have been reduced to ineffectiveness

by means of corruption and political pressure from the top through postings, transfers, etc., and (v) To deal with this menacing situation, it is necessary that a nodal agency for coordinating, monitoring and prosecuting the offenders is established.

By the second serious social evil of the Indian polity, i.e., corruptibility is meant the prevalence of corruption in the Indian political process. Though it has continued with full force all through the post-1947 polity, yet it has surpassed all records under the present regime. The latter has come to be looked upon as a synonymous of loot. One scandal after another—securities scam, sugar muddle, disinvestment scandal, the ongoing hawala racket, etc.—has reeked the Indian polity. So far nine ministers of P.V. Narsimha Rao's cabinet have to quit on corruption charges.

However, what the above cases do reveal is only a tip of the iceberg. In fact, a large number of such cases in all states and at all levels remain concealed. The *hawala* blast, in particular, has shown that the top Indian politicians of all hues are steeped in corruption.

By the third serious evil of the Indian polity, i.e., communalism, is meant the forceful existence of different varieties of communalism (i.e., the politics of a religious community), particularly the majoritarian one (i.e., the *Hindutva*), in the Indian political process. The communalisation of the Indian political process (i.e., the rousing of inter-communal hostility and revengeful passions), firstly, accelerates the mass polarisation along antagonistic communal lines—thus creating fissures in the process of national integration. Secondly, it generates communal riots which disrupt the law and order and disturbs the economic process. Thirdly, it creates hurdles in the further democratisation of the polity and the liberalisation of the economy. Fourthly, by virtue of being a system of thought and belief, every type of communalism orientates its respective adherents to appraise phenomena from the communal angle. Fifthly, the majoritarian communalism, by rousing aggressive jingoism, creates animosity between India and Pakistan, thus increasing the possibility of an Indo-Pak conflict.

By the fourth serious evil of the Indian polity, i.e., casteism, is meant the strong influence of casteism (i.e., the politics of caste) of various hues, particularly the one exploiting the name of *Dalits* and Backwards, in the Indian political process. The casteisation of the Indian political process (i.e., the generation of inter-caste tensions), firstly, perpetuates the traditional caste divisions

among the people, thus hindering the process of national unity. Secondly, it accelerates the caste riots which create hatred among the people and upset the normal social life. Thirdly, it nourishes the traditional behaviour pattern of loyalty and subservience to the caste leaders. And, fourthly, it strengthens the casteist approach and attitude towards every problem.

By the fifth serious evil of the Indian polity, i.e., violence, is meant the predominant role of violence, particularly the state violence, in the Indian political process. The state violence denotes the use of violence by the state to deal with social problems. There is hardly any social conflict in the country today in which the security forces are not directly or indirectly involved.

As regards the non-state violence, a major part of it (whether in the terrorisation of the public or in the inter-gang rivalry) is committed by the mafia groups. Next, comes the militant violence, mainly directed against the state and sometimes even the people, followed by the communal and the caste violence. The violence at the mass level forms a very insignificant part of the Indian violence prone political process.

Thus, the degeneration of the Indian political process has hindered all the constitutional and legal measures which are required for the smooth working of a genuine rule of law, on the one hand, and deprived our people of even the meagre political-economic rights that are available to them under the existing Indian system, on the other.

Obviously, no genuine freedom of democracy can, exist in a society whose polity is characterised by criminalisation, corruptibility, communalism, casteism and violence.

All this has resulted in creating fissures and splits in our national process. Firstly, it has given rise to the alienation of all minorities from the national mainstream, leading to militant movements in areas where the minorities happen to be in majority—Jammu-Kashmir, Punjab and the North-Eastern states. Secondly, it has increased the gap between the different social communities and groups, resulting in more communal and caste troubles. And, thirdly, it has broken even the minimum consensus on the fundamental factors of the social system among the mainstream parties. In brief, it has weakened our national fabric.

(B) Unsustainable Development Process

The other important reality of our national process is that its development process, while boasting of its sustainable advance,

is, in fact, characterised by distortions in India's natural and human resources.

The natural distortion is the degradation of India's land, forest and water resources, destruction of bio-diversity, and pollution of the air.

As regards land, out of a total land mass of 329 million hectares, only 226 million hectares has a potential for agriculture. The actual cultivable area is only 143 million hectares, while 85 million hectares area has become degraded and 40 million hectares totally unproductive. Of the 143 million hectares cultivable area, only 1/3rd is irrigated, while 2/3rd remains dry.

As regards forests, they cover an area of 85 million hectares about half of which has been denuded to varying degrees due to the illegal felling of trees and the daily increasing pressure of the growing human and animal population. This has created a threat for the flowering plant species, mangrove swamps, etc.

Deforestation and cultivation of forest lands have led to soil erosion and an estimated loss of 6,000 million tonnes of soil. Due to the more and more barrenness of the area under pasture land (comprising 13 million hectares in all) through degradation and the forcible occupation of this area by the strong as well as the needy, the Indian cattle, perhaps the largest number than in any other country, have to scrounge for whatever they can get on the forest and fallow lands—thus leading to overgrazing and further land degradation.

As regards water resources, their annual average quantity is estimated to be about 400 million hectare metres (MHM). Out of this, about 300 MHM is secured through rainfall during the monsoon period. In earlier times, the vegetation cover used to hold back the monsoon waters and release them steadily after augmenting the ground water. With deforestation, this cushion has been gradually disappearing and the water availability becoming uneven. Now a high rainfall results in a flood, while below normal rains lead to a drought. Floods carry the soil with them and cause silting of rivers and reservoirs. This steadily increasing cycle of alternating floods and droughts imposes a burden of about Rs 1,500 crore on our exchequer. The wastage of much of the rain water exercises more pressure on our groundwater resources and restricts their capacity as well.

The availability of water in India is constantly decreasing. It is estimated that, if this situation continues, the per capita availability of water in India may slump from the current level of

2,100 cubic metres to 1,100 cubic metres (a level of shortage) by the year 2039.

Effluents discharged from industries and urban human wastes along with the use of chemicals in agriculture are badly affecting the quantity of running, surface and ground waters.

The use of toxic chemicals, automobile transport, and above all the consumption of coal in thermal plants and some other industries go on creating air pollution in India.

Deforestation, land and water degradation and air pollution have created threats for India's genetic resources, comprising 45,000 plant and 75,000 animal species.

The human distortion expresses India's population explosion which has grown into a serious challenge—rising from 342 million in 1947 to over 920 million now. In 2.4% of the world's land area, India is now accommodating more than 16% of the world population. Burgeoning at the rate of 18 million a year, India is expected to reach a 1,000 million mark by the year 2000 and 1,400 million by the year 2025. The increase of about 50 crore in our already unmanageable 920 million would lead to uncontrollable political and social tensions.

The distortions in human and natural resources are already resulting in natural calamities and social troubles.

(C) Inefficient Economic Process

The third important reality of our national process is that its economy is, despite its claim of a balanced growth, marked by imbalances in its production process, finance, sectoral composition of population and social sector.

The first imbalance of the Indian economy is its inefficient production process which is characterised by high cost of production, low rate of productivity and poor quality of its products.

As regards cost of production, while the capital/output ratio in India around 1990 stood at 6/1, it has been 2.5/1 in the developed and 3/1 in the ASEAN economies. That is, while India spends Rs 6 for one unit of output, developed countries invest Rs 2.5 and the ASEAN members Rs 3 for the same quantity.

As regards productivity, while China's per worker per year rate of productivity today stands at \$11,000, India's comparable figure has been only \$900. Even Pakistan's productivity rate at present comprises \$1,500 per worker per year. Around 1950, these 3 countries had the same productivity level. At the world

level while the total output and commerce have, in the post-second world war period, increased by 5.5 and 14 times respectively, our national output had grown by 2.5 times and the external trade slid from 2.5% to 0.6% share in the world trade.

As regards the quality of its products, the Indian goods, and services—leaving aside the traditional items, like tea, jute, cotton, textiles, footwear and a few eatables—hardly fetch any external demand.

The second imbalance of the Indian economy is its weak fiscal discipline—which is marked by high fiscal and revenue deficits.

As regards the fiscal deficit (i.e., borrowings and other liabilities plus nominal budgetary deficit), the 1991 economic policy of liberalisation undertook to reduce it to the level of 3% of GDP by 1995-96. But, after 5 years of reforms, it today stands at 6% of GDP. The slippage on this core point of the fiscal correction shows a poor fiscal management.

As regards the revenue deficit (i.e., revenue receipts minus revenue expenditure), it goes on increasing year by year and now stands at 2.5 times of its 1993 figure. The worrisome feature of this deficit (which, like other revenue expenditure, is a spending on consumption, such as defence, interest payments, etc.) is that it is being financed from the capital account (i.e., production expenditure which generates assets and values). This is just like wasting one's borrowed capital on merry-making. Living beyond one's means is a highly irresponsible act on the part of any regime.

The third imbalance of the Indian economy is its continuation of the traditional sectoral composition of its population.

While there has been a fall in the share of agriculture in our national income from 59% in 1951 to about 33% in 1994, the same percentage of people, i.e., around 70%, remains dependent on agriculture even today.

While nearly 2/3rd national income of India is now coming from the industrial and the tertiary sectors, these sectors have not been able to absorb even a moderate number of rural population.

The fourth imbalance of the Indian economy is its poor performance in social sector.

According to the 1995 UNDP report, India ranked 134 among 174 countries on the basis of Human Development Index (HDI), which takes into account the per capita adjusted real GDP, life expectancy and literacy.

In the Gender related Development Index (GDI), which takes

note of equality achievement between man and woman, India has been placed 99 among 130 countries.

The social sector components of the Indian economy—i.e., literacy, public health, poverty alleviation, employment, housing, etc.—present a depressing picture.

As regards literacy, while the Indian Constitution (Article 44) ordains total literacy within 10 years of its promulgation (i.e., 1960), 48% of Indian population still remains illiterate, five decades after the independence, despite an expenditure of crores of rupees on education.

As regards public health, while the Indian Constitution prescribes due attention to health care and the government makes loud professions in this respect, the actual position is quite disappointing. Still some 1/4th of Indian villages are devoid of drinking water, 2/3rd of Indian people have no latrines and nearly half of rural population has no proper medical facilities.

As regards poverty alleviation, while the government claims reduction in the percentage of people below the poverty line from 29 to 19%, the unofficial estimates by some reputed economists put this percentage at about 40%. The mid-term appraisal by the Planning Commission also shows this percentage to be 38% for the year 1993-94.

As regards unemployment, nearly 5% of our population still continues to be totally unemployed and about 40%, mostly rural, under-employed.

As regards housing, 1/3rd of our population is houseless, while millions of urban houseless sleep on pavements.

Obviously, an economy, like India, geared to the ruling politics, is bound to remain poor, despite having rich human and material resources, while a balanced and efficient economy, like Japan, attains a supra world status, despite the non-availability of domestic resources.

(D) More Militarisation But Less Security

The fourth important reality of our national process is that its foreign-cum-defence policy, while singing paeans to peace, non-alignment and cooperation, is characterised by big brotherly attitude towards its five South Asian neighbours, a docile approach towards big, military and economic powers, a confrontationalist and cold war stance towards Pakistan, reliance on militarisation, etc.

As regards its big brotherly attitude in South Asia, India's relations with most of its neighbours are far from congenial. With

Bangladesh, they have changed from friendship to bitterness. Sri Lanka and Nepal remain highly apprehensive about India's intentions. Bhutan and Mauritius, without causing any provocation, pursue a cautious policy towards New Delhi.

As regards its approach towards big military and economic powers, its docility can be seen from New Delhi's policy on its border dispute with China and its submissive posture towards US adverse positions on the most of India's national concerns. Its standstill agreement with China on the Sino-Indian border conflict—contrary to Indian parliament's October 1962 unanimous resolution forbidding any talks with China till it vacates its occupation of Indian territory—shows its mellowed attitude towards a more powerful neighbour. Similarly, its silence on US positions concerning Jammu-Kashmir, Khalistan, question of human rights violations in India, tagging social clauses to WTO agreement, etc., contrary to New Delhi's stand, demonstrates its subdued approach towards a world power.

As regards its confrontationalist and cold war conduct towards Pakistan, it is obvious from perpetual Indo-Pak hostility and three Indo-Pak wars on Jammu-Kashmir in the post-1947 period.

As regards its reliance on militarisation, while the entire world has been reducing military spending since 1987, at an average rate of 4% a year, both India and Pakistan have gone on increasing their annual military expenditures by 20% in the same period. Both countries are spending over \$20 billion annually on militarisation. Despite their abject poverty, both countries bought twice as many arms from the international market as Saudi Arabia which is 25 times richer. Both countries have six times more soldiers than doctors who are badly needed by their disease afflicted populations. Instead of spending their scarce resources on their peoples, they are investing them in the production of deadly material for killing each other's human resources. But the more they spend on militarisation, the less secure they become. Their level of insecurity is for higher than at anytime in this century.

India's foreign-cum-defence policy takes no clear cut stand on international events— i.e., Chechnya, Bosnia, Rwanda and so on. Events are overtaking the country. But it still seems to be mired in the pre-conceived notions of cold war.

(E) A Culture Of Cheating

The fifth important reality of our national process is that its culture, while parroting the universal values of truth, peace, non-

violence, equality and justice, is in fact characterised by innumerable vices, falsehoods, trickeries, double-speak, double-dealing and what not. In brief, it is a culture of cheating.

At the top political level, this culture of cheating says one thing, but does another or professes one thing, but practises another.

For instance, while daily swearing by democracy, this style always tries to crush dissent by all means, either through inducement, insinuation or suppression, e.g., Nehru's style of continuously advising the people to inculcate the democratic spirit of toleration, on the one hand, and of branding all opposition parties or his critics as anti-nationals, fascists or foreign agents at the same time, on the other; Indira Gandhi's and P.V. Narsimha Rao's styles of declaring their respective commitments to the democratic principles but actually pursuing the traditional trick of breaking the opposition through bribes.

Again, while publically making solemn declarations of upholding secularism, this style always hobnobs with communal forces, e.g., Congress alliance with one group of Muslim league in Kerala under Nehru and his successors; CPI's and Jan Sangh's partnership in Punjab and Bihar coalition ministries during 1967-68; CPM's UF with the Muslim League's anti-Congress group in Kerala for over two decades; CPM's support to the 1977-79 Janata Government which Jan Sangh was a co-sharer with L.K. Advani and A.B. Vajpayee as two senior ministers; CPM's united front with the BJP and JD during 1989-90 V.P. Singh regime, the Janata Dal leaders' desperate efforts to secure the blessings of Imam Bukhari or other traditional religious or casteist leaders or BJP stalwarts, L.K. Advani and A.B. Vajpayee's 1977 call on Imam Bukhari at Jama Masjid to secure his goodwill in favour of their party, etc. There is nothing wrong in parties' forming alliances with one another, provided they are based on certain programme, maximum or minimum. Without any programme such alliances become unscrupulous, especially between the ideologically different parties.

More, while always announcing peace as its goal and non-violence as its fundamental principle, this style always hankers after war and adopts militarisation as its basic principle. For instance, New Delhi's continuous steps on peace and disarmament slogans in every world forum and its four wars with neighbours (three with Pakistan and one with China), resort to military means to gain control of Goa from the Portuguese and of Sikkim from its ruler and always giving top priority to military

matters in the national process.

Further, while daily repeating the pledge to fight corruption, this style always indulges in corruption and shields the corrupt, e.g., all top politicians' daily promises of establishing a clean public life and their personal indulgence in frauds and rackets, vote bank deals and protection of the corrupt.

Furthermore, while asking the people to make sacrifices for the country, this style engages in amassing wealth by various unfair methods, in getting power by all criminal means and in enjoying a luxurious living at the peoples cost.

At the public level, the culture of cheating has created an immoral atmosphere all-around. Food adulteration, short-weight, sub-standard goods flourish all over the country, illicit liquor, drug taking and gambling exist as national pastimes. Black market in railway reservation, purchasing a ticket for any music or dancing show, test match, exhibition or cinema house, admission to schools, colleges and hospitals, getting water, electricity or telephone connections, obtaining a ration card or gas facility, hiring for a shop or a house operates as a normal profession. Fleecing through chit fund companies, bogus employment exchanges, false universities, forged currency dealers, *Hawala* firms and passport and visa agencies goes on unhindered. Tax evasion, money laundering, smuggling, drug trafficking, manipulation of foreign trade, transfer of black money to foreign banks, bank frauds, securities scams, stock market racketeering thrive quite at ease.

(F) Breakdown Of National Consensus

The sixth important reality of our national process is that at present its national consensus, strategic or short-term, has completely broken down; party-wise, the Congress, BJP or NFF, each has its own line on India's polity, economy, foreign policy, nuclear weapons, Jammu-Kashmir issue, etc., and do not agree, on even a single key national issue. In fact, they are on a confrontationist course in every sphere. Similar consensus is also lacking among the major communities and social groups. This means that there is very little psychological unity among our political and social forces—a highly dangerous trend for the smooth running of our national process.

(G) Rise Of A New Historical Era

The seventh important reality of our national process is that it has been caught in a crisis at a time when a new historical era

has dawned on the earth.

The basic feature of this era is that the community of nations, which consisted of semi-independent national entities in the 1940s, has today become an amalgam of interdependent national units. An interdependent world means where poverty in one part adversely affects the prosperity in other parts. That is, a world where issues have become common and priorities same for all countries. No country can any longer afford to isolate itself from this process. The sooner it makes itself an integral part of this inevitable movement, the better for it.

The change has not occurred in a decade or two, but is the result of a very very lengthy process (starting from the very beginning of the human society) which has been picking up with every new human phase (i.e., clan, tribe, kingdom, nation, etc.), especially acquiring the top speed in the post-1945 period.

The underlying cause of the ever-going integration of the given human social groups at each phase has always been the continuously changing social division of labour, particularly the post-1945 one. The social division of labour, including both the mental and the physical categories of work and covering all sectors of social life (political, economic, cultural, etc.), itself arises from a given scientific-technological mechanism and social knowledge and undergoes transformations according to changes in the former.

The interdependent community of nations in the post-cold war period has been undergoing a new restructuring through a three sided process. Firstly, new international organisations—such as WTO, Environmental Commission, NPT Regime, Population Commission on poverty alleviation and so on (like global media giants, TNCs, collaborations, international currency markets, etc.)—are arising one after the other. Secondly, new regional groupings (Caribbean Community, East African Cooperation Union, etc.) are taking shape in every region of the world, while the old ones (EC, NAFTA, APEC, ASEAN, SAARC, etc.) are further strengthening themselves. Thirdly, the various multi-ethnic states are being worn out by their respective ethnic, cultural or linguistic identities which are actively integrating themselves with the global village (e.g., the present 27 units of the former Soviet bloc).

Obviously, this three sided restructuring process is, while mainly strengthening the globalisation process, at the same time eating away the sovereignty of the nation-states. While the

internationalisation is occurring due to the restructuring of production, finance, trade, communication, etc., the national fragmentation is taking place because of the deprivation of equal rights to the minority groups by the majoritarian regimes (based on the national democracy's traditional principle of the majority rule over the minority).

It is just possible that several mixed nations, even some democratic ones, like Canada, may sooner or later, face separatist challenges. The CIA has recently listed some 16 countries, including India and Pakistan, in this category. Many communities, such as Kurds, Basques, Tamils, Tibetans, etc., are already fighting for creating their respective states. May be, the non-resident Hungarians, Turks, Greeks, Chinese, Indians, one day follow a similar course. The imperative of global perspective today is the only safety valve against destabilisation and the only effective means to progress.

India's response to the new global reality has been too late and too little.

The world is moving towards integration. It has brought forth new problems—environmental, demographic, gender equality, poverty elimination, common market, etc. Nation-states are not capable of properly managing them. The three old national models—the Western Liberal, Communist and the mixed one—have become almost outdated.

Similarly all cold war (or confrontationist model approaches, i.e., North-South divide, clash of civilisations, East vs West, West as the central core of the new world order are unfit for today's world. There is need to create a new model.

The other feature of the new process of globalisation is the downsliding of the developed economies, including now even the Japanese one, all of which, having been marked by slow growth rate and increasing unemployment rate (over 11% in the EC) for about two decades, are now in the grip of recession. All the traditional economic remedies administered by them so far—i.e., balancing the budget and lowering the interest rates to boost growth and employment or raising the interest rates and reducing money supply to control inflation, etc.—have come to naught. This means that the traditional economics' focus on market, privatisation, productivity and maximisation of profit and neglect of human resources have now stopped to work.

Another feature of the new process of globalisation is the miraculous economic performance of the East Asian economies.

Some three decades ago, the East Asian countries were as poor as any then deficient region in the world. But during this period, these countries have performed economic wonders. Their growth was three times more than Europe, Latin America and South Asia and five times more than that the sub-Saharan Africa. Real per capita incomes quadrupled in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore and tripled in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. China and Vietnam doubled and sometimes even trebled their growth rates. In every social sphere, the East Asian countries did blaze a new trail. Today, East Asia has become the focus of world economic growth.

The worrisome feature concerning the new process of globalisation is that it is, while being overburdened with a host of new and old problems, confronted with the two most deadly threats to all bio-life on this earth—i.e., the ecological imbalances and the population explosion—generated by man himself in the past one century.

In sum, the afore-mentioned facts show that the sum total of country's weaknesses are growing at a faster rate. The more the weaknesses multiply, the more the depletion in the stability and the unity of the country.

II. Reasons Behind Wrong Going Of Things

What our country and its 950 million people need today is not uncertainty and despair but a clear perception about what lies behind the wrong going of things.

Historical experience shows that the reason behind the wrong working of a thing in society generally lies in its non-conformity with the given social realities—whether the thing represents a concept, style, organisation or some other social phenomenon. The same is the case with the crisis of our national process.

The main reason why the pre-1947 Gandhian nationalism and the post-1947 Nehruvian model failed to work lies in the fact that the two did not accord with the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual reality of India. This principal Indian reality demanded a fair and just social system ensuring equitable share in political power, economic resources, security mechanism, national ethos, human rights, etc., to the deprived sections of all types of social groups. The pre-1947 Gandhian nationalism and the post-1947 Nehruvian model, while rallying the upper sections of these groups within their folds, did not meet this requirement. The fundamentals on which these two

theories were based and the way they worked made it inevitable that some day disaster would come. The first theory met its fiasco in 1947 and the second one had entered its waterloo since *Hawala* blast.

All pre-1947 parties in India, except the Muslim League, recognised Gandhism as Indian nationalism, while there had been a virtual national consensus on Nehruvian model's secularism, non-alignment and public sector among all the post-1947 Indian parties up to 1989. It was only in that year that the BJP clearly identified itself with *Hindutva* and the Socialists and the Communists took shelter behind Mandalism (after the weakening of the Marxian logic).

(A) Pre-1947 Gandhian Nationalism

A review of our national process shows that its theory and practice have constantly failed to attain a national cohesion on the basis of a realistic agenda. The pre-1947 Gandhian nationalism tried to unite the Indian people on the basis of its agenda, i.e., majoritarian nationalism, whose key slogan has been: "Long live the unity of Hindus-Muslims-Sikhs and Christians"¹ and whose style of functioning has been the centralisation of all power in the hands of one individual or at the top (e.g., Gandhi's officially acting as a dictator to lead the various mass movements initiated by the Congress in 1919-21, 1930-34, 1942-44 and so on).

Gandhian agenda always stressed the principle of the unity of different communities and castes in India. It hardly ever took up any concrete issue, constitutional, legal, economic, cultural, foreign, pertaining to security, etc., which might have become a focal point for the rallying of the people of varying social groups. Guided by its philosophy of Hindu humanism, the Gandhian agenda remained confined to the general Hindu humanist slogan, i.e., truth (*Satya*), non-violence (*Ahimsa*), *Satyagraha* (holding persistently the Truth), etc. Thus, an ambiguous and vague Gandhian agenda did not harmonise the interests of the minorities. It only represented the majoritarian cause. It could not attract the minorities on its side. Attacking its majoritarian bias, the Muslim League under Jinnah was able to unite the Indian Muslim's behind its pan-Islamic agenda. Consequently, the

¹ This unity slogan, devoid of any concrete nation-building programme ensuring equal rights, represents a unity of majority and minority groups.

prevalence of communal ideologies and methodologies led to the 1947 partition of India.

(B) Post-1947 Nehruvian Model

The post-1947 Nehruvian model—combining three main approaches, i.e., (a) the Gandhian majoritarian nationalism and its style of the centralisation of power, (b) the British parliamentary political system, and (c) the socialist economic planning—despite having many advanced features as compared with those of the colonial model, contained fundamental weaknesses and hence failed to work. We need to take a composite view of all the elements of this model.

Firstly, the chief feature of the Indian Constitution, characterised by two sided vision, i.e., the vision of a centralised (or unitary) Union, on the one hand, and the vision of a majoritarian nationalism (or secularism) on the other, does not reconcile with the multi-facial reality of India which demands a fully federal, decentralised and humanitarian system (treating the majority and the minorities at par). Contrary to this Indian reality, the centralised aspect of the Indian constitutional vision bestows immense powers on the Indian state, especially the executive, while allocating merely certain subsidiary powers to the constituents of the Union and only one fundamental supervisory right to the people, i.e., the right to vote (which is exercisable after only five years); the majoritarian constitutional aspect, while providing emotional concessions to the majority community (such as granting of special rights to its SCs and STs and backward castes; bracketing of all Indian born religious faiths, i.e., Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc., as part of Hinduism; and adopting of the classical and the recent majoritarian ethos) denies any such right to the minorities, and discriminates against them in the matter of services, economic concessions, language, etc.

Secondly, this constitutional vision, coupled with the British parliamentary confrontationist mode introduces a strong element of sharp political contention in our polity—conditioning all sections of people to hanker after power by all means, fair or foul.

Thirdly, the Indian legal framework—while giving special powers and privileges to legislators, judges, bureaucrats, army and police; special economic and financial rights to modern capital owning and high income social stratum; certain economic concessions to broad strata of middle class and providing outlets to the undesirable social elements to save themselves from the

clutches of law—contravenes the basic democratic principle of equality before law and violates the fundamental principle of social justice by discriminating against the weaker sections, like women, children, unorganised urban and agricultural labour and invalid, poor and dependent people as is evident from the specific laws concerning these sections and general laws applicable to all people. Thus, the legal framework enables the power wielders, wealthy and corrupt to do, whatever they like, with impunity. It discourages the genuine and encourages the false.

Fourthly, the Indian government, owning no constitutional or legal accountability to the people, functions in an autocratic way, with the three state organs—the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary—perpetuating the Indian state's centralised authority.

Fifthly, the confrontationalist or cold war oriented post-1947 Nehruvian foreign policy has continuously imposed unbearable financial burden on the fledgling Indian economy—thus sharpening all its imbalances and pushing it from one crisis to another.

Sixthly, the top politicians of all the parties, oriented towards power capturing by all means, fair or foul, generally follow an unscrupulous political style, based on money and muscle power and supplemented by manipulation and trickery. Starting their legislative career by filing false returns of the expenses in their elections, they have no qualms in getting black money from the dubious sources, entering shady deals with the underworld dons, appealing to the religious/caste sentiments of the masses, making false promises with the people, creating or breaking parties and in following the politics of *Aya Ram Gaya Ram*.

Seventhly, the vast number of honest politicians, government employees and common people, while themselves shunning corruption at all costs, do not, having been affected by the prevailing immoral social atmosphere, feel any aversion to corruption or criminality and hesitate to raise voice against the undesirable elements, whether political or non-political.

Eighthly, the Indian media plays a mixed role. The official electronic media, having been directed by the ruling elite, projects an exaggerated picture of reality. As regards unofficial print media, the overwhelming number of journalists does serve the national interests by highlighting and defending the public issues and bringing out the basic systemic weaknesses, while the vested interests, upholding the defective constitutional vision and the legal framework, generally support the ruling group, promote the prevailing unscrupulous politics and bear no public accountability.

Ninthly, the Indian masses, having been conditioned by the perspective of power grabbing and unscrupulous style and lacking general awareness, do not exert a significant check on multi-sided systemic defects.

Tenthly, the post-1945 emerging new world reality of the interdependence of countries has been continuously making the inward looking and confrontationist Nehruvian model more and more ineffective day by day—turning it totally irrelevant today.

Eleventhly, the two post-1989 national models—the BJP's *Hindutva*, standing for aggressive Hinduisation of the Indian state and the NF-LF's *Mandalwad*, upholding the militant casteisation of the Indian state by defining the caste unit (based on the principle of birth) as the unit of providing social justice to the *Dalits* and backward castes—further helped in the communalisation, casteisation and consequently the criminalisation of the national process.

(C) Indian Historical Experience

The basis of the Gandhian nationalism and the Nehruvian model (as also of RSS-BJP *Hindutva*) rests with their common historical approach which considers that ancient India represents the peak of human civilisation—creating the best of everything that man could or would do again. Therefore, according to these two theories, whatever we do is right and all others are wrong.

The historical experience, however, shows that the Indian nation, like other nations, is a part of the great community of mankind. Though the development of each national unit of the world community today has occurred in its given geo-social conditions, there has been much give and take among the different social communities or groups of the people. Each country, small or big, has made contributions to the world civilisation and likewise has, in its turn, received equal share. India is a part of the world and cannot be an exception to this general rule. She has given much to the world and received a great deal in return.

The concept of India within its present framework is neither the outcome of any geographical factor, nor any cultural, religious or ethnic phenomena. Nor it is the creation of any revealed scripture, because the traditional scriptures themselves did not contain a single word to denote India. The old terms *Brahma-Varta*, *Arya-Varta*, *Bharatvarsha*, *Madhya-Desa*, *Uttra-Patha*, *Aparanta*, *Purvadesa*, *Dakshina-Path*—used in ancient texts do not express any conception of India, but only symbolise

certain parts of India. Thus, India is neither a divine manufacture, nor embodied in any specific culture.

The concept of one India is not the work of a day or of some decades. It has gradually grown in the course of centuries. All our forefathers, whether aboriginals or coming from outside, have contributed to its making—developing from the tiny groups of primitive men to its present stage of nationhood. Certain continuity through uncounted generations of inhabitants persists. It would be absurd to claim that our early ancestors thought like us. But an obvious bond of words, images and customs links us still, across thousands of years, with them.

It was only during 1757-1947, when certain geo-social conditions, both objective and subjective, emerged that Indian nationalism adopted for the first time in history a concrete shape, as an ideological, methodological and organisational principle. The objective reality of the British colonial rule generated the need for the subjective unity of the Indian people. Learning from the Western national rationalism, they began to organise themselves on national lines. But the shackles of traditional chauvinistic historical approaches always hampered their path.

(D) Need To Look At Our Own Follies

Just blaming Pakistan, minorityism, Muslim fundamentalism, high casteism, British parliamentary model, modernisation, public sector, etc., for our own follies—like spurt in crime, corruption, communalism, casteism and violence, mismanagement of human and natural resources, inefficient economy, cold war oriented foreign policy, culture of cheating, breakdown of national consensus, ignoring of the newly emerging world reality—is no way to treat a serious social problem. It is a way of transforming reality into falsehood.

III. Agenda Of Setting Things Right

Surely, India cannot be in crisis if we do not create troubles for ourselves. Most of our historical setbacks—modern, medieval or ancient—have been our own creations. Hardly a few might have occurred due to certain external factors.

(A) Old Formulae Will Not Work

Certainly, India can get out of its present all-sided crisis if it discards its ongoing three competing national sociologies—i.e., the Congress' soft Hinduism (or majoritarian secularism) and soft

Mandalism, the BJP's aggressive *Hindutva* and the NF-LF's militant oppressed casteism—all of which, having proved to be outmoded social theories, have, in turn, continued to land us in one crisis after another and all of which, having been confrontationist social modes of development, cannot meet the requirements of consensus needy interdependent nations of the present day world.

Undoubtedly, India can today become a crisis free country and a good social unit if it opts for a two sided realistic restructuring agenda which, on the one hand, properly answers all the current national challenges, and, on the other, appropriately responds to all the global issues, arising out of the new historical era of globalisation. Definitely, all our traditional options—like Gandhian *Ram Raj*, J.P. total revolution, renovated Nehruvian model, Presidential system, national government, an anti-BJP front, an anti-Congress coalition, etc.—can neither resolve the national threats brought forth by the three prevailing national models nor meet the social requirements of the new globalised era.

Sure enough, the world recognised old national theories—the market oriented Western liberal, the public sector geared Communist and the mixed type ones—have outlived their utility. Despite their earlier positive roles, they are now in decline and are unable to face the new challenges—environmental pollution, demographic explosion, economic, political and cultural distortions, etc.—created by themselves. No doubt, in the absence of a newly required appropriate paradigm, the countries are swinging back and forth between them, but, finding no way out, everyone is on the look out for something new.

Therefore, we cannot adopt any domestic or traditionally world accepted national formulae as our new restructuring agenda. We will, while learning from all the past domestic and external experiences, have to carry our search for social truth through the scientific method of trial and error.

(B) India's New Restructuring Agenda

The starting point of a new restructuring agenda is the identification of its two sided fundamental principle—the goal and its path. As ends and means, both are equally important and inseparably interdependent upon one another.

Sociologically, the goal of a given social unit, arising from its given social division of labour, expresses the spirit of the totality

of its socio-natural interests, while its path comprises the method of safeguarding, perpetuating and advancing that cause.

Proceeding from this premise, the long-term goal of India, like any other country should be the establishment of a global human society with reorganised regional communities as its constituent units.

The short-term goal should comprise the restructuring of India as an interdependent nation-state on the one hand, and the step by step formation of a regional community of the interdependent nation-states in South Asia, on the other.

In both phases, its path should be the path of peoples empowerment through democratic consensus building.

The main essentials of such a society may include the following:

The first essential of an interdependent nation-state, just like any other human unit, is the guiding principle of its mode of thought which denotes the way one looks at the world and sorts out the right and wrong of any problem. Obviously, it should be none else than scientific realism or rational humanism.

According to this approach, the human society (a part of nature's universal process) exists, moves and changes due to a two sided interaction—that between the organisation of nature (including the interaction between various natural processes) and the organisation of mankind and that within the human social organisation, existing among its various social units (including the social unit of the individual).

Thus, the outlook of rational humanism rationalises the relation between man and nature on the one hand, and between man and man, on the other.

The second essential of an interdependent nation-state is the world peace. Without social harmony, no integration, development or progress can take place. Disharmony among nations harms the interests of the human community. And social harmony can only be created through justice and fair play.

To promote international justice and fair play, India should stand for the establishment of an equalitarian world order where all special privileges and social inequalities now existing in the UN and other international organisations are ended and these organisations are made accountable to the world people. It should immediately forsake its cold war approach towards Pakistan by resolving the Jammu-Kashmir issue through tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir

people on the basis of a concrete proposal which stipulates an Indo-Pak Condominium over Jammu-Kashmir in the matter of defence, foreign affairs and currency, on the one hand, and a full autonomous status to each of the regional-ethnic identities in that state on both sides of the LOAC, on the other. After the resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir problem, both India and Pakistan should reduce their military spending by 50% annually.

The third essential of an interdependent nation-state is to produce the best quality of human resources who, on the one hand, balance the interests of nature and human society and, on the other, create harmony between the interests of individual and society and between one individual and another. There is no other better way of doing this than to entrust it to the people themselves by: firstly, empowering the people, especially the women and other deprived sections; secondly, involving them in the management of all development processes; thirdly, removing all types of social disparities—rich-poor, gender inequality, rural-urban, literate-illiterate, etc.; and fourthly, making the administration accountable to the people. This requires a fundamental change from the parliamentary democracy which represents the empowerment of political parties by the people to the participatory democracy where the people themselves become the direct rulers. Participatory democracy is the most effective way of realising the peoples full potential. Obviously, the complex process of transformation from a parliamentary to a participatory democracy will be a gradual movement and take a long time.

The fourth essential of an interdependent nation-state is to satisfy the just ethnic, linguistic, cultural or regional aspirations of the people in order to enthuse them for social reconstruction by restructuring India on a federal basis. Under federalism, the centre will hold defence, foreign affairs, currency, communications, etc., while the rest along with the residuary powers will vest in the states.

Centralisation has already generated a lot of fissiparous tendencies. It has already harmed India a great deal. Its further continuation can lead to dangerous consequences.

The fifth essential of an interdependent nation-state is to adopt a new mode of development that is sustainable. The new mode of sustainable development is a way of involving the people, especially the women, and entrusting to them the responsibility of present environmental cleanliness and

population control and of maintaining a balance between nature and human society in future. All official agencies and technical personnel will work as a part of the given public mechanism.

The sixth essential of an interdependent nation-state is to adopt a new ethic of culture. This ethic, contrary to the Western Liberal and the Communist ethic of maximising one's interests (and also communism's theoretical assumption of maximising social interests), stresses the cultivation of new social values which temper a person to rationalise one's interests with one's family, with one's party or group, with one's society or nation, with one's species and with all forms of nature. The prevailing values of hunger for power and ultra consumerism are the powerful motivational factors for corrupting and criminalising society. They are opposed to the principles of social justice and equality.

The seventh essential of an interdependent national model is to globalise its economy through a judicious mix-up of market mechanism and state planning with a three fold aim of maintaining ecological balance, maximising productivity and ensuring social equality.

The afore-mentioned restructuring agenda necessarily comprises several components. These are so integrated that no single component can take us far unless the rest are coordinated with it. Empowerment of the people is very important. But it can work only if combined with a policy of peace. Under conditions of cold war against Pakistan, it can work only on paper.

(C) Problem Of Motivating People

The most crucial problem concerning India's restructuring agenda is the question as to how it can be put into practice. Obviously, the way lies in motivating the people on this agenda.

To motivate the people, it is necessary to do three things:

(i) Propagating it through various initiatives; (ii) Involving the people in its discussion through various workshops; and (iii) Preparing the people for putting it into practice whatever is smoothly possible within the existing conditions.

The above three initiatives should always be linked with the immediate agenda facing the people.

Today, the election agenda is dominating the national scene. And tomorrow the post-poll scenario will occupy the public attention. Both occasions should, and can, be properly utilised to have a discourse with the people on India's restructuring agenda.

(D) Coming General Election

Even before the Hawala blast, the political analysts were of the view that no single party in India was in a position to secure a simple majority in the coming Lok Sabha elections and thus form a government on its own.

The basis of this forecast was the realisation by the political commentators that the Indian people have become disenchanted with the manipulative politics of the three national alternatives, i.e., the Congress, the BJP and the NF-LF combine and come to look upon them as birds of the same feather.

The mass disillusionment with these parties was not an abrupt happening. It has, despite ups and downs, kept constantly growing in the post-1947 period. After the practical test of all these samples, the people had in recent years felt that there is no basic difference in the agendas, priorities and styles of these brands. If the Congress record had been bad enough, that of the BJP and the NF-LF combine was in no way dissimilar. While the 45 year long Congress rule had brought few pluses and a lot of minuses, the other two combines, during their three year administrative management, could not improve upon this performance by even a single notch.

The *Hawala* episode, showing the depth of degradation of the so-called public servants of the three national trademarks and reviving the age old dictum of the “fence eating the crop”, further strengthened the prediction of a hung parliament.

Thus, the public non-preference for any party, having started in the late 1980s as expressed by the 1989 and 1991 general elections, seems to have now become more pronounced. Public weariness with unscrupulous politics appears to have grown further. This is confirmed by the fact that, despite peoples mute reaction to the high power corruption, politics has come to be looked down upon as a profession of criminals and corrupt people.

But the expectation of each of the 3 mainstream parties is that the people are going to spring a surprise in their party’s favour.

The 11th general elections are being held at a time when India is on the threshold of the 21st century and when every country is trying to integrate itself into the global economy and politics.

Therefore, what India needs today is a clear-cut vision and a clarity of its path. But the Congress offers the sociology of Chankya (the politics of manipulation) for the globalisation of Indian economy. The BJP puts forth the sociology of *Hindutva* for the uniformity of Indian culture and the NF-LF stands for inverted

Manuwad for imparting social justice to the Indian people. Representing the social realities of their times, these centuries old sociologies are quite irrelevant to the spirit and problems of our times. Obviously, the absence of any vision and its path makes the situation highly frightening.

As in the case of many past elections, there is no over-riding theme in the coming elections. The absence of any meaningful theme robs this election of any emotional fervour, bereft of a purposeful debate and passion.

The Congress theme of stability means a government that sustains itself for five years through corruption and criminalisation of politics. But who can deny the fact that this type of stability creates the conditions for the destabilisation of the country itself in the long run.

The BJP theme of oneness and homogeneity by forcibly suppressing the traditional minority beliefs and values violates the natural law of the uniformity in diversity.

The NF-LF theme of caste based justice and equality is only a worn out old device of creating new type privileged hierarchies (e.g., old *Dalit Rajas* transforming themselves into *Suryavanshi* and *Chandravanshi Rajas*; the proletarian leaders perpetuating themselves in the socialist countries; the five star politics of Kanshi Ram, Mulayam Singh and Lallo Yadav varieties, while the *Dalits* and the Backwards remain mired in squalor and misery).

False, confused and vague themes all are dangerous phenomena which always end in anarchy and disorder, charging a very high price from the people.

Another significant aspect of this election is that there is no real choice before the electorate. All the mainstream parties and their leaders are equally suspect, whose only motive is to enjoy the privileges of political power and acquire illegal wealth through manipulation, trickery and fraud. The whole political tribe has become degenerated and no alternative is in sight.

The reason for the public reacceptance of the same discredited parties rests with two factors. One is the prevailing general outlook of unscrupulous politics and ultra consumerism (i.e., the maximisation of one's interest at the cost of others) which distorts the distinction between right and wrong. The other is the non-availability of a viable alternative.

To meet such a complex situation seven steps are required:

One is to popularise India's reconstruction agenda as an alternative to India's existing corrupt and degenerated social system.

The other is to stress the fact that a general election under a corrupt and degenerated social system cannot, except a few limited gains, benefit the Indian people, as had been verified by the past 10 general elections in the country.

The third is to emphasise the point that the respective agendas of the three national combines are contrary to the interests of India and its people.

The fourth is to clarify the unscrupulous politics and the money & the muscle power-oriented style of the major national parties.

The fifth is to inform the masses as to how the electoral process can be cleansed of the money and the muscle power.

The sixth is to make an appeal to the people to uphold value based politics and lifestyle and not hanker after criminal politics and corrupt politicians.

The seventh is to request the people to cast their votes on the criteria of honesty, truthfulness, principled stand and service to the people in favour of firstly women followed by wise, poor, deprived and minority candidates respectively.

IV. Logic Of Present Situation

The present uncertain situation has emerged out of its past. Elections are not going to affect its basic nature. Because elections are only a means to indicate the approximate position of the given political balance of forces.

Everything develops in accordance with its own (external as well as internal) logic. The logic of the ongoing Indian national process shows that, whatever the electoral outcome, the post-poll scenario is going to be hotter than the pre-poll one.

The problems of militancy, criminalisation, corruption, scams and scandals, communalism, casteism, fundamentalism, human rights violations, women and children abuses, minority discrimination, defiling of law and order, budgetary crisis, price rise, foreign exchange and debt crisis, unemployment, poverty, water disputes, environmental troubles, Indo-Pak tensions, arms race, nuclear weaponry issues, and so on, are in varying forms and sizes, going to shake India in the times ahead.

It is the duty of all positive national forces to get prepared to meet these challenges. The rationale of their approach demands that they deeply view the existing state of affairs and its likely next direction, start mobilising the people from this moment in favour of India's new restructuring agenda and be prepared for the coming ups and downs.

10-03-1996

Hindutva Politics Vs False Secular Politics Two Faces Of Political Opportunism

I. Peoples Verdict

1. An intense debate is going on in our country on the meaning of and the response to the verdict of the recently held Lok Sabha poll. The discussion is, mainly confined to the two rival political camps. On the one side stand the UF and the Congress supporters and on the other are ranged the adherents of the BJP. Many non-party persons too have joined the fray on this or that side.

2. The pro-UF and the pro-Congress elements consider that it is a mandate in favour of secularism; while those who back up the BJP think that it favours them. But the facts tell the real tale.

Firstly, the elections were not fought on any single issue—national, regional, international or ideological. The questions of secularism or *Hindutva* did not at all figure as principal campaign slogans, though their respective cards might have been played by certain individuals at some places.

Secondly, the Congress sought the peoples mandate on the basis of P.V. Narasimha Rao government's performance. The main focus of the two major opposition formations, i.e., the BJP and the NF-LF, was the Rao government's non-performance or anti-Congressism. The Congress stood in confrontation with one and all, i.e., the BJP and its regional allies, on the one hand, and the NF-LF and its regional partners, on the other. In many constituencies where all the three had their existence, there were triangular contests among them.

Thirdly, the voter has not shown preference for any single party. He had neither given a total and decisive mandate to any one nor rejected anyone completely. He had not decisively opted for any particular ideology, politics, economy, culture or leader. He is not satisfied with any single existing model.

Fourthly, the only message the electoral verdict, provides is

the working of all the national and regional parties together by forming an all parties coalition government on the basis of a commonly agreed agenda.

Fifthly, the coalition politics is a compromise of different political brands. It forbids the dictation of terms by one party to others. It also rules out the theory of political untouchability or the trick of ganging up of the two political formations against the third. Party splits, which in the given context could only be unprincipled, will not help anyone.

3. The misinterpretation of the mandate, with regard to its short-term causality, rested with the opportunist politics of all the three major political players, while the basic cause was located in their respective misperceptions of India's and the world's fundamental realities.

4. A distorted view of the mandate was bound to result in wrong actions and reactions on their part. The mandate that, at home, ordained a path of national consensus to resolve all contentious issues and to chalk out and undertake a comprehensive mass welfare programme, especially for the poor, weaker sections, minorities, etc., on the one hand, and, on the world scale, sets apart a course of friendship and cooperation with all countries, particularly the neighbours, on the other, was thwarted, the old confrontationist political style remained in vogue as usual, both internally and externally.

5. The politics of opportunism and its confrontationist way has already harmed our country a lot. It has, along with India's centralised Constitution, contributed in accentuating its environmental and population problems, turning the Indian republic into one of the most violence prone entities in the world, marked by criminalisation, communalisation, casteisation and corruptness of its political process, transforming its rule of law into a mere formality, throttling economic progress and financial soundness, degrading its standards of behaviour, making milltarisation as its national priority, producing the need to keep its nuclear weapons option open, maintaining it as a marginal political and economic player in the world, creating it as one of the poorest countries of the world with 2/5th of its population as absolute poor, 48% illiterate, 1/3rd homeless, 1/10th unemployed and 1/3rd under-employed, and so on. But, despite its damaging results, the mainstream parties are not prepared to give up this dangerous route.

6. In the post-poll phase, these parties did everything to

distort the spirit of the mass mandate by interpreting it in a purely partisan manner.

7. When the general trend of the election results began to appear, some senior politicians suggested to the President the idea of forming a national government by the new Lok Sabha, it got a totally cool response from these parties.

8. When the President was consulting with the constitutional experts on the procedure to be followed in extending the letter of invitation to the deserving person for the Prime Ministership, the BJP issued public statements to take to the streets if it is denied its right to form the government as a majority party in the Lok Sabha.

9. When the President, as a rule, invited the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha to form the government, it was dubbed as a hasty and partial Presidential action by the NF-LF.

10. When the information letter from the Congress about its support to the UF in ministry formation reached sometime late to the President, it was denounced by the NF-LF as a conspiracy on the part of the Congress Chief, Narasimha Rao, to indirectly help the BJP.

11. When the things were just in the political melting pot, the Congress played with the idea of forming a coalition government with the UF under Narasimha Rao's leadership due to his being the leader of the majority party. But when the Atal Behari Vajpayee government took over and when Narasimha Rao got further stuck into new scams—i.e., the JMM and the urea cases—the Congress settled down to a new strategy, i.e., the strategy of offering support to the UF government from outside, with the specific aim of first pulling the Vajpayee ministry down and then letting the UF government collapse under the stresses and strains of its own conflicts—thus demonstrating the validity of the old Congress thesis that its rule alone can guarantee stability.

12. As the post-poll phase of counting reached towards maturity with the declaration of the final results, it was followed first by the formation of the Vajpayee ministry and then its fall, and the installation of the Deve Gowda government. The initial record of both these governing bodies provides us some clues to understand their sociology, both individual and collective.

II. The 13 Day BJP Government

13. The formation of the BJP minority government at New Delhi was a short-lived affair. During its 13 day rule, the single most political question debated throughout India was whether it

would be able to get its confidence motion through in the Lok Sabha. While the overwhelming number of people in India were of the opinion that only a miracle can save it from the fall, the top BJP leaders were up to the last exuding confidence in winning not only the trial in the Lok Sabha but also in holding the office for the full term.

14. The subsequent reality did not, however, confirm the BJP optimism. As expected, the Vajpayee ministry was forced out of office by the combined opposition's onslaught. It failed to exploit any political or personal schism among its multi-shaded opponents. Surprisingly, it could not get even the minimum possible support from any quarter in the House, except its own party and allies.

15. The BJP explained it in terms of a conspiracy hatched by the NF-LF in collaboration with the Congress. But this explanation distorts the logic earlier put forth by the BJP in support of its assumption of office for providing a viable government to the country. The first point was the BJP's public declaration after the announcement of the Lok Sabha election results that a sizeable number of good Congress MPs would after splitting from their present organisation be joining the BJP parliamentary party. But this proved a fairytale. Next, in the mid-stream, the BJP leaders began to harp upon the theme of regional parties lending their support to the Vajpayee government. But this too went awry. Towards the final countdown, they adopted the tune that a number of non-BJP Lok Sabha members would absent themselves from the house at the time of voting on the confidence motion. But, this also turned out to be a fabrication.

16. All the above facts point out that the only reasonable explanations of the BJP leaders' misplaced optimism was their belief in the lure for power and money which could, according to them, take care of every problem, even drawing a good number of Lok Sabha members to their flock. But, in the *Hawala* context wherein, the Indian politicians' conduct became suspect in the eyes of the Indian and the world people, it was next to impossible for any one, to play the power-cum-money card. Otherwise if one closely looks into the happenings of those 13 days, it becomes clear that the BJP was prepared to do anything to remain in power.

17. Was the above happening an aberration or an isolated and accidental event? Let us go into the whole set of BJP's perceptions, initiatives and responses during its 13 day regime.

18. Firstly, its explanation of the recent Lok Sabha election results as a peoples' mandate in its favour—a notion not supported by facts, according to which it got merely 23.9% of the total number of polled votes and secured less than 1/3rd of the seats, i.e., 161, out of the 543 contested ones—is a misrepresentation of reality meant only to justify its acceptance of the President's invitation.

19. Secondly, its decision to form a minority government in the given adverse conditions cannot be defended by any standards. What to say of rival parties, it did not consult even with its own allies—i.e., the Samata Party, HVP, SAD, etc., before taking the oath of office. The actual situation (i.e., the composition of the new Lok Sabha) demanded that before undertaking the responsibility of forming the government Vajpayee should have explored the possibility of setting up a coalition government with a workable majority or refused to form a minority government in a surcharged atmosphere.

But instead of taking a right course, the BJP brazenly announced that once it attains power, the Lok Sabha members of various political colours would rush towards the party. Again, its estimation proved unreal.

20. Thirdly, with regard to the formation of cabinet, it acted according to its sectarian approach, ignoring the plurality of the peoples' mandate. The 12 member ministerial team was dominated by the extreme wing of the RSS. Despite its appeals of national consensus, it could not find any non-party democratic personage outside its fold to induct into the ministerial team, except Ram Jethmalani, an old fellow-traveller of the BJP.

21. Fourthly, the denial of the home portfolio to Sikander Bakht and then the allocation of this key and sensitive office to Murli Manohar Joshi, a known fundamentalist in the party hierarchy, shows BJP's disregard for the liberal and the minority public opinion.

22. Fifthly, the BJP prepared Presidential Address neither contained any elaborate analysis of the country's problems nor suggested any new thrust in sorting out the national priorities. It merely echoed the same prescriptions which had been repeated by the Congress year after year. Its only distinctive point was more stress on militarisation and nuclear weapon manufacturing. The wholesale abandonment of party's basic principles was not adjustment or consensus building but sheer opportunism. It only showed the irrelevancy of its programme.

23. Sixthly, as regards the performance of its ministers, every one of them, instead of understanding as to how he can respond to the burning mass problems or mitigate the sufferings of the poor and the deprived by providing some relief to them within the constitutional and legal constraints on an interim government, was pronouncing a set of basic policies day by day, though such pronouncements were below political propriety before getting the vote of confidence.

24. Seventhly, when the BJP failed to attract any Lok Sabha member, it began to issue threats of a fresh poll if its government lost the confidence vote.

25. Eighthly, in regard to the discussion on the confidence motion, Vajpayee, on the one hand, emphasised the theme of an all party consensus, and, on the other, made the declaration that once the BJP gets the majority in the Lok Sabha, it would at once implement all its fundamentalist concerns, i.e., the construction of a Ram Mandir in place of the demolished Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, common civil code, abrogation of Article 370, and so on. This double standpoint reflected sheer hypocrisy and nothing else.

26. Ninthly, while doing nothing tangible for the common people, the Vajpayee government crossed all limits of administrative and moral propriety by sanctioning the review of the Enron project at a hurriedly called cabinet meeting on the day when it was seeking the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha.

27. Tenthly, arguing its case on two occasions in the two day discussion on the confidence motion brought by him in the Lok Sabha, Vajpayee dwelt at length on two main points. One was that the opposition parties were ganging up to overthrow his genuine and value based government in the name of pseudo-secularism. And the other was that his party did not indulge in any horse trading to gain necessary support. His first point was in fact an accusation against those who he was pleading to lend support to his confidence motion. The second was only a self-recommendatory certificate. Both points had only marginal relevance to the reasoning justifying the validity of his motion.

Rationality demanded that he should have at least explained as to why he did accept the President's invitation to form a minority government, what notion at the time of acceptance he had to secure the necessary support and how it was not an attempt to grab power by his party. Further, how did BJP try to work out a consensus approach and what did his government do to uphold value based politics, what was its performance of the

past 13 days, why this government should now be allowed to continue and, how does it now propose to solve India's major problems in the days ahead? Vajpayee raised almost non-issues and said nothing about real issues concerning the motion as well as the serious problems facing the country.

28. The experiment of the short-lived Vajpayee government provides one more example of unprincipled politics where a party swearing by sacred values and holy norms abandons its fundamentals (as is evident from the BJP government prepared Presidential Address and Vajpayee's two speeches in the Lok Sabha) for the sake of holding power. Obviously, it does not constitute a plus point in the Indian political process. It was neither gainful for the BJP nor for the Indian polity.

III. UF Coalition's 21 Days

29. How long will it survive? This is the main question occupying the minds of the Indian people since June 1, 1996, when the UF coalition government led by Deve Gowda was inducted into office by the President. An air of uncertainty about this coalition's future prevails everywhere. But the architects of coalition are confidently predicting that it will last for five years.

30. No doubt, the numbers game supports this view. But the number, having been a variable factor, undergoes constant changes due to the interaction of varying ideologies, agendas, priorities, etc.—finally resulting in the breaking up of the old equations and the constructing of the new.

31. The UF coalition in fact needs some magic formula to keep its numbers together. This is because its constituents are united not on the basis of an ideology or programme but on only a two point agenda: keep the BJP out of power and grab the chair. The first point was only a means to achieve the second, the end.

32. Its slogan of unity among the anti-BJP forces on the basis of secularism was a post-poll thought which erupted only to prevent the BJP from forming the government after its emergence as the main party in the Lok Sabha. Its common minimum programme (CMP) was compiled only after taking power.

33. As its motivational factor was only power and as the only obstacle on its way (i.e., the BJP's ousting from power) has now been removed the most serious problem facing the UF is the question of unity among its constituents. The UF leaders want to solve it by keeping the bogey of BJP alive. But the members aspire for a full share in power and decision making.

34. The question of power sharing, especially the state power is a highly complex process, involving varying interest groups, numbering as many as the political, cultural and economic composition of the people in a given state. It is less troublesome where the partners hold a common perspective. But wherever the different perspectives (including that of the self-interest) hold sway, it becomes the most difficult problem. And the UF belongs to this variety, comprising not only a number of political, economic and cultural outlooks, but more of ego-cum-ambition perspectives.

35. The history of coalition politics in India has not been much encouraging. Of the four coalitions shaped at New Delhi in the post-1947 period—i.e., 1977-79 Janata Party government (which in fact was a coalition because the Janata Party itself consisted of five political groups), 1979-80 Charan Singh coalition supported by the Congress from outside, 1989-90 NF coalition supported by the BJP and the CPM from outside and 1990-91 Chandra Shekhar government supported by the Congress from outside—each had proved fragile and unstable.

36. The immediate reason for the instability of the coalition politics has been the competition among the respective constituents for getting the major share in power and mass influence. The underlying cause, however, rested with the fact that all those coalitions were forged against one party or the other, on the one hand, and to gain power by hook or by crook, on the other. The first and the third coalitions were based on anti-Congressism, while the second and the fourth ones were Congress creatures, meant only to disrupt the opposition. None of these coalitions started on any programmatic or principled basis. The experience of the coalition politics in Bengal and Kerala, led by the Communists as well as the Congress has turned out to be more durable due to its principled basis.

37. The UF coalition, however, seems to be on the same wave length as had been the past four central coalitions. Going by the past experiences, its performance cannot be much different from its predecessors. Its three week working is too short an experience to judge its performance. But the UF's main initiatives and responses during this period do indicate which way the wind has started blowing.

(a) To begin with, the UF entered upon its career by distorting the fact that the recent electoral verdict constituted 75% mandate for secularism and secular forces and a total rejection

of BJP's communal politics (though the latter has emerged as the main party in the Lok Sabha).

(b) Next, it misrepresented reality by propounding the theory of the politics of compulsion according to which all past and new principles are to be adjusted to the needs of the new situation. Under this proposition, it revised its evaluation of the Congress from being a reactionary force to a secular one.

(c) Then, its key player, V.P. Singh, made a declaration that the Congress was soon going to be split and a large group of its MPs would be joining the NF.

(d) Thereafter, it declared that any understanding with the Congress was only possible if it removed Narsimha Rao from the leadership of the party. But, only a few days later, it reversed this statement by saying that it is only concerned with the unity of all secular forces, including the Congress, and not with the question as to who heads the Congress which is a matter exclusively related to that party.

(e) When the BJP began to assert its right to form the government by virtue of its being the main group in the Lok Sabha and when the Congress too began to talk in terms of unity among the secular forces, V.P. Singh, forgetting his earlier remarks that Narasimha Rao would be bringing money into play to buy up MPs, stressed the need for a closer liaison between the NF-LF and the Congress. To cement this unity, the newly elected UF leader, Deve Gowda, paid a visit to Narasimha Rao and sought his blessings for the formation of a UF Government.

(f) The question of electing the UF leader could not be sorted out for days together. When every conceivable proposal failed to mature, a compromise on Deve Gowda was arrived at among leaders of the four groups, (i.e., NF, LF, TDP, DMK-TMC) and only then other groups were taken into confidence.

(g) When the President invited Vajpayee to form the government in his position as leader of the main party in the Lok Sabha and when the Congress letter of support to the UF reached the President somewhat late, the UF accused Narasimha Rao as well as the President for hatching a conspiracy to install the BJP into office.

(h) During the debate on Vajpayee's motion of confidence, the UF's main theme was to expose the BJP vision of *Hindutva* and its communal agenda, while maintaining total silence on the damaging results of the 50 year performance of Congress' and NF-LF's false secularism.

(i) On the confidence motion in the UF government, the Prime Minister, while presenting the CMP did not at all refer to government's national priorities.

(j) After the vote of confidence in the Deve Gowda government, the first act of his party was to expel R.K. Hegde, one of the founders of JD and NF.

(k) A day later, the DD's scheduled news bulletin, i.e., *News Tonight*, which contained some extracts from Hegde's press interview, was suppressed.

(l) Now, a new controversy has erupted between the finance minister and the left parties on the question of retrenchment in the PSUs and the administration.

(m) During the past few days, the contradictory statements issued by Narasimha Rao which, on the one hand, reiterate support to the Deve Gowda government and, on the other, ask party workers to get prepared to face another general election, have introduced a new element of political uncertainty about the coalition.

(n) The above facts demonstrate that the post-election behaviour of NF-LF (i.e., the parties comprising it), especially its attitude of 100% about turn towards the Congress and Narasimha Rao, has been totally unprincipled. The expulsion of Hegde and the black-out of DD's scheduled news bulletin indicate that the parties comprising the UF are completely undemocratic in their organisational setup as well as their style of functioning. All this arises from the logic of the militant casteist perspective, upheld by NF-LF.

So far, the coalition has not been able to reach any consensus on its political perspective. With so many varying political perspectives, even the adjustment among the 14 parties becomes a tough job. But the fact is that it is a coalition of interests rather than of political principles. Such a coalition can only be guided by the perspective of power.

Prime Minister Deve Gowda thinks that God's will and blessings will do the job.

Can a country like India be managed through an adhoc approach? Can its problems be responded to by practising the politics of power? Can its starving, shelterless and deprived millions be satisfied by overplaying the songs of simplisticism?

Today no one has an answer to these questions. But the time will provide the answer in due course.

1996 Poll Verdict Initiates A New Federal/Confederal Process

I

1. Every election in India, as elsewhere, represents some change, in terms of political balance of forces. Such a change may, with its specific characteristics, be either formal, i.e., relating to the political form or the mode of politics, or essential, i.e., relating to the essence, quality or substance of politics. While all the pre-1996 ten Lok Sabha elections in India come under the first category, the 11th one constitutes a distinct variety.

2. The difference between the two types lies in the fact that whereas the Congress had in all earlier elections occupied the top position either as the dominant or the first party, this time it has lost both these distinctions. The electorate has given little indication of its preference. It has neither opted for any particular party programme nor any specific charismatic leader. Also no single national, regional or foreign issue has affected its thinking. While disapproving the Congress' catch-phrase of stability and progress, it has also not approved the BJP theme of stability with change and the NF-LF rhetoric of social justice. At certain places, even corrupt, criminal and shady elements have been able to creep in, while those stressing moral values have been trounced.

3. Some people hold that it is a vote in favour of secularism and against *Hindutva* (i.e., BJP). But no single party fought elections on the theme of secularism or on the anti-*Hindutva* issue. The so-called secular parties (NF-LF and Congress) had in fact fought each other.

4. Obviously, it is a travesty of facts to call it as a mass mandate either in favour of secularism (which for Congress means corruption and lust for power and money through deception and fraud, for BJP implies communalisation of Indian politics by fair means or foul, and for the NF-LF denotes the casteisation of Indian politics by all sorts of unscrupulousness

and trickeries) or *Hindutva* (i.e., a theocracy covered under the garb of cultural nationalism) or *Mandalwadi-Marxwadi* social justice (i.e., Lalooism in practice and Surjeetism of sorts, etc).

5. The only motivating factor impelling the BJP to call it a mandate in its favour, on the one hand, and the UF-Congress to call it a mandate for secular forces, on the other, was to deceive the people and grab power. Both indulged in a dirty game. The BJP's trickery failed and the UF-Congress' deception succeeded. The BJP's accusation that its government was a victim of a UF-Congress gang-up holds no ground because it was as illegitimate as was the gang-up. The Congress strategy has been to first pull the BJP government down, then let UF government fall under the weight of its own contradictions and thus prove before the Indian people that the Congress alone can provide stability.

6. Thus the UF-Congress alliance is neither an unavoidable imperative nor the politics of compulsion, but a filthy alliance to secure their respective ends, as has been the case with the BJP concoction that a sizeable chunk of good Congressmen was after breaking the Congress ranks going to join it.

7. The above facts denote that the 1996 poll represents a unique, a special type of electoral verdict. The uniqueness of this verdict is that the voter is dissatisfied with all current models—*Chankyavad*, *Hindutva*, *Mandalvad*. He wants a new model. But he is not clear about it. Also, he has no alternative. Despite rejecting their political models, he still continues to grope within the framework of the traditional ideologies.

8. The only meaning that can be read in the spirit of this wonderful verdict is the working of all parties together. This demands the formation of an all parties government on the basis of a common agenda. In this scheme of things, all ideologies have to be kept out. No one is to be treated as an outcast. All decisions have to be taken by consensus, or at times by a majority vote. Those who do not join this government on ideological grounds can support it from outside or stay neutral, taking their decisions on issue to issue basis.

II

9. The main feature of the 11th Lok Sabha verdict is that it represents the initiation of a process of the growing irrelevance of centralised nationalism (or strong pan-Indianism), majoritarian secularism and conflictive social justice. This conclusion emerges out of three facts.

A

10. First, the electorate clearly rejected the only pan-Indian party, the Congress, and its politics of centralised nationalism and majoritarian secularism. Though the Congress had earlier too failed to attain an absolute majority in the 9th and the 10th Lok Sabha elections, yet on those two occasions the people did vote for it as their principal choice on the country-wide scale. This time only a few regions expressed their liking for it. Here another notable point is that, since 1947, no other mainstream party has, despite BJP's centralised orientation and communal protestations and the Communists' "democratic centralism" and "proletarian justice", come to acquire an all India nature.

B

11. Second, the polling explicitly demonstrates the regionalisation of the Congress and other mainstream parties and the relatively growing influence of the regional groups. For instance, the Congress today controls only four big states—Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh—besides a few peripheral territories. In the coming Punjab and Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, it may, as is evident from the recent Lok Sabha polling figures, lose both these states. Similarly, the BJP in fact, holds only three states—Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi. In Maharashtra and Haryana, it is in the ruling coalitions only as a junior to its respective two regional partners—the Shiv Sena and the Haryana Vikas Party—each, with its independent programme. But the declining influence of the BJP in Rajasthan and Gujarat may lead it to the loss of these two states in their due Assembly elections. In the coming Assembly elections in UP, the BJP may win the majority, not on its own strength but only if the BSP refuses to form a common front with the constituents of the ruling UF. The Left Front rule is since long confined only to three states—West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura—while that of the Janata Dal is restricted to Karnataka and Bihar. The performance of the NF-LF has been below the mark this time. And, it is not likely to improve in the period ahead, especially after the political retirement of Jyoti Basu and the demise of the Deve Gowda government. As compared with the mainstream parties, the regional parties today hold the primary position in seven states, i.e., the DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra, AGP in Assam, SAD (Badal) in Punjab, HVP in Haryana and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. Further, there are scores of regional parties operating in various regions—i.e., Bodoland

Party and ULFA in Assam, various militant parties in the North-Eastern states, including Tripura, Jharkhand Party in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal, Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim, SP in Haryana, SP and BSP in UP, RPI in Maharashtra, etc. The process of the regionalisation of parties has yet to pass through many ups and downs before it reaches its phase of maturity.

C

12. Third, there has been a near absence of any major national issue—political, economic and cultural—in the respective electoral campaigns of the mainstream parties. Thus, the regional questions mainly formed the electoral campaign topics. For example, in Kerala, the Congress tried to make prohibition as its main electoral plank, while the Left Front concentrated on the failures of the UDF regime. In Tamilnadu, the DMK and the TMC targeted Jayalalitha's improprieties to turn the masses in their favour. In Andhra Pradesh, both wings of the TDP tried to compete by playing the NTR's heritage card. In Orissa, the manipulations of J.B. Patnaik and the corruption charges against Biju Patnaik decided the outcome. In West Bengal, the charisma of Jyoti Basu again worked, though with declined effect, in favour of the CPM. In Assam, the AGP profited by the Congress' corrupt and inefficient administrative record. In UP and Bihar, elections were mainly turned into caste battles by the respective parties. In Madhya Pradesh, the leg-pulling between the different Congress factions indirectly helped the BJP. In Gujarat, both the BJP and the Congress exploited each other's local weaknesses. In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance mainly cashed on Congress' corruption and factionalism. In Rajasthan, the BJP and the Congress used their caste, communal and rhetoric tools to score their ends. In Haryana, the anti-Bhajan wave benefitted the BJP-HVP combine. In Punjab, again the Congress corruption, favouritism and factionalism sealed its fate. In Himachal Pradesh, the accusations of corruption traded between the two main contenders—the Congress and the BJP—clinched the issue in favour of the relatively subtle trickster (i.e., the Congress). In Jammu-Kashmir, the traditional game was replayed by the Governor's administration in favour of the mainstream parties.

III

13. The second feature of the 11th Lok Sabha verdict is that it demands the formation of an all parties coalition on an agreed

programme, incorporating the issues as projected by not the party manifestoes but the masses, i.e., the federalising of the polity; the decentralisation of authority from top to bottom at every level and the empowerment of the people; the eradication of corruption, communalism, casteism, criminalisation and violence from the political process; the removal of financial and production imbalances, inefficiency, black marketing, etc., from the economic process; the rooting out of unscrupulous norms of behaviour; sustainable development of land, water, forest, human resources, infrastructure, especially education and medicare; arranging of clean water, laterines, shelters, food and cloth for all; etc.

Ideological issues should be kept out of the above programme. All programmatic issues should be resolved through consensus. In case of non-resolution, the majority decision should prevail. If any party wants to remain out of such a coalition on ideological grounds or on the basis of differences with the majority decisions, on certain programmatic issues, it should be allowed to do so. It should not be categorised as an enemy and requested to cooperate on agreed issues from outside.

The mandate is not for a coalition against any party, like the present UF coalition against BJP, Samata Party, Akali Dal and Haryana Vikas Party. The latter type will instead of creating national unity, create perpetual splits in all sectors of our social life.

IV

14. The third feature of the 11th Lok Sabha verdict is the consensus building on all divisive issues not only among the representative parliamentary parties and within the parliament but also within the Indian society, in South Asia and lastly the world.

The consensus within the Indian society cannot be built by resolving all major conflicts and irritations, such as Babri Masjid, Operation Blue Star, 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Kashmiri migrants, Uttarakhand, Bodoland, Jharkhand, Telengana, Vidharba, Cauvery Waters division between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, outstanding Punjab problems (e.g., granting of special status to this state, its proper share in river waters, Chandigarh, etc.), all sorts of reservation to be made on poverty basis, ensuring of social justice not through caste reservation but by the gradual removing of all disparities in our society (i.e., rich-poor, urban-rural, gender inequality, literate-illiterate, developed-underdeveloped).

15. The consensus in South Asia can be built by discarding the

present hegemonic and confrontationalist foreign policy towards the South Asian neighbours and resolving all sorts of conflicts with them. This requires a fundamental transformation, i.e., a transformation from the present cold war foreign policy and the ever expanding militaristic defence policy to a policy of peace and of resolving conflicts through dialogue. Such a course, first of all, demands the resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir dispute through the trilateral talks between India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir people. Going by its basic nature and the ground realities, a just, fair and viable solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem is the one that reconciles the interests of all the three parties, i.e., India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir people. Based on this principle, an appropriate option is the establishment of an Indo-Pak Condominium over this state, including its POK part. This Condominium will handle matters only pertaining to Jammu-Kashmir, i.e., its foreign affairs, defence and currency, leaving the rest to the jurisdiction of the Jammu-Kashmir state which will restructure itself into a federative unit, granting full autonomy to all of its eight ethnic regions. The consensus on Jammu-Kashmir will enable the two countries to discard the nuclear option and sign the CTBT with the proviso that all nuclear weapons now lying with the five nuclear weapon states will be disposed off within 20 years after the signing of the Treaty. The other South Asian problems, such as Indo-Bangladesh dispute over Ganga Waters, Chakma Tribals, trade, common borders, immigrants question in each other's country, the Indo-Sri Lanka fishing irritations in each other's waters, trade matters, etc., the Indo-Nepal differences over trade and transit arrangements, etc.

16. The consensus in the world can be built by demanding the reorganising of UN on the basis of not increasing the number of veto holding members but of ending the veto privilege, of ensuring equal rights to the members of all other international organisations, of resolving all regional disputes through dialogue and negotiations.

V

17. The emergence of the process of growing irrelevance of centralised nationalism and regionalisation of mainstream parties is not an accidental development. Its short-term cause rests in the poor performance of the post-1947 Nehruvian model which has resulted in a few ups but many more downs, changed the destiny of some but neglected a lot and thus failed to meet the aspirations

of the Indian people. In brief, it has brought in criminalisation, communalism, casteism, corruption and violence in our political life; unsustainable development, imbalanced finance and inefficient economy; confrontationalist and cold war based foreign-cum-military policy; devalued behavioural norms; and a chauvinistic sense of history—all of which have hindered the collective as well as the individual development of the Indian people.

18. Basically, the said process has emerged from the unresolved basic nature of modern India, i.e., its multi-ethnic-cultural-lingual-religious and regional character which did emerge during the process of India's formation as one country under the British rule. This multi-faceted Indian reality remained unresolved for a long time and even accentuated by the split and rule policy under the British. The pre-1947 Gandhian nationalism, characterised by reformed Hindu humanism, instead of balancing the interests of the majority and the minorities, caused the further alienation of the Muslim minority from the national mainstream—thus resulting in the 1947 communal partition of India.

19. Though somewhat weakened by the 1947 partition, the multi-faceted Indian reality continued to operate in the post-1947 India. The post-1947 Nehruvian model characterised by centralised nationalism, majoritarian secularism, one party rule, personality cult, politics oriented economy, hegemonic foreign-cum-defence policy, unscrupulous behavioural norms and above all an anti-Pak stance (as the most important trait of Indian nationalism) was again a negative answer to this reality. It failed to meet the aspirations of the Indian people and thus create a proper sense of national identity in India.

VI

20. The initiation of the process of the growing irrelevance of centralised nationalism and the regionalisation of the mainstream parties carries certain implications. Some major ones are:

21. One is that it marks the beginning of the process of the federalisation of the Indian polity, parties and agenda.

22. The other is that from now on all the national parties will, apart from making empty promises, have to take practical measures for the recasting of the centre-state relations.

23. The third one is that it will necessitate for the Pradesh Committees of all the major national parties to demand the right of adopting their own line of action, based on the political situation in their respective states.

24. The fourth implication is that some state governments led by regional parties may due to their rising indebtedness, demand the full control of their regional natural and financial resources.

VII

25. The federalisation process is bound to encounter certain objective constraints on its development.

Firstly, the full reliance of the Deve Gowda government on the centralism oriented Congress, on the one hand, and the Left Parties, on the other, will remain a constant constraint on the development of the federalisation process.

Secondly, the centralised perspective and practice of the top bureaucracy, armed forces, administrative structure, financial apparatus, government owned central projects, etc., constitutes another constraint on its smooth working.

Thirdly, the stability of Deve Gowda's position and the lessening of the pressures of his partners of his government may ignite his desire to retain the available constitutional-legal authority.

Fourthly, the BJP as a formidable opposition will always try to create obstacles on the way to federalisation.

Fifthly, at the moment, the process of the regionalisation of parties is not a very powerful trend. It may be temporarily halted in the next mid-term Lok Sabha elections. And the BJP may in that election emerge as a dominant force. This possibility may arise only if the BJP succeeds in making out its case before the Indian people to the effect that it has been wrongly denied its legitimate right of forming the government by the ganging up of the opportunist forces of casteism-cum-minorityism (NF-LF) and of corruption (Congress) and also if the UF government commits strategic blunders, which it is bound to, due to its opportunistic perspectives. But once the Indian people pass through the experience (which is likely to be of a short duration) of *Hindutva*, (emphasising all-round uniformity), it is likely to, give a tremendous fillip to the temporarily halted process of the regionalisation of the Indian polity, parties and agendas.

VIII

26. However, the factors favourable to the federalisation process far outweigh the constraining elements in social importance. These factors are in fact imperatives for every country, particularly the larger ones, like China, India, USA, Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, etc.

27. The first imperative is that every country makes an effective response to the two most serious challenges of our times, i.e., the environmental pollution and the population explosion, which constitute a threat to bio-survival. Simply put, it means the removing of environmental distortions caused by man's abuse of natural resources, i.e., land, forests, water, air, on the one hand, and the rationalising of the high population growth rate by raising the peoples living standards through sustained development which particularly requires the removing of the gaps among the human beings, namely the rich-poor, urban-rural, gender inequality, literate-illiterate, developed-developing, etc.

28. Obviously, such a task will not need the involvement of the whole people which, in turn, will require the creation of viable and wieldable self managed administrative states, comprising people with more cohesive social, cultural and linguistic affinities. This will necessitate the restructuring of large countries into smaller units which will have full powers to manage their natural and human resources according to the plan worked out by the national, regional or world community. In due course, such self-managed administrative units will acquire the status of full-fledged states, eligible for membership in the regional community.

29. The second imperative is that the globalisation process and its agenda demands the restructuring of UN as an effective global management centre, based on fully democratic principles and comprising members with equal rights free from special rights (veto) for anyone, on the one hand, and the organising of regional communities, like the SAARC, ASEAN, EC, NAFTA, etc., each comprising national states of the region as its members and handling the common regional problems, like the common market, security system, environment, population, human rights, etc., on the other.

30. Under this fully democratic arrangement, a bigger country, such as India or China, will have the same rights, i.e., a single vote, as will have a smaller state, e.g., Bhutan or Maldives. With its population many times more than the smaller states, it will be at a loss in the voting weightage not only on important political and cultural issues but also in its global share in trade, finance, material resources, etc. The same situation will confront the bigger countries as members in their respective regional communities. Inevitably, this will necessitate the reorganisation of bigger countries into independent smaller states which will be eligible for becoming a member of the regional community and

the world community. Inevitably, the bigger countries might either transform themselves into confederations or fizzle out as a national entity.

31. The third imperative is that the globalisation process demands from each country the organising of an efficient and competitive economy. This can be—as per the latest experience of the MNCs which are getting more rewarding results from the restructuring of the bigger units into smaller ones, with independent decision-making powers—achieved by creating smaller and viable economic zones, capable of utilising the full sustainable capacity of their available human and material resources.

IX

32. India is entering the most crucial phase of its history in which far reaching changes are likely to take place. The present day India needs two things—federalism and participatory democracy. Both are meant for the democratisation of the centralised Indian polity which is incompatible with India's multi-faceted basic social reality and the emerging global trends.

33. Federalism (not the present Indian brand) denotes a Union created by sovereign states which on their own surrender some powers to the former, while retaining all the rest. In traditional terms, the Union (i.e., the federal centre) had enjoyed the over-riding powers. In the newly emerging situation, the Union and the states should have equal rights with regard to their interrelationship.

34. Participatory democracy may be defined as a rule of law under which the people enjoy the maximum possible power exercisable not only at the time of elections (as has been the case under the present Western parliamentary democracy or the American Presidential system) but at all times and in every social sector. While under the parliamentary and the Presidential models, the people exercise power through their representatives, i.e., the political parties, in a participatory model, the people should have the right to exercise some powers directly and some indirectly through their elected representatives who should be bound to account for all their performance to the people within a prescribed time (preferably through the electronic media).

Also, the people should, under a specific law, have the right to recall their elected representatives at any time.

On all fundamental questions, the people should have the final say either through referendums or plebiscites.

35. A big country, like India, cannot, in the light of fast changes in peoples thinking and lifestyle, be managed from one centre. It is liable to pass through a democratic restructuring. There is no escape from it. Whether it undergoes this transformation in a normal or turbulent way—depends upon how it behaves in its current phase in which every party and politician is going to be put to test by the Indian people. If the traditional forces remain entrenched (as they now are), social turmoil becomes a strong possibility. In case of the emergence of new democratic forces, the social transition may be normal and smooth.

Lok Sabha Elections in Jammu-Kashmir— Neither Free Nor Fair

I

1. It seems that New Delhi continues to persistently refuse to learn any lesson from history. And those who ignore the historical experience are condemned by the law of history.

2. A modern historical truth is that the denial of free and fair election to any people has always strategically boomeranged everywhere. Richard Nixon (USA), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Pakistan), Begum Khalida Zia (Bangladesh) and scores of other manipulators became victims of their own electoral misconduct.

3. India too has, as already accepted by a lot of democrats, media and even the major political parties, suffered its ill effects in the form of Kashmiri alienation and militancy in the valley where 7 out of 8 elections held in Jammu-Kashmir previous to 1996 were rigged (leaving the 1977 one that was tolerably manoeuvred).

II

4. How did New Delhi proceed in the 11th Lok Sabha elections? Did it take a different road from the one it pursued during the past elections in Jammu-Kashmir? Let us look at the facts.

5. According to New Delhi, a “proxy war” is, as launched by Pakistan, going on in the valley. Obviously, an election is not, and cannot be, an appropriate response to a “proxy war”. But, if for arguments sake we accept its logic, did it act in a rational way?

6. Rationalism demanded that New Delhi should have first called a meeting of all the mainstream parties and chalked out a political consensus on the national question of Jammu-Kashmir. Secondly, it should have been better if it had striven to arrive at an understanding with the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) on the terms and the supervising agency of these elections in order to ensure the participation of the latter. Thirdly, in order to make

elections credible, it should have at least invited international observers to supervise the electoral process in Jammu-Kashmir. There was nothing wrong or extraordinary in inviting such observers, because it does not impinge upon the sovereignty of any country. Even some developed countries follow this practice. South Asia, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh had in their respective recent elections adopted this course.

7. New Delhi did not, however, take any of these steps. Instead, it even ignored the opinion of not only the mainstream parties but also of the important regional parties. The result was that the National Conference (NC) decided to stay out of the fray because, in its opinion, no free and fair election was possible in the valley. The state units of the CPI (M) and the CPI too, followed suit. The BJP and the Janata Dal, despite maintaining the Kashmir situation as highly inappropriate for the holding of any election, reluctantly asked their local units to enter the arena only when the ruling party posed this issue as a question of national interest. Even the half of the Congress unit in Jammu-Kashmir (i.e., the dissident group), while holding the same view, remained passive throughout.

III

8. In the run up to the elections, the first step taken by New Delhi was to terrorise the people through the pro-government armed outfits who, operating under the protection of security forces, let loose a reign of terror on the people, including the leaders of the APHC, in all the districts of the valley.

9. After the proper announcement of the elections, the pro-government militants set up their own organisation, i.e., the Awami League, and put up candidates under its name to contest the elections. They began to threaten the people either to cast their votes in their favour or face serious consequences. They not only killed their rivals and beat the ordinary people, but also threw bombs at the meetings of the leading Congress candidates. These happenings first prompted Ghulam Rasool Kar (the state Congress President and a party candidate for the Lok Sabha from Baramulla constituency) to threaten to opt out of the electoral contest and praise Farooq Abdullah (NC President) for his party's wise decision to stay out of the Lok Sabha elections. A few days later, Taj Mohiud-din (the state Congress General Secretary and a party candidate from Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency) publically declared to immolate himself if the pro-government militants were not restrained. Even some of the defected senior

militants who had initiated a dialogue with New Delhi, later demanded the disarming of the pro-government armed militants.

10. In the mid-April, the International Committee of the Red Cross, operating in the valley since two years, was asked to leave the state within a few days, while allowing it to come after the Lok Sabha poll.

11. From the third week of April, the entire press in the valley, decided to cease its publications as a protest against the conditions imposed on it both by the administration and the militants. From that time up to the last poll, the Kashmir region remained devoid of any newspaper.

IV

12. On the actual three days of the staggered polling what happened can be seen from the facts as reported by the entire foreign media and even many Indian scribes, all of whom had stated that the people, with a few exceptions, in almost every area of the valley, alleged that they were forced into casting their votes by the security forces. Apart from the misuse of the security forces, a number of non-voters and hired people who went on polling many times were used for fake voting. In the Srinagar constituency, the APHC leaders were put under house arrest a day before the poll. The security forces had to use force at over a dozen places in the city and the district of Badgam to disperse the demonstrators. At various places, the militants too launched attacks on the security forces. Rural areas were virtually under a crackdown. Media persons were also assaulted and insulted by the security forces. The entire media boycotted the press conference addressed by the state chief secretary after the poll. Later, the government had to order a judicial enquiry into the allegation made both by the foreign and the Indian media. The counting process in the Anantnag constituency was accompanied by brutal shooting by the security forces in which five polling agents of an independent candidate were done to death—an unprecedented poll phenomenon perhaps the world over.

V

13. The Election Commission has expressed satisfaction over the “by and large” peaceful polling for the Lok Sabha in the state. The Governor, Krishna Rao, has thanked the Jammu-Kashmir people for their voluntary participation in the polling. New Delhi, despite the change of three governments during the past

fortnight, had, while characterising the Lok Sabha poll as a great success of the Indian democracy and a humiliating defeat for Pakistan, declared the holding of state Assembly poll in the days ahead.

14. While the different government agencies are congratulating themselves for the conduct of “smooth” poll in the state and while the high ups of the non-Congress parties are maintaining a discreet silence on the electoral outcome, the defeated candidates of all the parties have been alleging full scale fraud and rigging in their respective constituencies.

15. The various regional parties have more forthrightly criticised the poll process. The NC has termed it as neither free nor fair, and demanded an impartial enquiry into the irregularities. Panthers Party has described it as fraudulent. Even a BJP leader, Rishi Kumar Kaushal, has called it unjust.

VI

16. New Delhi might have, by stage managing the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu-Kashmir, gained a tactical point to show to the world that normalcy prevails in the valley. But it has further damaged India’s moral stature and strategic position by reinforcing the Kashmiris view that New Delhi is, despite its high sounding democratic phrases, not going to change its old habits of denying to them even the elementary human rights. The common Kashmiri feeling is that the arranged Lok Sabha election in Jammu-Kashmir was an attempt on New Delhi’s part to cow them down under the sense of defeat.

17. The unfair and the unjust way of doing things in our times has, as shown by the external and the internal experience, harmed the cause of the wrong doer everywhere. In South Vietnam, despite the South Vietnamese 30 year resistance struggle, first against France (1946-56) and then the US (1956-1975), the French and the American powers, despite conducting occasional manipulative poll exercises, failed to achieve their objective. Injustice can suppress the people for some time, but cannot ever win them over.

VII

18. Justice demands that, taking into account the Jammu-Kashmir problem’s basic nature (i.e., having been a trilateral dispute) and its ground realities (i.e., the different perceptions of its three sides), a rational, fair and realistic solution to

this political riddle is that both India and Pakistan agree to jointly manage the foreign affairs, defence and currency of Jammu-Kashmir; with the rest of the sovereignty vested in the state and each of its ethnic regions enjoying the maximum possible autonomy.

Such an arrangement would, by ending the 50 year long Indo-Pak cold war, interjected thrice by the armed war, bring the two historically and culturally related neighbours closer together and initiate a new process of peace and development in the sub-continent. It would constitute a new experiment of a sustainable development model showing how the divergent national interests of various nations be reconciled and how the different aspirations and concerns of various ethnicities be harmonised by empowering the people and removing all social disparities.

A Note From The IDP To The APHC

I

1. It is now quite apparent that the morale level of the mass movement in the valley for the resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir problem has, as shown by facts, come down. Definitely, it is, and should be, a matter of concern for all those who uphold a just and fair solution to this prolonged tangle.

2. The ups and downs in any complex mass movement are not an unusual phenomena, often occurring either due to the relatively great strength of the adversary or the tactical mistakes committed by the given mass movement.

3. Tactical ups and downs are merely short time gains or losses of the given contenders. Each side endeavours to make up its temporary disadvantages in time. The continual tactical setbacks to any side lead to its strategic defeat.

4. However the fall in the graph of mass morale is a strategic question. Because it is ultimately the people who are the decisive element in any contest. Hence the mass morale is more important than every other instrument in a given struggle.

5. The mass morale in any movement is related to its political strategy and its application which in turn, is based on a realistic perception of the problem.

6. The formulation of a correct, political strategy and its proper application enables a mass movement to take suitable initiatives and responses in any stage of the given process. These timely actions and reactions enhance the mass morale and strengthen the mass belief in the victory of their cause.

7. A confused or vague understanding of reality and consequently an inappropriate strategy always results in mass demoralisation and final defeat.

8. Therefore, the fundamental requirement for carrying a mass movement to a successful conclusion demands a proper understanding of the basic and the ground realities of its agenda

and the chalking out of a right strategy—expressing its aim, the role of different forces, the mode of operation and the form of organisation—to realise that agenda in a long-drawn struggle where the adversary is highly powerful, the strategy and its application require constant review in the context of the twists and turns in the ever-changing situation.

II

9. Turning to the strategic essentials of the Jammu-Kashmir problem, the following suggestions may serve as a starting point for discussion among those who stand for an amicable settlement of this outstanding question to arriving at an agreed general line.

10. As regards its basic reality, the Jammu-Kashmir problem is a trilateral question, involving India, Pakistan and the Jammu-Kashmir people. This is because all countries, while verbally accepting it as a bilateral issue, between India and Pakistan, at the same time, demand the involvement of the Jammu-Kashmir people in its future settlement—thus virtually turning it into a trilateral question. The 1948-49 UN resolutions too, by giving plebiscitary right to the Jammu-Kashmir people to decide the question of the accession of the state either with India or Pakistan, indirectly admit its trilateral nature. Even India and Pakistan concede this international position, though in a muted form.

11. As regards its ground realities, three facts deserve close observation.

(a) At the international level, while everybody acknowledges the disputed character of the Jammu-Kashmir state, no world forum—UN and its agencies, NAM, OIC, etc.—is at the moment prepared to take any initiative for its resolution. Nor any country (except Pakistan) is ready to raise it in some international body or to initiate mediation in this matter.

(b) At the Indo-Pak level, both New Delhi and Islamabad have since put their respective national honours at stake on making Jammu-Kashmir as a part of their nation-states and created mass frenzy to defend their respective national prestige at any price.

(c) At the local geo-political level, the Jammu-Kashmir state, having historically been a multi ethno-regional entity, is marked by varying ethnic aspirations. While the overwhelming number of Kashmiris are struggling to opt out of India, the other identities have their own concerns.

III

12. As regards its strategic aim, the basic and the ground realities of the Jammu-Kashmir problem point out that a reasonable, desirable and viable solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem is, and can be, the one that imbibes a three sided reconciliation. That is, (a) the balancing of the national interests of India and Pakistan, (b) the matching of the interests of India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and the Jammu-Kashmir people, on the other, and (c) the harmonising of the interests of the Jammu-Kashmir's eight ethno-regional identities, i.e., the Kashmiri, Dogra, Pathwari, Pahari (i.e., Gujjars, Bakarwals, etc.), Ladakhi, Kargili, Gilgiti, Balti, etc.

13. The national interests of India and Pakistan should, and can, be balanced by establishing a joint Indo-Pak Condominium over the entire Jammu-Kashmir state.

14. The interests of India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and of Jammu-Kashmir people, on-the other, should, and can, be matched by entrusting Jammu-Kashmir's defence, foreign affairs and currency to the Indo-Pak Condominium, on the one hand, and by leaving the rest of the state matters within the jurisdiction of the Jammu-Kashmir state, on the other.

15. The interests of Jammu-Kashmir's different ethno-regional identities should, and can, be harmonised by adopting a federal Constitution of the Jammu-Kashmir state which should, on the one hand, give maximum possible autonomy to each ethnic region, with a provision for further devolution of power to the district, block and village councils, and, on the other, stand for a single Jammu-Kashmir state, having a common Head of the State to be elected by the ethno-regional councils, a common High Court, a common Election Commission, a common Public Service Commission, Environmental Commission, Human Resources Developmental Commission, all to be appointed by the ethno-regional councils.

IV

16. As regards the role of different forces, all those in agreement with the basic and the ground realities of the Jammu-Kashmir problem constitute its political forces. The different ethno-regional groups form its basic forces on whose maximum possible mobilisation depends the question of movement's success or failure. All the democratic forces in India and Pakistan who lend support to the trilateral cause, make up its active

supporters. Those world forces who want a peaceful solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem come under the category of sympathisers. All such forces who characterise Jammu-Kashmir problem as a military issue and opt for a military solution, kill innocent people, commit atrocities on the masses, and violate human rights comprise opponents of the mass movement.

V

17. As regards its mode of operation, the path of the mass movement, conforming to its strategic aim, is, and, should be, a peaceful one. The prevailing politics of gun in the form of militancy vs state militancy can become irrelevant only when a strong democratic movement, embracing all the ethno-regional identities, emerges in the state. While building such a movement, efforts should be made to bring about a ceasefire on a fair basis, ensuring the personal and material security of all those who were forced to adopt a militant course in the face of the brutal oppression by the New Delhi and the Srinagar regimes.

VI

18. As regards the form of organisation, the strategic aim, the motive forces and the mode of operation of the mass movement demand that its organisational structure should be built as a political front on the state level, with its units in every ethnic region from the regional down to the village level. This front (which may be called the "Front for the Peaceful Trilateral Resolution of the Jammu-Kashmir Problem" or be given some other appropriate name by its organisers) should undertake to bring the entire Jammu-Kashmir people within its fold. It may start, with the carrying out of the meaningful talks on the nature of the Jammu-Kashmir problem and its ground realities between the representatives of various ethno-regional identities on the Indian side of Jammu-Kashmir. Next, it may conduct a similar dialogue with the representatives of the "Azad Kashmir" people. Again, it may mobilise mass support in favour of its trilateral formula in both India and Pakistan. Further, it may, after due consultations with all concerned and proper preparations, convene a representative conference of all ethno-regional identities living in the two parts of Jammu-Kashmir so as to thrash out an agreed solution to the Jammu-Kashmir problem. Furthermore, it may strive for ensuring the involvement of a just and fair minded people in India, Pakistan and the world in the implementation

process of the agreed solution. While performing these tasks, the Front will constantly mobilise the masses for defending human rights and the redressal of their immediate problems.

VII

19. In the fast developing situation in the state as well as in India and Pakistan, the high voltage flash point of Jammu-Kashmir can, if the peace-loving and democratic forces do not act and react in a proper way, develop into an Indo-Pak nuclear conflagration, resulting in the devastation of the sub-continent, including the state of Jammu-Kashmir. 20-05-1996