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AGRICULTURE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, APR 1, 2015
Column: 70% provisions of the land acquisition law ensures our poor stay poor
By: Jaithirth Rao

The newly elected pro-corporate, pro-business government is apparently trying to rob the poor farmers of India (somewhat analogous to English yeomen) and enriching greedy, ruthless industrial capitalists. Reuters

In the distant past, when India had a university system that worked in fits and starts, I was lucky to be in a class where Oliver Goldsmith's The Deserted Village was a prescribed text. The way we were taught ensured that we read up on English social and economic history. The poem covers the period after the "enclosure" movement. Powerful landlords literally "enclosed" or took under their control large tracts of land which had earlier belonged to the so-called "sturdy English yeomanry" or had sometimes even been part of the "village commons". This move made English agriculture more efficient and productive. But it did displace hundreds of villagers who became "erstwhile villagers" of their now deserted village. These people either drifted into the growing cities or migrated to the Americas. The romantic in Goldsmith is cloyingly nostalgic about the beauties of the English village, now so irretrievably changed. Goldsmith has no time for efficiency, productivity, GDP, growth, progress or for that matter change of any kind which disturbs his idyllic past, even if the past had been an imagined and imaginary one.

Goldsmith, of course, was impervious to the argument that land consolidation, in fact helped England become rich and powerful and that, over time, it resulted in the average English citizen becoming more prosperous and freer to explore the world beyond the limited, if beautiful, village.

The current arguments against the Sovereign's right of eminent domain being made in the context of the debate on land acquisition remind us a little bit of Goldsmith. The newly elected pro-corporate, pro-business government is apparently trying to rob the poor farmers of India (somewhat analogous to English yeomen) and enriching greedy, ruthless

industrial capitalists. The residual Leftists of India, who remain a very influential force are like Goldsmith—they would like to preserve the poor farmers in their idyllic, but stagnant state. These Leftists are supported by several sober persons who are genuinely concerned about the rights of the residents of the currently not-so-deserted Indian villages. Who benefits from growth and development? Why should poor farmers pay for the benefit of fat-cats? These kind of questions are invariably raised and there is a penumbra of respectability to the concerns they have regarding issues of justice and fairness.

Unfortunately, the poison pill laws passed by our previous government would be hard to defend even for a poetic genius like Goldsmith. Let us for a moment consider purely public goods—and not acquisitions for the notorious PPP projects, while making a passing note of the fact that the egregious SEZ land-grab, which in fact has precipitated so much of ill-will against all land acquisitions, was the brainchild of the solidly-socialistic government that preceded the current one. To build a road which is 1,000-kilometres long, one may have to cross two hundred villages at the rate of one village every 5 kilometres. In each of these villages, a "social impact" study will have to be carried out and then presented to the villagers; 70% of the villagers will have to approve the road. If half a dozen villages do not approve, then the road will have to be re-aligned. The re-aligned road will then need fresh social impact studies and fresh 70% approvals. In the meantime, nothing prevents lawsuits from patriotic NGOs, arguing that in the other one hundred and ninety four villages, which approved the road, the social impact studies were inadequately done and appealing these lawsuits all the way to the Supreme Court. There can also be lawsuits on the grounds that the 70% approvals were forged; in fact, in 95 villages only 67% percent of the villagers approved the road. These lawsuits can also be appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. One can predict our future. Fifteen years from now, our country would have proudly produced thirty thousand social impact statements, twenty-six thousand of which will be subject to lawsuits; we would have also had twenty-five thousand gram sabha votes of which twenty-four thousand will be in dispute. We would not have built a single kilometre; forget about building, we would not

have even started building a single road. And you don't even have to be a right-wing economist to know that roads benefit the poor the most. The poor, unlike the rich, cannot fly and earn frequent-flyer miles! In the same period, our friendly neighbour China, would have built an extra million kilometres of roads adding to their already extensive and excellent network. But we can be satisfied and happy, unlike the unhappy Goldsmith. We would have saved our poor farmers, our not-so-poor lawyers and our lavish NGOs.

We can debate till the cows come home as to whether every line of the new ordinance is correct or not; we can argue as to which projects are essential and represent genuine public goods. But none can dispute that the social impact studies and the 70% votes, both of which can be dragged out by endless litigation, have been put in place by persons who consciously or otherwise wish to make sure that we have no roads in India, despite the fact that we have a long tradition of gracious sovereigns—one can think of Ashoka and Sher Shah—building roads; in passing, one can also mention that the land law of our earlier government would have ensured that the not-so-gracious Lord Dalhousie would not have been able to start building the Indian railways. If I were a devious member of a Chinese think-tank committed to ensuring that India remains poor, I would keep hoping that the old law prevails and that the new ordinance fails. If I were a Machiavellian member of the British Parliament wishing gleefully to witness the continued poverty of India—because I have never reconciled myself to the fact that they sent us away—I would be welcoming representatives of Indian NGOs who oppose the new ordinance to come and testify in Westminster and would ensure that they get adequate TV publicity. But those of us who are admirers of Ashoka, Sher Shah, and even of some aspects of Dalhousie—we might feel differently.

The author is a Mumbai-based entrepreneur

HINDU, APR 7, 2015
New pay scales for Telangana staff

The wait for Telangana State government employees for receiving revised pay scales following the recommendations of the 10{+t}{+h}Pay Revision Commission appears to be over with the Finance Department issuing a circular memo on Monday with procedural instructions for fixation of pay in the revised pay scales.

According to the circular, the salaries in the revised pay scales will be paid in cash from the month of March 2015 payable in April. As regards the arrears of salary for the period from June 2, 2014 to February 28, 2015 in the revised pay scales, orders will be issued separately. Action shall be initiated to pay the arrears in the manner specified therein on receipt of the orders. As a result, the employees will start getting new salaries from April, payable in May and the differential amount due for March would be paid in April itself.

The State Government has given its employees a fitment benefit of 43 per cent for fixing the pay in the revised pay scales as against the fitment benefit of 29 per cent recommended by the Pay Revision Commission.

The revised pay scales will be implemented notionally from July 1, 2013 and with monetary benefit from June 02, 2014. However, there is no clarity on payment of arrears.

DECCAN HERALD, APR 3, 2015
Prime minister turns to bureaucracy to make government shine
As his government heads towards completing one year in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is looking again to his bureaucrats to put in their best to bring back shine to the image of the BJP government.

In his third such interaction since he became the prime minister, held on Wednesday, Modi assured them that they need not fear taking "honest decisions" as some officials expressed fear over repercussion and scrutiny in the future.

Both Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who was also present, told the officials that they were looking into the problem of filing of frivolous complaints against them, employing the Right to Information Act.

But they must work fast for an effective campaign to showcase the achievement of his government in the last 11 months, Modi told the officials. In particular, the prime minister mentioned the success of coal block auctions and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.

"The prime minister once again urged all secretaries to consult each other regularly, to

eliminate silos, if any, and speed up the process of decision-making," an official statement said.

He underlined that a "communication gap" in "this team was absolutely untenable", it added. Modi's interaction came on a day when three more senior IAS officers from Gujarat cadre were appointed as joint secretaries in the Union Government, taking the number of Gujarat cadre officers in Delhi to over 20.

Known as trusted lieutenants of Modi, G C Murmu, principal Secretary to the chief minister, was appointed as joint secretary expenditure, R P Gupta, principal secretary, civil supplies as joint secretary coal and Rajkumar, principal secretary agricultural, as joint secretary economic affairs.

These officers will join other Gujarat cadre colleagues in Delhi, including A K Sharma, P K Mishra and Rajeev Topno, who are in the Prime Minister's Office. Besides, Hasmukh Adhiya was deputed last year as finance secretary and Gauri Kumar is secretary cabinet (co-ordination).

Soon after taking over as the prime minister on May 26 last year, Modi had met all the secretaries on June 4 and told them to fearlessly take decisions and that he would back them.

He had also told them that he was always accessible to them in case they had any problems in discharge of duty.

PIONEER, APR 2, 2015
MUSSOORIE IAS ACADEMY IN HONEY TRAP?

A woman masquerading as a trainee IAS officer stayed for as many as seven months at the prestigious Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, and left the institution without leaving a trace. The incident is seen as a major security breach as Intelligence agencies had repeatedly warned that the academy was on the target of various terror groups.

The woman, who introduced herself as Ruby Chaudhary from Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh), used an invalid ID card of an IAS trainee for staying in the allotted quarters on the LBSNAA campus from September, 2014 to March 27, 2015.

After Ruby left without a notice on March 27, Academy's Administrative Officer (security) Satyaveer Singh registered a complaint with Mussoorie Police Station accusing

Ruby of being an imposter. A case under Sections 420/467/468/471 of the IPC was lodged against her on Tuesday evening. Rattled by the development, the district administration shifted Mussoorie Police Station in-charge inspector Harendra Bhandari. She has been replaced by Inspector Chandan Singh Bisht, who will investigate the case.

"The Academy learnt about the woman and her prolonged stay at the institute when she had already left on March 27," said Dehradun SSP Pushpak Jyoti. The SSP said a special team has been constituted to find out how the woman gained entry into the high-security academy and managed to stay there for so long without the knowledge of authorities concerned.

During her stay at the academy, she frequented the academy library. Documents seized from the room where she stayed are being closely investigated, police said, adding that the team constituted by the Uttarakhand Police had interrogated Satyaveer Singh, who had lodged the FIR in this connection.

According to Mussoorie sub-inspector Pawan Bhardwaj, Ruby Chaudhary had ensured her stay on the strength of a fake ID card of Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Nainital. The ID card bore her designation as SDM. She claimed before LBSNAA security guards that she was there to undergo training at the academy, after completing her SDM training in Nainital. However, she often used to identify herself as a librarian.

Police inspected the spot and recovered a fake ID card of ATI (Administrative Training Institute), Nainital, her fake driving licence, MA (second year) marksheet, and a Aadhaar card of an unidentified person named Virendra Malik.

The Academy faced threat from terror groups since 2010, and based on the threat perception it had proposed to augment the security arrangements. Subsequently, the security cover to the academy was being provided by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force.

The LBSNAA trains over 1,000 civil servants every year. It runs an annual 4-month common foundation course for all recruits of all-India services and Central services.

STATESMAN, APR 1, 2015
Four IAS officers appointed in PMO

Four IAS officers were today appointed as Director and Deputy Secretaries in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The competent authority has approved lateral shift of Gulzar Natrajan as Director in the PMO, an order issued late at night, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said.

Natrajan, a 1999-batch IAS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, is presently Director in the DoPT.

IAS officers Brijesh Pandey, Mayur Maheshwari and Shrikar Keshav Pardeshi have been appointed Deputy Secretary in the PMO.

Pandey, a 2004-batch officer of Manipur-Tripura cadre, is presently Deputy Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs here.

Maheshwari, a 2003-batch officer, and Pardeshi-2001 batch officer are presently serving in their cadres -- Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively.

Both the officers have been appointed for four years tenure or until further orders, it said.

DECCAN HERALD, APR 1, 2015
Largesse is wrong, withdraw it

Government orders do not have to justify themselves by offering reasons for what they seek to do. So, a recent Karnataka Government Order (GO) which extended a number of key financial benefits to retired senior IAS officers has not explained why such largesse is being given to them. Retired chief secretaries and additional chief secretaries, as per the GO issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms on March 4, 2015, will get certain allowances on very inexplicable grounds. According to this order, they will get Rs 6,000 as servant allowance because, yes, they need servants, Rs 1,000 as telephone allowance because they certainly have to make telephone calls and medical reimbursement because they may fall ill. The munificence will benefit almost all the IAS officers as most of them retire as additional chief secretaries, at least. How does a retired officer's servant and telephone serve the public interest? The Siddaramaiah government

has gifted this retirement benefit purely for IAS officers' personal needs and comfort. Neither the Central government nor other states have extended these facilities to retired civil servants. The order is wrong and lacks all rationale, and is even feudal in its conception.

IAS officers are the best paid among all government servants. They enjoy perks, allowances and other benefits like no other employees do, when they are in service. They get hefty pensions after they retire from service. There is no case for the government to pay them for their personal expenses when they are not in public service. Retired additional chief secretary V Balasubramanian has himself gone on record to question the government's decision. There are any number of people who cannot afford even minimum medical service because of extreme poverty. There are not enough doctors and facilities in hospitals and healthcentres, especially in rural areas. Most people cannot afford private healthcare and insurance is almost non-existent. When they need medical support, spending public money on those in the top rung of society, who can well afford all their expenses, is criminal wastage.

Such wastage of public money has become rampant and the norm. The government spent Rs 1 crore of public money on the treatment of Housing Minister Ambareesh in Singapore, on travel and for other expenses of his family and entourage, when the actor-politician had more than the means to meet his expenses. It is not an isolated case of what amounts to misappropriation of public funds by the cosy club of politicians and bureaucrats. It is gross misuse of power by a minuscule section, and hurts the interests of the vast majority of people. The order is wrong and immoral, and the government should withdraw it immediately.

INDIAN EXPRESS, APR 1, 2015
A new kind of babu

We must move away from a mathematically impossible system in which everybody is above-average, tighten empanelment (currently, the pyramid looks like a cylinder because 75 per cent of officers become joint secretaries and 40 per cent reach the level of additional secretary) and put the best people, irrespective of age, in the right positions.

Written by Manish Sabharwal

Politics in India has changed forever. Now, it's the turn of the civil services to change. But can the services heal themselves or will change have to be forced by politicians under siege from exploding expectations? I'd like to make the case that change will be most enduring if it comes from within and the only criterion for choosing the new Union cabinet secretary should be willingness and ability to reform the civil services. This is particularly important because the window between the cabinet secretary's appointment and the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations in October is critical.

Politics is experiencing an exciting churn — the generational change in the BJP and the impact of its crazy fringe on the Delhi assembly elections, a potential change or regicide in the Congress party, the magnificent resurgence of the AAP after its goofy resignation and now its internal conflicts, looming expiry dates for regional parties that don't deliver prosperity or plumbing, campaigns innovating at the speed of Moore's law, and more money for state governments — all have consequences that are impossible to predict. Expectations morphing from garibi hatao to ameeri banao mean that voters care more about jobs, roads and power than about the envy of income inequality. This makes the notion that bureaucrats must protect India from its politicians and create continuity by defending the status quo dated, patronising and inappropriate. And the notion that politicians can fulfil voter expectations without civil service reform is delusional.

The cabinet secretary of India does not have the same trust, access or convening power that the chief of staff of an American president has. Not only is he stationed far away from the prime minister's office — in Rashtrapati Bhawan, because the viceroy was once head of government — but his ability to impose his will on secretaries who are close to retirement and who report to independent ministers is at best suspect and at worst absent. But the cabinet secretary is the government's chief people officer even though his

power over empanelment, promotion, postings etc has been unimaginatively or uncourageously exercised so far. The government and the next cabinet secretary need to do three things each in order to modernise the civil services.

First, the government must shift the cabinet secretary to the PMO. Second, it must choose the next occupant of the office based purely on his hunger for civil services reform and make sure that his brain is connected to his backbone. Third, it must empower him to work closely with the pay commission till October and then use the rest of his tenure to deliver to us a civil services that can bear outcomes. Policy outcomes are a complex cocktail of people, processes and technology but the meta-variable is the selection and reward/ punishment system for people. The next cabinet secretary must avoid the infinite activity loop that his role has traditionally been and do three things. First, he must improve performance and career management. Seniority is an objective basis for promotion but often an ineffective one.

We must move away from a mathematically impossible system in which everybody is above-average, tighten empanelment (currently, the pyramid looks like a cylinder because 75 per cent of officers become joint secretaries and 40 per cent reach the level of additional secretary) and put the best people, irrespective of age, in the right positions. Restoring the confidentiality of the process is critical to reinstating its honesty. And establishing objectivity and trust is critical to restoring its effectiveness.

Second, the new cabinet secretary must formalise lateral entry and political appointments. Any effective organisation has to balance specialists with generalists as well as insiders with outsiders. India's policy problems are not insurmountable but many of them require specialist input that only lateral entry could provide. This could be done by introducing a new point of entry at the joint secretary level; designating 25 per cent of the top jobs as

posts that can be filled through direct political appointments which are coterminous with the government's term (for instance, 4,500 people resign when a new American president takes over, while, in Delhi, only 10 people do); and easing out civil servants who are not shortlisted to move up beyond a point (similar to the lieutenant colonel level cut-off in the army that avoids top-heaviness).

Third, the pay commission must be reimagined as a performance commission. Pay commissions have never received the "accepted-in-totality" honour that finance commissions get because they end up being "compensation commissions" and mostly formulate implementation plans that lack political economy considerations. The Seventh Pay Commission has a chance to make history by initiating a bold rupture with the past, like the 14th Finance Commission had done. The next cabinet secretary must work with the pay commission and the NITI Aayog to synthesise the useful recommendations of past administrative reform commissions into a plan that can help accelerate the changing of Delhi's role in ruling India, started by the 14th Finance Commission. The 900 IAS officers who live in Delhi must be reduced to 500. Civil servants must be moved to a cost-to-government compensation structure through the monetisation of all benefits. A mechanism that separates the compensation review for the bottom 90 per cent of civil servants must also be devised for the future.

Politicians and bureaucrats who are talented and ambitious are frustrated with the current system. Chief ministers struggle with the paradox that political priorities like water, school education, labour and health are currently considered as painful postings by the permanent, generalist civil service. Bureaucrats — particularly the talented and idealistic ones — are tired of a system in which you get the top job only two years before retirement. It is a system that does not distinguish between fraud, incompetence and bad luck when things go wrong, has no room for career-planning, and often grants postings

based on deafness and blindness rather than competence. The most recent cabinet secretaries have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. The next one is being engaged at a time when we have made a new appointment for our tryst with destiny. He must do his bit by boldly demolishing his cradle. The government should start by vacating some space in the PMO.

The writer is chairman, Teamlease Services

EDUCATION

DU to challenge Deccan College Sanskrit glossary

Delhi University's Sanskrit department's project to give a chronology to ancient Indian history text has started. The project is set to challenge the Deccan College's Sanskrit dictionary.

The Sanskrit dictionary of the department of Sanskrit and Lexicography of Deccan College in Pune was undertaken in 1948. Though the dictionary is yet to be completed, it is termed as the encyclopaedia of the language.

The project received funds from the government. But DU's Sanskrit department aims to challenge it as the chronology to historical text like the Vedas have been given as per western historians' interpretation of Indian history.

Explaining the reason to undertake this project, Ramesh Bhardwaj, head of the Sanskrit department in DU said, "The dictionary has not been completed but the introduction part has a section giving chronology right from the ancient text of the Vedas to the contemporary literature. However, they are influenced and written according to what the European historians like Max Muller wrote. We only want to challenge that. For instance, they put Rig Vedas at 1,400 BC but we strongly believe that it is not later than 5,000 BC."

DU's project is in collaboration with the Indian Council of Historical Research and it will involve Sanskrit scholars from different parts of the country.

Explaining the relevance of the project in present times, GC Tirpathi, director of BL Institute of Indology said, "Chronology of the ancient Indian history has been topsy turvy. It has been shaped as per the political motives of European scholars. They did not want our history to be older than theirs. They did not want to believe that Rig Veda is older than the Old Testament. So, with linguistic evidence and Sanskrit language we can put ancient Indian literature in the right context."

This is also a part of the department's larger 'Aryan project', where they are trying to prove that Aryans were not invaders who came from Central Asia but people indigenous to India.

For this project, the department is also trying to rope in history, anthropology and linguistic departments, as they also serve as an important tool in form of archaeological exhibitions, geological evidences and genetics.

"I have spoken to the HOD of the history department. Once completed, the project will only be released after it has been approved by other departments," said Bhardwaj

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 2, 2015
Slow erasing of the teacher: Higher education is being undermined
Krishna Kumar

Reformers of higher education appear to be totally disconnected with the realities that surround teachers. This may be because many reformers perceive teachers as being unimportant or, rather, an impediment to change. Another common perception is that ideas and practices can be borrowed from Western — especially American — universities and straightaway implemented in India. Many of these recycled ideas have adorned the pages of government reports for decades. A concerted drive to enforce them gained momentum under UPA-II. Now, a torrent of such ideas has hit the higher education system. The institutional apparatus is groaning with chronic pains, but reformers are no more interested in old problems. They feel it is best to ignore old woes and move forward with new ideas. This is, of course, a guess. No one knows what policy is shaping current reforms. All we get is an overarching justification; namely, that in order to get into world rankings, Indian universities must quickly copy the American universities.

A few years ago when reservation was extended to the other backward classes (OBC), one assumed that universities would focus on enhancing systemic capacity and quality. It became clear quite soon that the term 'quality' didn't necessarily mean higher standards of teaching. For many new-age administrators, quality had a physical connotation. It meant a glossier website, smart classes, CCTV cameras, and so on. Even as quality became the avowed goal, class size grew, libraries dwindled, and the teacher's role and status changed. I remember being told by a senior officer that teaching would no more be a career. He clarified that the teacher's role had changed and there was no need for long-term engagement. In a modular course structure, he said, different individuals can come in for short periods to 'deliver the content'. Technology will provide the back-up for students to develop their knowledge and maintain continuity.

Is this the new policy the University Grants Commission (UGC) is following? It is hard to say. After the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) announced its vast recommendations, the UGC got somewhat sidelined. The NKC was a new-age enterprise. Its report(s) exuded a spirit no one had ever seen in government documents. The NKC's fire and foam caused a general confusion. No one knew how much support it had in UPA-II. A parallel vision for rejuvenation of higher education was proposed by a committee chaired by Yash Pal, the scientist. His report took a more compassionate view of the existing system and suggested steps to strengthen it. One of the old weaknesses it chose for attention and advice was the disconnection between senior faculty and undergraduate students. Neither the UGC nor the HRD ministry gave Yash Pal's holistic philosophy much thought. Ultimately, his remedial voice got submerged in the din of piecemeal radicalism.

One radical measure the UGC has pushed in recent years is a scoring device to quantify the credentials of a candidate for selection as a teacher. This system has given an unprecedented boost to fraudulent research publications and participation in conferences. Hundreds of journals that charge the writer for quick publication have cropped up. Certificates of participation in conferences have become valued pieces of paper. This kind of trivialisation of academic work parallels the corruption that recognition and accreditation procedures have promoted in professional education. The academic landscape has lost what little grace and integrity it had.

Courses on offer have multiplied, leaving young students confused and their temporary teachers clueless about any larger curriculum design or purpose. In any case, the manner in which Indian universities have implemented the semester system leaves little room for sustained engagement with knowledge. Unlike the West, where teachers devise their own method of assessment, the semester system has been enforced in India without touching the old exam system. The only change is that the stationery on which one submitted the confidential exam paper now includes a compact disc. Secrecy of names and marks continues to be symbolised by the lac seal that adorns official envelopes and sacks. Some universities now prefer to gather all the evaluators in a large-size room the way school boards do. There they sit and speed through hundreds of answer sheets. Instead of one annual exam, we now have two. The questions asked are of the same old type that the guidebook industry loves.

The semester system is now going to be followed up by a so-called choice-based credit system. One of its declared goals is to facilitate student mobility from one university to another. This is supposedly a priority in a country where guardians sigh with relief when their hunt for a tiny rented room for their ward ends. One is told that credit transfer and uniform syllabi will also facilitate faculty movement. These measures, reformers feel, will throw fresh energy into the tired veins of what a former HRD minister called 'a sick child', referring to the higher education system. The sickness now pervades every limb in the child's body. Reformers seem determined to continue damaging the system. Their indifference to ground reality can only exacerbate the crisis. They will, of course, keep wondering with legitimate innocence why Indian universities don't figure in world rankings.

Krishna Kumar is professor of education at Delhi University and former director NCERT. The views expressed by the author are personal

STATESMAN, APR 6, 2015
UGC's utility

The committee appointed by Smriti Irani's HRD ministry has few bouquets to offer to the University Grants Commission, the regulatory authority that was formed in 1956 to oversee higher education.

Paradoxically enough, the panel headed by a former UGC chairman, Hari Gautam, has recommended that UGC be disbanded. While the points raised in relation to its non-functioning character are well-taken, it is doubtful if a National Higher Education Authority can bring about a dramatic change unless the scope of its functioning is spelt out explicitly, and to the benefit of the universities.

Education can offer no scope for semantic quibbling or a change in nomenclature. From the United Progressive Alliance government to the BJP dispensation, the HRD ministry has contended with a turmoil of ideas and with little or nothing to show in tangible terms. As often as not it has played footsie with the UGC.

The ministry's directive to Delhi University --via the UGC -- to introduce a four-year under-graduate course is a case in point. The short point is that the UGC has on occasion been used/misused by the government. It is intrinsically an academic entity and ought not to be reduced to a plaything of the political class. Whether the regulatory authority is named the UGC or NHEA is not the point at issue; of uppermost importance is the damning indictment that has been advanced by the committee -- The UGC has sidestepped its function of being a sentinel of excellence in education and embraced the relatively easier function of funding education. Over time, it has reduced itself to an academic accountant.

The panel has suggested that the HRD ministry can redefine the commission's functioning by amending the UGC Act. This doesn't quite inspire optimism as the amendment will be executed on the terms of the ruling political establishment. Having commissioned a feedback, the HRD ministry ought to address what the committee calls a man-made crisis which is the cause of unhealthy ambience and poor performance of the UGC.

As critical as the need to periodically evaluate the performance of the chairman is the distressing trend of induction -- business men, hotel owners, and even Readers in colleges have been made members. President Pranab Mukherjee, regretfully, overlooks the structural deficiencies when he laments that Indian universities have in recent times failed to produce Nobel laureates. Which is merely an embroidery in a rusted system of higher learning... with centres of excellence amidst below-average institutions.

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 1, 2015
UGC a failure, must be scrapped: HRD panel
Akshaya Mukul

NEW DELHI: One of the first committee set up by HRD minister Smriti Z Irani to review the working of the University Grants Commission has said that the regulator not only has "failed to fulfill its mandate but also has not been able to deal with emerging diverse complexities."

Headed by former UGC chairperson Hari Gautam, the committee has said any "reshaping or restructuring" of UGC "will be a futile" exercise and so will be amending the UGC Act. Therefore, it has recommended setting up of National Higher Education Authority through an act of Parliament. It has also prepared a draft of the bill but said that till the time such a body is set up, HRD ministry can bring about many changes through executive order.

For instance, it has suggested a national research aptitude test for admission to Ph.D and doing away with 10 years as professor criteria to become vice-chancellors. It has also emphasized teaching of yoga and transcendental meditation. Ministry sources said, "Recommendations are far-reaching and will be looked into seriously."

The two-volume report submitted to the ministry says UGC is "plagued in the main by reductionism in its functioning." The report also states, "It (UGC) has side-stepped its function of being a sentinel of excellence in education and embraced the relatively easier function of funding education." It has specifically pointed out that the UGC staff is unhappy as only "few find favour and are delegated with powers to perform in important areas while many of them are left out with hardly much to contribute." "It is said that they are pushed around through an element of fear and threat. The overall impression is that there is a man-made crisis which seems to be cause of unhealthy ambience and poor performance of UGC," the report said, adding there should be pay parity with central government employees.

Advising reform from the top, the committee has said that UGC chairperson "should be advised to strictly keep a vigilant track of the various performance areas of the UGC and assess the contribution at all levels." It has recommended that chairperson should spend more time in his "seat" than go around the "country and the world on occasions that have not much relevance for the system he governs." In this regard, the committee has recommended that chairperson be held accountable and "his performance be assessed once after three years and then at the end of his tenure of five years by a committee constituted by HRD."

As for members of the UGC, the committee said "all kinds of people have been appointed" "Eminent educationists or men of eminence in any field should have been the natural choice but at times it is observed that businessmen, hotel owners and even readers in colleges" have been made members. The report has recommended that members be given more active role and asked to attend review meetings.

Pointing out various ills of functioning of UGC, the report said "working structure of UGC is so ad-hoc that many do not know how many bureaus represent various disciplines and activities are currently existing." The report has said regional offices of UGC and even Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC) have failed to deliver and are a waste of "good money and manpower."

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 2, 2015
Govt says UGC a statutory body, can't be scrapped

In the wake of a committee constituted to review working of the University Grants Commission (UGC) reportedly suggesting that the body be scrapped, the government on Wednesday said that the UGC was formed by an Act of Parliament and could not be scrapped unilaterally.

"UGC has been created by an Act of the Parliament and cannot be unilaterally scrapped," the ministry said in a release.

"The report is yet to be examined in the ministry… The mandate given to the committee was to analyse, review and recommend to the ministry, the architecture required, and the ministry will have to take a view after going through it threadbare," the ministry said. "Hence, no such decision has been taken and the recommendations are yet to be understood and analysed before any decision is taken in the matter."

The committee, set up under former UGC chairman Hari Gautam, suggested setting up of a "national higher education authority" to replace the UGC. The new statutory agency should have wide-ranging and quasi-judicial powers on setting standards in higher education, it is believed to have suggested.

In the meantime, the committee recommended improving the organisational structure and functional status of the UGC. It reportedly said that the present body had not only "failed to fulfil its mandate but also had not been able to deal with emerging diverse complexities." The committee suggested that categorisation of universities should be replaced with an efficient model, a national research aptitude test for admission to PhD and a single tenure of VCs, besides scrapping a criterion that requires 10 years as professor to be eligible for VC.

Haryana private schools to reserve 10% EWS quota
ASHOK KUMAR

The Haryana School Education Department has asked all private recognised schools to reserve 10 per cent seats for students belonging to the economically weaker sections (EWS) and below poverty line (BPL) category from Classes I to XII.

The decision comes in compliance with the Punjab and Haryana High Court order with regard to the implementation of Rule 134-A of the Haryana School Education Rules, 2003.

Stating this, an official spokesman said that in case of schools built or situated on HUDA land, this reservation for students belonging to EWS and BPL category would be up to 20 per cent.

He said that all institutions concerned have been directed to display information relating to availability of seats, admissions, etc., of their respective schools on their school website and also place the same on the school notice boards for public view by April 1, 2015.
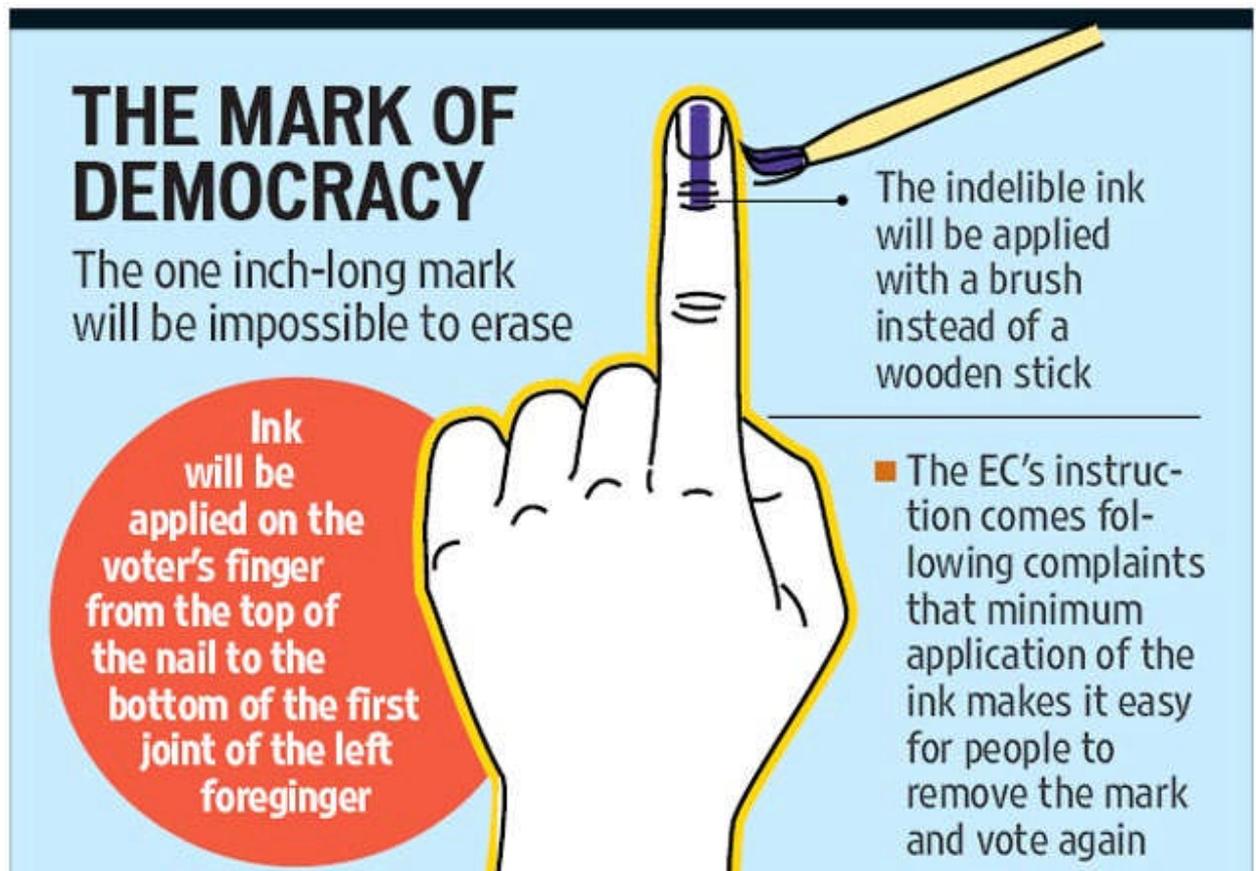
ELECTIONS

EC calls for bigger and bolder indelible voting mark on forefinger
Chetan Chauhan

The indelible ink mark on your forefinger signifying participation in democracy will now be 'bigger and bolder', helping you show it prominently in a selfie.

The Election Commission (EC) has asked all chief electoral officers to ensure that henceforth, the mark is prominent enough to prevent it from being erased by impersonators and is visible from a distance.

The reason for the EC's instruction was complaints that minimum application of the ink by polling officers helped impersonators remove it and make an attempt to vote again.

THE MARK OF DEMOCRACY

The one inch-long mark will be impossible to erase

Ink will be applied on the voter's finger from the top of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the left foreginger

The indelible ink will be applied with a brush instead of a wooden stick

■ The EC's instruction comes following complaints that minimum application of the ink makes it easy for people to remove the mark and vote again

Several people in Mewat in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls had claimed to have voted but the mark was not visible, leading to re-polling in certain areas.

Earlier, the only instruction issued to polling officers was that the ink should be applied on the forefinger of the left hand. However, the practice will change now as the instructions issued last week say the ink will have to be applied with a brush instead of a wooden stick, from the tip of the nail till the first joint on one's forefinger.

"The mark will be one inch long on the nail and skin of the forefinger and erasing it will not be possible," a senior EC official said.

The EC has asked the polling official in-charge of the control unit (of the Electronic Voting Machine) to ensure that the ink is intact on the finger of electors before pressing the ballot button.

EMPLOYMENT

DECCAN HERALD, APR 1, 2015
New UK law allows turban in all workplaces

A new law which will allow Sikhs in the UK to wear turbans in place of safety helmets in all workplaces across the country has come into force, providing more job opportunities to members of the community.

Sikh groups have campaigned for years to close a loophole in existing UK employment legislation which meant that Sikhs were exempt from safety headgear only in high-risk areas, such as construction sites.

The Sikh Council UK had argued that this had led to turban-wearers facing discrimination in other low-risk areas such as factories, warehouses and transport.

An amendment introduced to the Deregulation Bill by the UK government with cross-party support in March 2014 has now been granted Royal Assent this week, making it a law.

"We are pleased that our long campaign has enabled a vital change in the law," said Gurmel Singh, secretary general of Sikh Council UK.

"It will make a real difference to Sikhs in the UK by increasing the number of workplaces that members of the community can work in whilst maintaining their religiously mandated identity," he added.

It said the rules led to a number of cases where Sikhs faced disciplinary hearings and were dismissed from longstanding employment for their refusal to remove their turban and wear a safety helmet.

Their campaigning led to an amendment to extend the exemption in the Employment Act to be introduced to the Deregulation Bill last year.

There will still be limited exceptions where safety helmets will be required, such as for specific roles in the armed forces and emergency response situations.

The change also further provides protection for employers by extending the limitation on liability for employers in the construction industry to any work situation where a turban-wearing Sikh chooses not to wear a safety helmet.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Pay more for bank services from today
BEENA PARMAR

From Wednesday, private sector bank customers will now have to shell out more for financial services, especially for non-maintenance of minimum balance in accounts, as banks including ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank have hiked service charges and penalties.

The revised charges, among others, are for non-maintenance of average monthly balance, cash deposit at branches, internet or phone banking pin, and issuance of cheque books.

Increased charges

Major private lenders – ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank – have increased charges and penalties. ICICI Bank will charge Rs. 100 more for non-maintenance of average monthly balance in metros and Rs. 50 more in semi-urban areas. The average monthly balance requirement for urban and semi-urban customers is Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 5,000, respectively.

ICICI Bank said it will notify customers by SMS, e-mail, letter, etc that in the event of the minimum balance not being restored in the subsequent month, non-maintenance of MAB charges will be applicable. Kotak Mahindra Bank has increased those charges to Rs. 300-500 per month from Rs. 250-400.

In case of HDFC Bank, non-maintenance of minimum MAB customers will be charged anywhere betweenRs. 150 and Rs. 600 depending on the type of account and the amount maintained. Also, customers will be charged Rs. 75 for an additional cheque book of 25 leaves.

HDFC Bank has also initiated new charges. Any deliverable returned by courier will be charged Rs. 50 per instance, TIN/IPIN regeneration (requests received at the branch for physical dispatch) will also incur Rs.50.

RBI has asked banks to inform account holders through email, SMS or letter of the imminent charges when the minimum balance requirement is breached.

Further, banks must also give customers a grace period of a month from the date of shortfall before penalising for the same and the charges must be reasonable.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated April 1, 2015)

GOVERNORS

NDA mulls new governors in 9 states

The NDA government is mulling a fresh round of appointments to gubernatorial posts in nine states, five of them ruled by the Congress, as incumbent governors are holding additional charge of multiple states.

"Since some governors are holding additional charges of two-three states, new appointments are expected in the coming weeks," official sources said. There are vacancies in Raj Bhavans in Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur, all ruled by the Congress, while Opposition parties like the JD(U), Left and TRS are in power in Bihar, Tripura and Telangana, respectively. The Raj Bhavan in Punjab, ruled by the Akali Dal-BJP combine, is also vacant. In Puducherry, the lieutenant-governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lt. Gen. Ajay Kumar Singh (Retd), is holding additional charge as L-G.

HEALTH SERVICES

India faces new health threat

What sets India truly apart in today's economy is its gigantic workforce. The country has the largest number of young workers in the world, with 12 million joining the workforce every year. But the question is, how productive can these people be if they suffer from frequent illness and poor health?

India, along with most other nations, has fallen victim to a lethal modern day scourge — non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes could cost the world $47 trillion in lost economic output from 2010 to 2030 if urgent action is not taken to prevent and treat them, say experts.

India's condition is particularly serious. NCDs are estimated to account for a chilling 60 per cent of all deaths in India, making them the leading cause of death — ahead of injuries and of communicable, maternal, prenatal, and nutritional conditions. Further, NCDs account for about 40 per cent of all hospital stays and roughly 35 per cent of all recorded outpatient visits. NCDs not only affect health, but also productivity and economic growth. The probability of death during the most productive years (ages 30-70) from one of the four main NCDs is a staggering 26 per cent. Moreover, as India ages, it is likely to find the burden even heavier.

The good news is that the NCD menace can be avoided. There are options that policymakers can take today, and businesses may contribute as well through workplace health programmes aimed at prevention, early detection, treatment, and care. Is India prepared to take up the challenge? Its track record is far from promising.

Global evidence on health spending shows that unless a country spends at least 5-6 per cent of its GDP on health and the major part of it is from government expenditure, basic healthcare needs are seldom met. Government spending on healthcare in India is only 1.86 per cent of GDP, which is about 4 per cent of total government expenditure, less than 30 per cent of total health spending.

Union Budget 2015 follows the same pattern. It spends less than a ten-year average on public health care. The alarms sounded across the country have not been able to shake off the indifference of policymakers regarding NCDs. They remain exclusively focussed on communicable diseases and the classic "diseases of poverty", paying scant attention to emerging menaces, even the most virulent ones. So, while NCDs now constitute the bulk of the country's disease burden, National Health Programmes to tackle and treat these are extremely limited in coverage and scope.

The scenario, however, must change, as India has too much at stake. In terms of tangible assets, it stands to lose U.S. $4.58 trillion before 2030. But the real cost of carrying the burden of a mammoth population that is growing steadily sicker would be far more debilitating.

Readying the arsenal

How can NCDs be contained and kept at bay. Primary prevention, built upon a robust early screening system, and a strong healthcare infrastructure, are the two main arms of the solution.

To enable this solution to act swiftly and with precision, it is imperative to build a comprehensive base of relevant data, which can be used as points of reference. This again envisages close and continuous collaboration among the public and private sectors and civil society. Most importantly, the medics and the researchers require uninterrupted infrastructural support that includes the following:

– Robust mechanisms for data collection, data sharing, and knowledge transfer

– Systems for monitoring and evaluation

– Clearing houses for people to share and learn about what works and what doesn't in various contexts

Finally, what role can we, the potential victims, play in this battle? We can launch a double-pronged attack. First, we work, as pressure groups, forcing the authorities to take NCDs out of dusty policy documents and introduce them into business and policy-making debates. The purpose would be to stimulate discussion on the extensive impact of NCDs on Indian families, businesses, and society.

The second option would probably be the most damning attack against the NCDs. We decide to make the correct choice. If we learn the skills of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle, then we can break the back of the NCD menace.

Are we ready to take the plunge? More importantly, is our workforce ready for it?

(Kenneth E. Thorpe is Chairman, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease; Robert W. Woodruff Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Policy & Management, in the Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.)

If we learn to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle, then we can break the back of the non-communicable diseases menace

HOUSING

Registration of properties in unauthorises colonies allowed: Delhi government

Kejriwal issued direction to finalise boundaries of 1650 unauthorised colonies in the city out of which around 800 have been regularised by the Centre.

NEW DELHI: In a major relief to lakhs of people living in unauthorised colonies, Delhi government today decided to allow registration of properties in the settlements regularised by the Centre, heeding to a long-standing demand of the residents.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal issued direction to finalise boundaries of the 1650 unauthorised colonies in the city out of which around 800 have been regularised by the Centre.

In a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister and attended by deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia along with all the concerned officials, it has been decided to immediately complete the process of fixing boundaries of these colonies using the latest scientific methods. Satellite and Total Solution Methods would be used for demarcation of boundaries.

"The government will seek a report on regular basis from the concerned department and officials to monitor the boundary fixation work," Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia told reporters.

The Chief Minister directed the Revenue department to fix the boundaries in these colonies as soon as possible. Once the boundary of a particular colony is fixed, registration of properties in these colonies will begin.

This will be followed up by sending the maps to the respective municipal corporations for preparation of layout plan and then to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for change in land use. The layout plan and land use change will simultaneously be taken up with the concerned authorities, but the registration of properties will not be delayed. The agencies for the demarcation of the boundaries have been identified. In total there are around 1,650 unauthorized colonies in Delhi. The cut-off date for eligibility for a colony is its existence from June 1, 2014 and for a building the cut-off date is January 1, 2015. The Delhi government also has decided to start the registration of the properties which are booked in the 12-Zones under the three MCDs. Every month various properties (both residential & commercial) are marked as 'booked properties' by these authorities for violation of building by-laws, such properties were not allowed to be registered till now.

However, the government of Delhi has now decided to open the registry of such properties. This will enable thousands of property owners to get their properties registered.

INTERNET

'Delhi to get full Wi-Fi coverage in two years'

Delhi will get full Wi-Fi coverage in two years and around 700 Wi-Fi hotspots will be set up by February 2016, State government's Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of IT, Adarsh Shastri said on Thursday.

"We will get budgetary allocation in June and issue tender for Wi-Fi by July. First phase comprising 600-700 Wi-Fi hotspots will be rolled out by February 2016. Wi-Fi coverage in entire Delhi shall be done in 2 years," Mr. Shastri said while speaking at an event organised by telecom news portal TeleAnalysis.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party had promised free Wi-Fi service in Delhi during its election campaigning.

Speaking at the event, industry players, however, questioned the business model adopted by the Delhi government for the sustainability of Wi-Fi operations.

Mr. Shastri said that Delhi government has various programmes that need internet connectivity, for which the State government will pay.

Besides, there are a number of sites of Delhi government where telecom companies can install their equipment and in lieu provide free access to public.

"If these sites are given out for advertisements, it will fetch the government a revenue of Rs. 20 crore per month. At any given point you can have 4 million smartphones connected to Wi-Fi. This can bring huge revenue model for companies…," Mr. Shastri said.— PTI

First phase comprising 600-700 Wi-Fi hotspots will be rolled out by February 2016

JUDICIARY

PM Modi asks judiciary to do 'self-assessment'

J. Venkatesan |

Courts, legislature like siblings, should 'correct each other' if they deviate: CJI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday cautioned the judiciary from giving "perception-driven verdicts", saying "perceptions are often driven by five-star activists", and suggested that the judiciary should have an internal mechanism of "self-assessment". As the PM raised the "self-assessment" issue, Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu quickly responded by saying that the judiciary already had an in-house system in place that was "effectively functioning".

Inaugurating the conference of high court chief justices and state chief ministers at Vigyan Bhavan, Mr Modi said it was necessary to ensure accurate judgments. He said: "It is easy to deliver judgments based on the law and the Constitution. There is a need to be cautious about perception-driven verdicts." He said the judiciary should be both "sashakt" and "samarth" — empowered and capable — to play its "divine role" of ensuring the rule of law and delivering justice to the common man.

Chief Justice Dattu, in his opening address, said the judiciary and the legislature should be seen as "siblings", and the two should coordinate and "correct each other" if the path laid down by the Constitution was deviated from. He noted that issues related to delivery of justice, including pendency of court cases, could not be handled by the judiciary alone and the executive must extend a helping hand, besides granting financial autonomy and better pay packages for judicial officers to attract the best minds.

"The judiciary and Parliament are like siblings, both the children of democracy. We are obligated, on one hand, to support one another, and, on the other hand, correct the other if they sway from the path laid down by our sacred Constitution," the CJI said.

Addressing the conference, Mr Modi said: "The political class is now under the constant scrutiny of the media and various other institutions. The news which earlier did not find a place even in a gossip column has now become breaking news. I belong to the community (politicians) which is under scrutiny for 24 hours. We have to answer to the people after every five years. The community of politicians from which we come has got a lot of bad name. Even being in that community, we have imposed checks on us." He said the Election Commission, RTI and Lokpal were other institutions that kept an eye on the political class. He wanted the judiciary to have an in-built mechanism to monitor itself.

The PM added: "If the politicians or governments make a mistake, there is a scope to repair the damage by the judiciary. But if you commit a mistake, then everything will end," he said.

Mr Modi said: "Chief Justice Dattu was talking about quality manpower. We need to look at the manpower that is coming in this field in coming years. The quicker we get technology in this field, the easier it is to bring about a qualitative change. The judiciary should be both powerful and perfect. Our law universities also need proper manpower for drafting. If we do not do this, the problems will increase."

Without going into details of pendency in litigation and corruption in the judiciary, the PM hoped this forum will suggest some fresh approaches to deal with these issues. He said Lok Adalats were an effective way of dispensing justice for the common man, and this mechanism should be strengthened. Similarly, he stressed the importance of "family courts". He said he was committed to removal of obsolete laws, and stressed the need to prepare for emerging areas of litigation like maritime law and cyber crime. He said an acquaintance with forensic science was now a must for those associated with the legal profession.

Presiding over the meet, the CJI said social evolution, economic progress and development of the nation raised new challenges and presented opportunities for all

institutions. The administration of justice was a complex issue, and could not be addressed by the judiciary alone. The executive had just as much at stake, and the judiciary must work with the executive as equal partners. Chief Justice Dattu said: "As judges are guardians of the rule of law and the executive has an equally important role in facilitating the rule of law. It is in the highest traditions of democratic governance that the two branches — the judiciary and the executive — have come together to communicate directly with each other."

Justice Dattu added: "We must remember that the framers of our Constitution established the Supreme Court primarily (as) the interpreter and the guardian of the many salutary principles they enshrined within the Constitution. The initial deliberations of the Assembly in this regard were almost wholly devoted to formulating its role as a Constitutional Court, and the extent of its original jurisdiction. It was only later that the framers turned their attention to the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Similarly, the high courts of states have also been given an essential constitutional role."

TRIBUNE, APR 3, 2015
Making judicial appointments
Rajindar Sachar
To ensure transparency, publicise the names of candidates recommended

The All India Chief Justices' Conference, being held on April 3, 2015, will take decisions on a number of crucial matters. It at least begins in a relaxed atmosphere as a result of the Law Minister's statement that as the National Judicial Appointments Commission law is under challenge, courts can till then make appointments under the collegium system. This is a big relief because sometime earlier Press reports had suggested that the government was taking the view that the appointments would have to be under the new legislation. That would have been unfortunate considering that of the total 895 posts in the High Courts 265 are lying vacant. Thirty-one of the 85 posts in the Punjab and Haryana High Court remain unfilled.

The situation is horrendous and seems to be frozen because even in 2010 there were 200 vacancies. Will the Chief Justices' Conference kindly issue information for the benefit of the real masters of the country ('we the people of India') as to where the real obstacle lies — in the High Courts, the Supreme Court not recommending the names, or is the government delaying the appointments? This is necessary as the Supreme Court itself says "public scrutiny is the best disinfectant." The court can put all this information on its website and update it regularly so as to enable people to find out where the fault lies.

Of course, one innovation the collegium must follow now is to publicise the names of persons being recommended for appointment. One of the grave objections raised by the Bar is the utter secrecy that is adopted in considering the names (though in actual practice the Bar comes to know about the inside deliberations even before the minutes of judges' meetings are circulated). But that is no substitute for making the procedure formal and transparent. All that it requires is that the Chief Justices should, before appointments, circulate the candidates' names to the High Court and Supreme Court Bar Associations to invite their comments before finally sending these to the authorities concerned. In the matter of Supreme Court appointments, the information needs to be sent to all Bar Associations but in case of a High Court it may be confined to the High Court Bar Association concerned. Once that is done, suggestions of private confabulations within the collegium (a charge which I believe is an overreaction) would not be made.

Another gravely mistaken policy is the appointment of outside Chief Justices. I have never understood the logic or the rationality of this practice which is a sure recipe for weakening the inherent strength of the judiciary as represented by the Chief Justice of a High Court.

At the Chief Justices' Conference held in 2002 it was resolved that the policy of having outside Chief Justices of High Courts be discontinued. Later on, however, the Supreme Court collegium yielded to the government suggestion of outside Chief Justices which practice, I believe, is not very conducive to the efficient working of High Courts and this is a view shared by the Bar Associations.

I have never understood the logic of transferring the senior-most judge whose turn has come to head the court in which he has worked for almost 10 to 15 years and with the functioning of which and also the lower judiciary he is most familiar. To transfer him out of the state to a new court for a period of one or two years to which he is a total stranger, most likely not even knowing the names of his colleagues, is a strange concept of advancing the administration of justice.

The most adverse effect is on the lower judiciary which is appraised every year by the full court. There are hundreds of judges in each state. The full High Court is expected to jointly supervise their work and give them their assessments for the purpose of promotion. An outside Chief Justice will be totally unfamiliar with their work. How does he evaluate them? The usual course adopted is to take the advice of colleagues. He cannot get any feedback from the local lawyers because he would not be so informal with them. Is that fair to the lower judiciary? Why are we bent on creating this morass - as if the judiciary was not already under serious attack already?

No one has suggested that an I.A.S. officer, when his turn comes to be the Chief Secretary in his parent State, should be appointed from outside. Why this gratuitous insult to the local Chief Justice? At present one watches the embarrassing spectacle of a Chief Justice on transfer being sent sometime to a State whose language is not even understood by him.

Personally, I am opposed to the Chief Justices' Conference recommending any suggestions/benefits to the judiciary because I consider such an exercise self-deprecating. But I now feel that the conference must boldly take up the question of retiring age of High Court and Supreme Court judges. There has long been a demand by the public that the age of retirement should be raised to 70. There is no physical or mental weakness or less agility attributed to this age. As it is, there are a number of Tribunals to which Supreme Court judges are appointed. Their age of retirement is 68 or 70. I cannot conceive of any logical reason not to increase the retirement age of High Court or

Supreme Court judges. As this will take time because it requires a Constitution amendment, let the retiring judges be continued as ad hoc judges till the vacancies are filled.

An increase in the retirement age of judges will also widen the field for selections. At present a successful lawyer in the age group of 50-55 is reluctant to accept judgeship because of early retirement. This obstacle would be removed, permitting more experienced lawyers to accept judgeship. Members of the Bar will have no objections because it would apply uniformly to all.

LEGISLATIVE BODIES

DECCAN HERALD, APR 3, 2015
Waste of public money shameful

No one other than Karnataka's legislators would be happy with the hefty increase in salary and allowances secured by them this week. The increase is about 75 per cent of their present remuneration and perks, and would cost the exchequer about Rs 47.5 crore. Salaries and all allowances relating to travel, daily expenditure and telephone use have been increased. Ministers' special allowances got a big jump. Such a huge increase is unreasonable and unjustifiable even for a government which can afford to squander money. There are a few legislators in the state who are indigent and who need state support, but most others are crorepatis and the salary does not account for even a small part of their income. The financial position of a person who holds a job or public office is admittedly no criterion in fixing salaries.But no one would agree that the legislators have deserved or have earned the hike they have given themselves.

The strange and unusual aspect of the fixing of the legislators' salary is that the decisions are taken by the legislators themselves, both at the Centre and in the states. Since they benefit from their own decisions, there is a serious conflict of interest here. In the case of government employees, pay commissions take decisions on salary revision based on many norms and criteria. No one knows if any norms are followed in deciding the salaries of legislators. In many countries, there are independent authorities which determine the salaries of the legislators. In some others, they are pegged to the salaries of certain levels of public employment or linked to indices. In India also, there was a suggestion in parliament some years ago when MPs' salaries were discussed that an independent commission should be set up to decide them. The government accepted it but no action was taken to follow it up.

Everyone agrees that MPs and MLAs should be paid fairly and compensated fully for the work they are expected to do. Adequate remuneration is needed to ensure the independence of legislators and to attract people to legislative work. But the reality is that most are attracted to it for the power and undue privileges that go with it, whatever the

salary is. Most of them don't take their responsibilities seriously as the poor attendance in legislatures and the disruption of sessions show. Most of them do not care for their constituencies. Therefore, the periodic and hefty increases in salaries and perks would only be seen as waste of public money. They also show that there is no limit to greed and the urge to grab.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Govt. wants to take over 'sick EDMC'
JATIN ANAND

Even as the stand-off between the Delhi Government and the BJP-led municipal corporations continues, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is contemplating taking over the "most financially sick among the three" — the East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

A senior government official said that Mr. Kejriwal was expected to write to Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Najeeb Jung soon urging him to set the ball rolling on pushing an amendment to the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957 for the purpose. The proposal would then be referred to the Central Government for consideration.

"Section 490 of the DMC Act says that if, in the opinion of the Central Government, the corporation persistently makes default in the performance of the duties imposed on it by or under this Act or exceeds or abuses its powers, the Central Government may by an order published, together with a statement of reasons therefore, in the Official Gazette, dissolve the corporation," said the official.

This, however, was provided that the corporation shall be given a reasonable opportunity of being heard before its dissolution. According to the official, the EDMC had turned out to be "the most financially unviable of the three MCDs, found to be run by corrupt officials and most unprofessional in conducting its day to day functioning".

"The issue of their salaries has not suddenly cropped up but had come to notice three months ago. Why were its officials quiet then? Why this sudden push for their employees overnight?" the official asked.

Sources said the Delhi Government was also peeved at repeated threats like how EDMC employees would throw garbage at "the doorstep of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia". These threats, a source said, were issued "at the behest of senior corporation officials acting as per instructions from the BJP's high command".

Aam Aadmi Party MLAs and volunteers have been taking to the streets with their brooms to clear garbage deliberately left behind by the corporation's employees in symbolic gestures over the last few days.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is expected to write to the L-G pushing for an amendment to

the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957 for the purpose

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

INDIAN EXPRESS, APR 1, 2015
Divided government, gridlocked House
Rahul Verma , Pranav Gupta

The NDA government at the Centre seems to be struggling to ensure the smooth passage of important legislation in Parliament. Recently, it was forced to defer the decision to debate the amendments to the land acquisition act in the Rajya Sabha. Some of the key policies of the NDA government have come as ordinances and the government seems to be on the backfoot as far as the ratification of many of these ordinances by Parliament is concerned. It has faced numerous embarrassments in the Rajya Sabha, including the passing of an amendment by the opposition to the motion of thanks to the president's address.

What explains this? Most political commentators would like us to believe that this is simply a case of the NDA not having enough numbers in the Rajya Sabha.

While there is some truth to this claim, in our view, the current gridlock in Parliament is a reflection of two inter-related, yet independent, trajectories dotting India's electoral politics.

The first trend signals greater consolidation of political power at the state level in the last 10 years or so. Ruling parties in the states now have a better chance of re-election.

THE DIVIDED GOVERNMENTS IN MANY STATES					
	VIDHAN SABHA		LOK SABHA		RAJYA S/
	PARTY	PROPORTION*	PARTY	PROPORTION	PARTY
Delhi	AAP	96	BJP	100	INC
Uttar Pradesh	SP	56	BJP	89	SP
Maharashtra	BJP	42	BJP	48	NCP
Bihar	JD(U)	47	BJP	55	JD(U)
Karnataka	INC	54	BJP	61	BJP
Andhra Pradesh	TDP	58	TDP	60	INC
Assam	INC	62	BJP	50	INC
Telangana	TRS	53	TRS	65	INC
Jharkhand	BJP	48	BJP	86	INC
Kerala	CPM	45	INC	40	INC
Tamil Nadu	AIADMK	64	AIADMK	95	AIADMK
West Bengal	AITC	63	AITC	81	AITC
Madhya Pradesh	BJP	72	BJP	93	BJP
Gujarat	BJP	63	BJP	100	BJP
Odisha	BJD	80	BJD	95	BJD
Rajasthan	BJP	82	BJP	100	BJP

*Proportion of seats

If in the 1990s the incumbent parties had an approximately 33 per cent chance of re-election, post-2003 the chances of an incumbent government returning to office increased to 50 per cent. The greater probability of the incumbent party's re-election has also led to longer terms for their chief ministers and, thereby, increased the political profile of these state leaders.

The elections to state legislative assemblies are also witnessing more decisive verdicts, with the winning party/ alliance taking a relatively higher proportion of seats than in the past. Analysis of election trends of the last 25 years suggests that in many states the proportion of seats won by the winning party/ alliance in the latest assembly election has been much higher compared to the average in elections held in the 1990s and early 2000s. For example, Uttar Pradesh saw a series of hung assemblies since 1989, until the BSP

won a simple majority in 2007. In 2012, the SP returned with an even bigger mandate. Similarly, in Odisha, Naveen Patnaik has been chief minister for the last 15 years. In 2009, his party had 103 seats in the state assembly, which increased to 117 seats in the 2014 election.

As far as incumbency status is concerned, states could be broadly classified in two groups. In some states like Rajasthan, Karnataka, UP, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the incumbent parties are continuously getting replaced, and the winning party is coming to power with a bigger mandate.

In states like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, the incumbents are continuously getting re-elected.

The second trend suggests that India is in a phase of divided government. In many states, different parties dominate at the national and state levels.

The table provides a snapshot of India's divided polity. Delhi is an extreme case, which is represented by different parties in the Vidhan Sabha, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. While the BJP and the Congress hold all the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha seats from the state respectively, the AAP has 67 of the 70 seats in the Vidhan Sabha. In neighbouring UP, the SP has a comfortable majority in the assembly; the BJP has approximately 90 per cent of the Lok Sabha seats, while the SP and BSP share approximately equal space in the Rajya Sabha. A similar trend could be observed in states like Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where parties enjoying popular support in the Vidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha have a low presence in the Rajya Sabha. On the other hand, the NDA has negligible presence at all levels in West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Ironically, a large proportion of the Congress MPs in the Rajya Sabha

represents states where the party has a dismal presence in both the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha.

This phase of divided government is probably temporary, and is primarily due to a time lag between the Rajya Sabha and the assembly elections. But it raises two important questions concerning the idea of representation and democratic accountability.

First, who should be held accountable for policymaking and policy implementation in a quasi-federal system with bicameral legislatures? Second, is a divided government a sign of healthy parliamentary democracy that creates checks and balances or a hurdle that constantly troubles the ruling coalition in formulating and implementing policies?

This divided mandate — popular support to different parties at the state and national levels — is not only impacting the passage of legislation in Parliament but is also likely to play a big role in the implementation of policies. With a majority in the Rajya Sabha unlikely for the government in the near future, Prime Minister Narendra Modi might have to make some compromises and concessions for pushing his agenda of development and governance. His government will have to use some political deftness in dealing with the opposition in the Lok Sabha and seek issue-based support from other parties. In the coming months, we will come to know whether divided governments in India are a sign of maturing democracy or a crisis in governance.

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STATESMAN, APR 1, 2015
Broom sweeps dirty

A parting of ways was probably inevitable -- did it have to come about in such despicable manner? All the moral high ground that the Aam Aadmi Party had sought to capture,

some of which it had actually captured, has been surrendered over the tumultuous weekend.

There have been splits in other parties too but seldom before has such "muscle" been displayed in dealing with those now dubbed as back-stabbers; and they have their own equally vicious counter-claims too. That charges are being levelled of bouncers having been drafted as delegates at a meeting of the party's national executive at which Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav were unceremoniously ejected -- one of their supporters requiring medical attention after that ejection -- is truly a new low in the never-lofty political arena. People have often been accused of anti-party activity but to seek to defeat the party in an election, or to scuttle its fund-raising activity -- those are "uniquely AAP."

Inner-party democracy, admittedly, is a national myth: dare anyone displease "Madam", note how LK Advani and MM Joshi have been sidelined (Sushma Swaraj too in reality) for not endorsing the Modi take-over. Or can Amma or Didi be questioned? Kejriwal however exudes a different, perhaps dangerous brand of dictatorship that is evident from his tossing the party's Lok Pal overboard too. The origins of that "my way" thinking could be traced to Anna Hazare's "negotiations" with the previous government on the Lok Pal Bill; now Kejriwal is demonstrating that internally. The scrap between vote-catcher and ideologue has implications down the line. No surprise that Medha Patkar is the latest to join the list of "eminent persons" who have had their faith in AAP shattered. And the thousands of young people who still cling to the dream of "a new beginning" are wondering where all this will end.

It would appear that Kejriwal has emerged victorious -- in a battle not the war. Whether Yadav and Bhushan will contemplate a fight-back or float a new outfit is as yet unclear, surely they will not accept being sidelined, slighted.

While Kejriwal's political squabbles will continue, his path to public redemption could lie in providing people the quality of governance they deserve after giving him that 67-3

mandate. Thus far he seems to have utilised that mandate only to bolster his political status -- the Dilliwallah has seen no signs of the much-promised "change".

PS: It is time to consider asking former defence officers who opt for politics to "drop" their ranks. In recent days two ex-chiefs, a General and an Admiral have found themselves treading murky waters. Is this fair to other officers, serving or retired, who attach sanctity to their military status?

BUSINESS STANDARD, APR 1, 2015
Ashok K Lahiri: AAP needs to transition from politics of protest to politics of power
How successfully Arvind Kejriwal manages the issue of inner-party democracy will determine whether the AAP is seen as transforming politics
Ashok Lahiri

A bitter power struggle within the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is unfolding in full public view. On March 28, the AAP's national council sacked Prashant Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav and two others from its national executive, accusing them of carrying out anti-party activities. On March 29, Admiral (Retd) L Ramdas was removed from the post of internal lok pal.

Only future research will reveal whether the struggle is ideological, strategic or simply a clash of personalities. Whatever its nature, it contains some danger of escalating to pose an existential risk — symptomatic of the transformation of a protest movement into a political party. Factional strife destroyed the Janata Party, formed after Jayaprakash Narayan's Sampoorna Kranti movement around the Emergency, in a couple of years.

The founding members of the AAP were lieutenants of Kisan Hazare, the leader of the India Against Corruption (IAC) mass agitation. Almost exactly four years ago, many of them were managing the crowd at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, where Mr Hazare went on a hunger strike from April 5, 2011. The demand was for the passing of the Jan Lok Pal Bill to create an ombudsman with powers to arrest and charge government functionaries accused of corruption.

Corruption is not new in independent India. Shiv Bahadur Singh, the 26th "Rao" of Churhat and a descendant of a branch of the Rewa royal family, was a distinguished leader of the Indian NationalCongress and a minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet. He

was convicted in 1950 of taking bribes to issue a forged document for a diamond mining firm and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Interestingly, Shiv Bahadur's son Arjun Singh became a revered leader of Madhya Pradesh, its chief minister and also a Cabinet minister in Delhi. There were allegations of fraud against Arjun Singh for the Churhat lottery case, but nothing was proved beyond disproportionate assets.

The spontaneous support by former bureaucrats, journalists, academics and professional lawyers – the founders of the AAP – for the IAC movement, clearly showed that times had changed between 1950 and 2011. Tolerance for corruption was down with increasing literacy and growth of a vocal middle class. But movements rise and fall in a cyclic pattern. The sustainability of non-structured agitation under the IAC was doubtful. A survey suggested preference for direct involvement in politics. Some members of the IAC's core team, led by Arvind Kejriwal, went ahead and formed the AAP in late 2012.

The December 2013 Vidhan Sabha elections in Delhi marked the AAP's grand debut: victory in 28 of the 70 seats, next only to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s 31. No coalition government could be formed. Another Vidhan Sabha election followed in February 2015. The AAP won a landslide victory, bagging 67 of the 70 seats.

In Delhi, the AAP did not and does not face any "coalition compulsions", a term popularised by the former prime minister Manmohan Singh. But it confronts the important dimensions of competitive party politics like informal power relations and formulation of actual decision-making processes. Not glaring problems in running a protest movement, they are critical issues when movements get integrated into the established political system. Furthermore, it is difficult to mobilise votes as a single-issue party. Moving from a single-issue (such as anti-corruption) movement to a political party requires defining the party's position on many more issues, such as the left-libertarian cleavage, without alienating its support base.

The Congress exemplifies a success story in management of such a transition. The Congress spearheaded the freedom movement as a very large one-party coalition of disparate elements spanning moderates and extremists, and the whole ideological spectrum from left to right. Its transformation into a regular political party created dissension. The party saw a spate of dissidence from the early part of the last century, including by luminaries such as Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose,

J B Kripalani and C Rajagopalachari. But the Congress managed these inner-party problems and the logic of party competition to rule India as a single party for over 40 years.

Dissidence within a party tends to surface more easily when the party does poorly in an election, as the Congress did after 1967 election. The AAP is no exception. Soon after its brilliant debut in the December 2013 Delhi Vidhan Sabha polls, the AAP lost to the BJP in all of Delhi's seven Lok Sabha constituencies in April 2014. That was when dissension came to the surface. Charges against building a "personality cult" around Arvind Kejriwal were labelled by some prominent members. But, interestingly, charges of insufficient inner-party democracy did not go away even after its spectacular victory in Delhi in February 2015.

The issues raised by Mr Bhushan and Mr Yadav relate to inner-party democracy. In particular, they relate to how and who will decide the appropriateness of Mr Kejriwal holding the dual posts of Delhi chief minister and national convenor; of the AAP focusing only on Delhi or, as a national party, fighting elections in other parts of the country; and the candidates to be put up for elections.

To promote inner-party democracy, the Election Commission has the mandate to ask registered political parties to hold organisational elections at periodic intervals. But except for the BJP and the communist parties, all have been reluctant to hold them in a meaningful way. Such elections tend to foster factionalism and weaken party discipline. In the Congress, in recent times, the incumbent president faced a challenge in an election only in 1997.

After the Congress defeat in the April-May 1996 election, former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao resigned from the post of Congress president in September. Sitaram Kesri replaced him as interim president. In the June 1997 party presidential election – only the third in the party's then 117-year-long history – Sharad Pawar and Rajesh Pilot challenged Kesri. Kesri won, but there were allegations of electoral malpractice. The end was tragic with the Congress Working Committee stripping the elected president of his post and replacing him with Sonia Gandhi in April 1998!

How successfully Mr Kejriwal manages the issue of inner-party democracy while

maintaining party discipline will determine whether the AAP is seen as a sign of major transformation of the Indian political landscape with the rising middle class, or simply a manifestation of the cyclical recurrence of social protests. Transforming itself from a protest movement to a regular participant in conventional Indian politics is no easy task. But even if it fades away in the humdrum of managing the difficult job of running a well-oiled electioneering machine, hopefully, its legacy of institutionalising the idea behind the IAC's corruption-free India will remain.

The writer is an economist

POPULATION

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 3, 2015
By 2050, India to surpass Indonesia, will have largest Muslim population: Study

WASHINGTON: Hindus will become the world's third largest population by 2050, while India will overtake Indonesia as the country with the largest Muslim population, according to a new study.

According to the Pew Research Center's religious profile predictions assessed data released on Thursday, the Hindu population is projected to rise by 34 per cent worldwide, from a little over 1 billion to nearly 1.4 billion by 2050.

By 2050, Hindus will be third, making up 14.9 per cent of the world's total population, followed by people who do not affiliate with any religion, accounting for 13.2 per cent, the report said.

The people with no religious affiliation currently have the third largest share of the world's total population.

Muslims are projected to grow faster than the world's overall population and that Hindus and Christians are projected to roughly keep pace with worldwide population growth, the report said.

"India will retain a Hindu majority but also will have the largest Muslim population of any country in the world, surpassing Indonesia," it said.

"Over the next four decades, Christians will remain the largest religious group, but Islam will grow faster than any other major religion," according to the report. The report predicted that by 2050 there will be near parity between Muslims (2.8 billion, or 30 per cent of the population) and Christians (2.9 billion, or 31 per cent), possibly for the first time in history.

GROWING RELIGIONS

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> The report predicted that by 2050, there will be near parity between Muslims (2.8 billion, or 30% of the population) and Christians (2.9 billion, or 31%), possibly for the first time in history

If the trend continues, Islam will be the most popular faith in the world after 2070

There were 1.6 billion Muslims in 2010, compared to 2.17 billion Christians.

"The number of Muslims will nearly equal the number of Christians around the world," it added.

If the trend continues, Islam will be the most popular faith in the world after 2070, it said.

By 2050, Muslims will make up about 10 per cent of the Europe's population, up from 5.9 per cent in 2010.

MINORITY REPORT

Population of Muslims rose by **0.8** percentage points from 2001 to 2011

Percentage of total population

	2001	2011
	13.4	14.2

MUSLIM POPULATION (%)

Percentage of total state population

STATES	2001	2011	Growth	STATES	2001	2011	Growth
Lakshadweep	95.5	96.2	0.7	Tripura	8.0	8.6	0.6
Jammu & Kashmir	67.0	68.3	1.3	Daman & Diu	7.8	7.8	0.0
Assam	30.9	34.2	3.3	Goa	6.8	8.4	1.5
West Bengal	25.2	27.0	1.8	Madhya Pradesh	6.4	6.6	0.2
Kerala	24.7	26.6	1.9	Pondicherry	6.1	6.1	0.0
Uttar Pradesh	18.5	19.3	0.8	Haryana	5.8	7.0	1.2
Bihar	16.5	16.9	0.3	Tamil Nadu	5.6	5.9	0.3
Jharkhand	13.8	14.5	0.7	Meghalaya	4.3	4.4	0.1
Karnataka	12.2	12.9	0.7	Chandigarh	3.9	4.8	0.9
Uttaranchal	11.9	13.9	2.0	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3.0	3.8	0.8
Delhi	11.7	12.9	1.1	Orissa	2.1	2.2	0.1
Maharashtra	10.6	11.5	0.9	Himachal Pradesh	2.0	2.2	0.2
Andhra Pradesh	9.2	9.6	0.4	Chhattisgarh	2.0	2.0	0.0
Gujarat	9.1	9.7	0.6	Arunachal Pradesh	1.9	2.0	0.1
Manipur	8.8	8.4	-0.4	Nagaland	1.8	2.5	0.7
Rajasthan	8.5	9.1	0.6	Punjab	1.6	1.9	0.3
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	8.2	8.4	0.2	Sikkim	1.4	1.6	0.2
				Mizoram	1.1	1.4	0.3

Over the same period, the number of Hindus in Europe is expected to roughly double, from a little under 1.4 million (0.2 per cent of Europe's population) to nearly 2.7 million (0.4 per cent), mainly as a result of immigration, it said. In North America, the Hindu share of the population is expected to nearly double in the decades ahead, from 0.7 per cent in 2010 to 1.3 per cent in 2050, when migration is included in the projection models. Without migration, the Hindu share of the region's population would remain the same. Buddhism is the only faith that is not expected to increase its followers, due to an ageing population and stable fertility rates in Buddhist countries, such as China, Japan and Thailand. The projections considered fertility rates, trends in youth population growth and religious conversion statistics.

A new public policy for a new India
SHIV VISVANATHAN

India is a country full of paradoxes. The elite in the country are forward-looking; they emphasise the need for reskilling but they conduct all this with backward-looking institutions. An acute observer once said: "we want to be [a] knowledge economy without reflecting on the demands of [a] knowledge society. As a result, we lack the institutions to be systematically innovative and our policies seem short run and erratic. We are being outfought and out-thought in the realm of knowledge and policy, while confusing rhetorical victories for real time gains."

In fact, our new regime talks of the demise of the Planning Commission as a feather in its cap. It conflates the existence of the Planning Commission with the ideology of the previous regime and treats it merely as a policy issue. Today, our medical and our environmental policies, for example, are in a shambles, and yet there are no relevant spaces to debate them. We are a tangled, regulatory society without being "socialist" in terms of justice, which we set out to be.

Confusion over distinctions

Let's face it. Our knowledge society does not differentiate between information and knowledge. Knowledge is embodied, epistemic, and has tacit elements. By confusing information and knowledge, we lack critical thinking, the metalanguages and the heuristics that go into the definition of knowledge. Central to such confusion is Sam Pitroda's Knowledge Commission report of 2006 which equated the knowledge revolution to the information revolution and confused technology with epistemology.

In fact, the elite in India do not realise that of the four revolutions of the 20th century, in Quantum physics, Genetics, in Linguistics and in Knowledge, the last two bypassed us. The profound Linguistic revolution had no impact in India despite the fact that an exceptional linguist like Ferdinand de Saussure was a professor of Sanskrit at Geneva in the same period. While the footprints of the Quantum revolution appeared in India well after World War II, the knowledge revolution led by Gregory Bateson, Thomas Kuhn and Claude Levi Strauss never excited us.

Contemporary India, in that sense, was never sensitive to the genealogies of knowledge. We boasted of the Planning Commission and the Knowledge Commission, of the D.S. Kothari Commission but saw education and knowledge in instrumental terms. To add to

our problems, we misread the managerial revolution and the debates on governance and democracy. We revamped a few commerce departments and believed that we had reinvented management. But our Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) had little research sensitivity. We consumed knowledge but we rarely added creatively to the stockpile. India became a consumer of knowledge rather than a translator or an inventor of knowledge systems.

Knowledge and power

This background is necessary to understand the new relations between knowledge and power. Linking the two is the field called policy. It also creates two kinds of intellectuals, the policy intellectual and the public intellectual.

The distinction is critical. The policy intellectual serves as an extension of the state. He/she is more a product of think tanks, of groups which strictly cater to policy interests of the state or of corporations. A public intellectual is a figure who provides a wide-ranging critique of policy, and looks more creatively at the relation between knowledge and power. A knowledge society needs both sets of intellectuals. The late Sukhamoy Chakravarty, the economist, was a great policy intellectual. Ashis Nandy, Rajni Kothari and U.R. Ananthamurthy belong to the category of public intellectuals. The policy intellectual usually takes his expertise for granted. The public intellectual questions the nature of expertise, probing deeper into the ethics and genealogy of ideas. In the post-liberalisation period, India has had more policy than public intellectuals with think tanks like the Centre for Policy Research and the Observer Research Foundation dominating the scene.

The think tanks and their attempts to formulate policy raise the whole question of the relation between knowledge and the public sphere. Policy formulation has not really articulated the views of the public sphere. In fact, the first challenges to policy came from the social movements, and from civil society which identified policy and experts as mere extensions to the state. The movements that grew around the Bhopal gas tragedy, the Narmada dam; the narratives of displacement and dispossession raised deep questions about policy and expertise, and about the public consumption of policy. Governance is now seen no longer as a statist exercise and the question of governmentality involves civil society articulating new epistemologies, notions of citizenship, ideas about the democratisation of knowledge and the assessment of public policy impacts. Governance has become tied to democracy, with the public sphere becoming crucial and public policy a critical field.

Field of the future

Public policy is not its impoverished, mechanistic cousin, Public Administration. Jawaharlal Nehru started the Indian Institute of Public Administration on the basis of the

Paul Appleby report. Public policy became that empty space between management and public administration. It had a different texture and different requirements. Management schools in India have never succeeded in establishing a successful school of public policy as all efforts have become annexes of departments of economics.

Public administration is more a monument to the bureaucratic ego in India than to administrative reflexivity. As experiments, public policy has never succeeded, and yet today is a fast growing field with new departments at various institutions and universities. So far, it is a case of necessity not generating adequate inventiveness in our institutions. Yet, public policy is one of the fields of the future, linking as it does, new notions of empowerment in democracy with new ideas of knowledge in policy.

What makes public policy exciting, protean and potentially inventive is the contested nature of the public sphere. It is anchored in a diversity of perspectives which challenges the dominance of one subject. For example, economics, which was almost a canonical discipline, now realises that it confronts a new commons of social sciences which sees its sense of measure as inadequate to understand freedom or suffering. The new developments in feminism, cultural studies, future studies and science studies have added an increasing plurality to the fields of knowledge. Today, the relation between the 'expert' and the 'citizen' has changed and new forms of knowledge have to be considered. One sees this particularly in the development of ecological policy.

Nature which was once taken for granted or seen as passive in the realm of knowledge is now becoming a part of the social contract. The problems of climate change, and the energy crisis have revealed that science and economics are inadequate to answer questions related to ecology. Revolutions in ecology show that panarchy, complexity and risk had created a non-Promethean science where policy is merely prudent and precautionary. The subject of ethics has made a big return into the making of these disciplines. A subject-wise understanding in terms of the old hierarchies of knowledge is inadequate for policy. We are looking for new modes of knowledge which are intercultural, interdisciplinary and holistic. The emphasis is now on emergence rather than certainty.

New demands of democracy

These revolutions in knowledge have been catalysed by the new demands of democracy. Democracy is no more a passive exercise of citizenship reduced only to the exercise of periodic elections. Today, democracy is more proactive. The citizen knows more and demands more. She is ready to challenge the dominance of the expert. She senses that her active role is required to sustain a society. The public sphere today is more dynamic and contested.

One senses the excitement and the choices before India in the issues confronting us. In the 1950s, India treated nuclear energy as sacrosanct. Today, the fishermen of Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu, and the tribals and villagers in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat are challenging the location of nuclear plants and even the feasibility of nuclear energy.

One sees similar debate on the future of biotechnology, for example on the need for Genetically Modified (GM) crops. For the first time, one saw an Environment Minister invite all stakeholders to a debate when in 2010, Mr. Jairam Ramesh of the Congress called for public consultations on the release of Bt brinjal. It was wonderful to watch the public sphere debating public policy on biotechnology.

The recent debates around growth, development and the fate of forests and the future of mining have also raised issues that public policy must answer. The new generation has to ask itself whether nature has rights: for example does a mountain have legal standing? When a tribal says that when a mountain dies, a myth dies, how does one translate his language into the dialects of policy? Recently, there was a report on the death of a waterfall. How does one analyse the death of a 'myth' through costs and benefits? Is a waterfall only about cusecs of water?

Similarly, the city raises its own seedbed of questions around the informal economy, the future of waste, issues of violence — all of which confront the policymaker. Ethics, science, suffering and philosophy cannot be ignored in any debate today. A student has to reach into the best of the academe to answer the new challenges to citizenship. One has to dream of futures in realistic terms going beyond the simplicity of smart cities to ask what urban space and urban imagination are.

Today, at a time when the university is in crisis, and the relevance of academics is in question, subjects such as public policy can revitalise the university, intensify the debates around intellectual life and show that the life of the public mind has new challenges. A subject like public policy is an invitation to construct a feasible future. It will be interesting to see how many Indians accept its challenge and construct the dream of a different India.

(Shiv Visvanathan is a professor at Jindal School of Government and Public Policy.)

Recently, there was a report on the death of a waterfall. How does one analyse the death of a 'myth' through costs and benefits? Is a waterfall only about cusecs of water?

What makes public policy exciting and potentially inventive is the contested nature of the public sphere. It is anchored in a diversity of perspectives which challenges the dominance of one subject

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 1, 2015
Secretaries' report paints a grim picture of PM's pet schemes
Saubhadra Chatterji

The NDA government's Jan Dhan Yojna might have recorded a sharp rise in opening bank accounts but it faces several hurdles in its way to become an effective tool of financial inclusion.

A report compiled for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with inputs from 46 top-ranking secretaries of the government of India, expresses concern over shoddy implementation of many more schemes across different sectors.

The internal report, accessed by HT, calls for a cutting down on number of central schemes to give states freedom to pick their own projects to address local needs.

"Central government schemes are rigid and do not allow flexibility in implementation. The states should be free to innovate and design schemes," commented one bureaucrat. Another secretary said, "number of schemes need to be reduced and more funds need to be given to states as united funds."
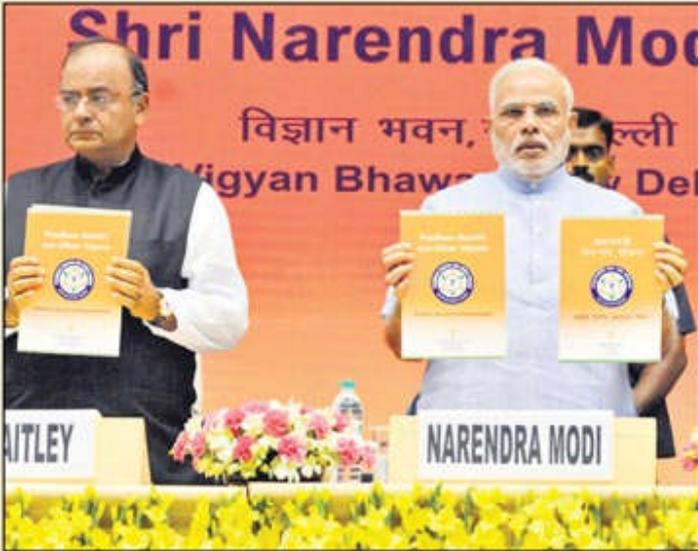
PM Narendra Modi with Arun Jaitley at the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna. MOHD ZAKIR/HT FILE

REALITY CHECK

46 secretaries present report to the PM on their tour of first place of posting

29 secretaries said unemployment most pressing problem

28 secretaries said sanitation conditions deplorable

25 secretaries found no new industry in areas visited by them

19 secretaries found poor road/rail/air connectivity

15 secretaries said abysmal condition of health services

15 bureaucrats pointed out deteriorating sex ratio

The six-page report concluded: "There is a need for enhanced public participation, decentralization and public ownership of schemes."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked secretary-level officers at the Centre to go back to their first place of posting and come back with a report on its progress. The consolidated report of the visits shows major flaws in government schemes and its implementation.

On Jan-Dhan Yojna, the report mentioned "Lack of information among account holders about minimum transactions and use of ATM cards" and "no awareness about availing insurance facilities". "An entire sub-division in Manipur appears to have no commercial banking facility," a secretary had pointed out.

Unemployment has been flagged as "most pressing problem facing the youth" by 29 secretaries. "Young boys and girls are often jobless after completing their intermediate courses, graduation etc. Such education does not contribute to livelihood," said the report, accessed by HT. As many as 25 secretaries have reported that no new industries gave come up in the majority of areas visited by them, drying up employment opportunities.

"Deplorable sanitation conditions" have been flagged by 28 secretaries. "In many areas, public toilets remain defunct, uncared for. And in most cases, are used for storage of goods," the report added.

A committee of secretaries, headed by cabinet secretary Ajit Seth, will hold a meeting next week on this report to recommend changes in the policies of the Centre.

PUBLIC SECTOR

A bridge too far
Public-private partnerships have not worked so far
Commentarao: S.L. Rao

For 44 years since Independence, India has been a socialist country. This meant that public ownership was considered better for society. Private ownership was profit seeking. Profits were not held to be in the public interest. They meant exploitation of a very large and poverty-stricken population. So private investors were rigidly controlled by the government and taxed heavily to make a more equal society.

Simultaneously, many schemes gave free or cheap goods and services to the 'poor'. These policies to divide a small gross domestic product cake into equal parts led to poor economic growth, inhibition of enterprise, tax evasion on a large scale, corruption, favours given to crony business persons, monopolies and oligopolies, with market dominance leading to consumer exploitation, and growing differentials in living standards.

In 1991, enterprise was given a freer role in the economy with the abolition of industrial and most import licensing. There was a flurry of private entrepreneurship. New manufacturing capacity was created. Competition between multiple players in the market gave the consumer superior quality and lower prices. The opening of the economy to imports further benefited consumers.

Public sector monopolies, especially in infrastructure, were also challenged by private entries allowed into telecommunications, electricity generation, transmission, distribution and trading, oil refining, airports and ports.

The removal of ceilings on industrial capacities, technology imports, removal of limits on compensation to all and particularly employees with special skills, resulted in efficiency improvements and cost reductions in many private enterprises. However, State-owned enterprises remained unchanged, continuing under government ownership and bureaucratic control.

As the economy grew with this liberalization of markets, manufacturing and imports, there was a galloping demand for fresh capital for increasing production. Sources for capital were largely domestic. In spite of high domestic household savings, and growing corporate profits and savings, there was a shortage of capital. A good part of the savings went to government-run insurance, provident, pension and gratuity funds. Government-owned and financed development finance institutions that lent long-term capital converted into commercial banks after economic liberalization. While foreign investment grew significantly, especially in equity and debt, it was a fraction of the needed capital.

Long-term debt of companies was increasingly financed by commercial banks, mainly from their short-term deposits. Inevitably the cost of capital for investment was high compared to China and many other countries. Indian manufacturers were not competitive in overseas markets. India was an exporter of raw materials, not much of manufactures. There were other constraints to manufacturing in India: the numerous government permissions and frequent inspections, widespread corruption, restrictive labour laws that forced employers to restrict permanent employment in favour of contract labour that could be laid off in case of a demand downturn, the constraints on free movement of goods because of varying indirect taxes, environmental regulations and interminable waits for government go-aheads, in addition to state government bureaucracies holding up projects. Infrastructure projects inevitably suffered time and cost overruns. Bank loans became sticky.

One answer was for the government to participate along with private enterprise with capital. In some cases, the government could speed up clearances. Partnerships between public and private investments in infrastructure projects required large investments. Their focus was on power plants and power distribution, roads, ports, airports, metro rail. All these projects required large tracts of land, many times in irrigated and inhabited areas. Thousands of farmers had to be persuaded to part with their lands for compensation. For many whose livelihoods came from working on the land, alternative skills had to be developed and gainful employment found. Considerable resettlement and rehabilitation of people was required. In most cases, there were adverse environmental impacts that had to be mitigated. Roads, airports, ports, had to be built to bring in raw materials and fuels.

Public sector companies (such as the Power Finance Corporation and the National Highways Authority of India) were tasked to get these initial clearances. The private party, it was hoped, would spend minimum time and capital locked up in developing the projects. The government would be a financial partner in addition to dealing with these preliminaries.

In some projects where tariffs were felt to be insufficient for an adequate return, the government developed the idea of 'viability gap funding'. Bidders were to forecast tariffs for the next 25 to 30 years. Taking account of other incomes that might be permitted - advertising, from land development, and so on - the bidder was to quote forward tariffs for the period (with escalations), and to declare how much financial support he would need from the government to build the project. Whoever quoted the lowest, got the project, if other conditions were met.

In the event, what was a brilliant solution to moving forward in building infrastructure was on the whole a failure. No project was without delays. There were many reasons: land acquisition became delayed, resettlement and rehabilitation required negotiations and took time, environmental groups lobbied governments to delay or refuse permission, in addition to problems of weather, geology, and so on. The government's desire to offer projects that had got major clearances, with only construction and operations remaining, was not achieved. This led to the private developer having his capital locked up, his technology providers and equipment suppliers screaming for payments even though the project was not ready for them and the payback period was being extended.

What was worse was that the economic assumptions did not hold. Power plants based on imported coal found that the coal prices were much higher than assumed in their power tariff commitments. Bidders for roads were so aggressive that they found their quotes unsustainable, and many abandoned their projects. Forecasting was poor - of future road traffic for tolls, advertising revenues, land development revenues, railways taking interminable time to approve bridges over railway lines, and so on. Fuel availability, especially gas, became very uncertain. Coal mines allocated for ultra mega power projects got mired in controversy. Barren land given cheap for port development (as for

Mundra port) and on which the developer lavished expenditure for hinterland development attracted political charges of favours being given to 'crony capitalists'. This was because the land values soared after the investments by the developer. Thus infrastructure projects, and the subset of private-public partnerships suffered time and cost overruns. They could not service bank loans. Capital adequacy of banks declined.

So is there hope that public-private partnerships can work? Yes, but there are big ifs. Our bureaucracies and politicians at all levels should be tamed to deal with all clearances in a timely fashion. There should be a coordinated approach to such clearances so that related clearances are given together. There must be compensation to the developer who suffers because of delayed clearances. Tariffs should not be quoted for longer than required by financiers for financial closures. Land acquisition should be simplified - a very difficult task with so many political parties interested in creating problems. The land required for projects should be minimal and not result in vast surplus lands as is the case with so many projects over the last 70 years. The contracts must be so designed that they take account of eventualities like unforeseen cost increases or imported coal-based power projects. There must be agreement on what is to be done if assumptions on forward interest or exchange rates are proven wrong. There must be a far wider reservoir of capital for long-term investments, as in many other countries. This should include long-term savings in insurance, gratuity, provident and pension funds. Government guarantees might be required. Clearly our administration needs much reform before India is ready for PPPs.

The author is former director-general, National Council of Applied Economic Research

RAILWAYS

Now, passengers can book rail tickets 120 days in advance
This is expected to cut last-minute rush for reservations

Travellers on trains will soon be able to book tickets 120 days in advance - instead of the current 60 days.

On Tuesday, the railway ministry announced the facility would be available from Wednesday. This is expected to cut last-minute rush for reservations.

"For instance, as on April 1, for trains leaving on July 28, the reservation can be obtained for a journey on all days between April 1 and July 28," the ministry stated, without disclosing the quantum of additional earnings that will accrue to the railways as increased interest income.

A senior rail ministry official said it would calculate the total benefit based on the pattern and share of advance bookings in overall bookings once the new system comes into play.

"At the moment, it is difficult to make an assumption of additional benefit from the increased booking period," he said.

The ministry clarified there would be no change in the case of some express trains, including Taj Express, Gomti Express and a few special trains, where a lower time limits for advance reservations are in effect. Also, there will be no change in the case of the limit of 360 days for foreign tourists.

TERRORISM

TELEGRAPH, APR 6, 2015
Deep anxiety
Why are young people from Europe joining the Islamic State?
Kanwal sibal

It is anomalous that European youth, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, should be attracted to the violent ideology of the Islamic State. That non-Muslim European youth should be beguiled by such an inhumanly violent ideology is baffling. In the case of European Muslims, it is also not easily comprehensible that having been brought up in liberal, democratic and secular societies, they should be attracted to the anti-human freedoms, anti-modern, anti-progress, anti-women, anti-minorities ideology of these *jihadi* groups that is devoid of economic ideas and does not offer any forward-looking vision of society.

One can object to the policies of one's country, but to join groups abroad that have such little regard for human life is another thing. One can feel strongly about injustice being perpetrated against another people, of violence being inflicted on them in the name of geopolitics, but joining groups that are dubious in their origin and are not led by particularly pious people is difficult to understand.

The problem is limited to forces within the Islamic world wedded to a certain kind of violent theology. There are people belonging to other religions and communities that could have similar grievances against the state of the world today and societal trends, but they are not taking recourse to violence inspired by religious ideology.

Europe has immigrant populations from various parts of the world. No one immigrant community is favoured over another and accorded benefits denied to others. How is it that the radicalization problem is confined to elements in the Muslim community alone?

It is true that the vast majority of Muslims all over the world do not support the kind of inhuman violence that the extremist groups use against others. It is also true that the majority of the victims of *jihadi* violence are Muslims themselves.

Islam, however, has texts that can be interpreted or misinterpreted to justify violence against others. The religious texts cannot be erased, but they can be interpreted in ways that are compatible with international life and relations between different communities in an interdependent world. Attempts have been made by some prestigious Islamic institutions to erode the religious basis of the ideology brandished by *jihadi* groups, but with little impact so far.

The core of the problem lies in Salafi or Wahhabi ideology that is the foundational ideology of Saudi Arabia. That country and some other Gulf States have used their enormous oil wealth since the mid-1970s to propagate this highly puritanical version of Islam all over the Islamic world that, in its harshest form, preaches hatred towards infidels, including the Shias and non-Wahhabi Muslims, and holds democracy

responsible for all the horrible wars of the 20th century. More moderate local interpretations have been overwhelmed by this Saudi interpretation of Islam.

The ideology of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq is a direct product of this Salafi ideology. It is a different matter that Saudi Arabia itself is being targeted by the Islamic State, which is more a political development than a religious one. Saudi Arabia is an ally of the West. It is too important a country to become the object of meaningful pressures by the West to contain and reverse the Wahhabi forces within and their radiation internationally.

Some would argue that it is the Western military interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria that have caused the emergence of the Islamic State. President Barack Obama has observed a few days ago that the emergence of the Islamic State can be traced to intervention by the United States of America in Iraq. The intervention in Libya and the chaos that has followed there have opened the flow of arms to *jihadi* groups in the region. The Western determination to oust Syria's Assad and the support given to opposition groups there has, by creating civil war conditions in the country, made space for extremist Sunni groups to occupy swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq and declare an Islamic caliphate. The anti-Sunni policies of the Nouri al-Maliki government in Iraq too are responsible for the rise of the Islamic State. But Western intervention in Iraq occurred years ago and the US has since militarily withdrawn from that country. The ouster of Muammar Gaddafi was supported by virtually all Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It cannot, therefore, convincingly be argued that European Muslims are joining the Islamic State today as a protest against these interventions. Significantly, no Palestinians, Iraqis or Afghans, whose countries have been occupied or ravaged by foreign forces, are amongst those joining the jihad.

The Islamic State is a Sunni phenomenon; it is violently anti-Shia. The European Muslims joining the Islamic State are Sunnis, and they may actually be wanting to contribute their might to a Sunni roll-back of the Shia power in Iraq and Syria.

Have European Muslims joined the Islamic State because they have not been integrated sufficiently in the societies they live in and are discriminated against in terms of employment and the like? While discrimination and racial prejudice may be a ground reality, it is hard to believe why these elements would therefore want to join the Islamic State to kill Yazidis, Kurds and Christians, besides beheading Western hostages.

There is introspection in Europe whether radicalization denotes a failure of multiculturalism and that the answer lies in greater integration of the Muslim communities with the rest of society. Actually, one can argue that multiculturalism gives the Muslim community space to live their lives as they want to, within certain bounds. Integration means a more focused effort to make this community accept the values and culture of the host State. The adoption of a *jihadi* ideology, however, cannot be ascribed only to the failure of either policy.

Those radicalized are educated, are often professionals and many are adept at using the latest communication technologies. They do not fit in with the profile many have in mind

of uneducated, unemployed youth with no future veering towards these destructive ideologies. The *Charlie Hebdo* massacre shows, in the view of some experts, that Islamic recruiters focus on certain personality traits and not employment status to radicalize young men and women.

About 2,000 Westerners are believed to be fighting with militant groups in Syria and Iraq, including 1,600 from Britain, France and Germany. There is deep anxiety in Europe about European *jihadis* returning home from Iraq/Syria to engage in terrorist attacks in their home countries.

The challenge to Western democracies posed by the radicalization of their youth is complex. No easy answer is available. It is a foreign policy problem at one level, in that it is linked to policies towards Muslim countries and regarding how to deal with the external sources of disruptive Islamist ideologies. The role of Turkey in supporting the Islamic State and keeping the doors open for European recruits to *jihad* to move into Syria and Iraq needs addressing. Whether the phenomenon of radicalization will end with the elimination of the Islamic State is not clear. The threat from al Qaida has not disappeared either.

It is a domestic problem as it involves the proper handling of Europe's immigrant population. It involves monitoring the social media without compromising the right to privacy and freedom of expression. It means tighter anti-terrorism legislation without diluting the rule of law.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Spain spells out technical terms for Delhi's smart city
The smart city will be zoned out of Dwarka, Rohini, Narela. (Source: Express photo)
Shalini Narayan

Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement to set up 100 'smart cities', beginning with the national capital, Spain has presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to spell out the technical support it will offer to the Ministry of Urban Development for construction of the world-class project.

Reportedly, Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu had held a meeting with officials of the 'Barcelona Regional' five months ago after a brief visit to Spain to seek "technical expertise" to construct the smart city, which will be spread over 20-24 hectares.

Sources said officials from Spain met the vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority recently with the MoU, explaining the terms of cooperation, which the department will now process and submit to the urban development ministry.

According to the MoU, the coordinators for the project will be the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, ICEX Spain Trade and Investments and the urban development ministry.

Sources said the memorandum states that expertise will be provided on issues of urban planning and management, infrastructure, water management, housing, waste management, mobility, energy and utilities, sanitation, environment and public goods and services.

Sources said a Joint Working Group meeting will be held alternatively in India and Spain every year, as part of the terms.

"The project has been proposed to de-congest the capital and facilitate it with all amenities. Focus will be to build global educational and health institutes and entertainment facilities. The city will be zoned out of Dwarka, Rohini and Narela and will be equipped with the latest technologies and waste management techniques," a ministry official said.

Twenty-four hours' water supply, WiFi, green technology, rainwater harvesting and waste management techniques will also be part of the project. Naidu, at a public function, had said apart from its modern buildings and the fact that it is an "advanced city", Barcelona "has preserved its old architecture. We also want to preserve our traditional architecture, that India is so richly endowed with, even as we embrace modernity".

INDIAN EXPRESS, APR 7, 2015
Swachh Bharat: Some 'elite' services to pay extra 2% cess

The sources said that hotels which charge tariff above Rs 2,000 per day are being considered for inclusion in the list of the services which will attract the Swachh Bharat cess.

Shruti Srivastava

Users of "elite" services including telecommunications, insurance, manpower recruitment agencies, hotels and restaurants above a certain threshold and business auxiliary services among others may have to shell out more in the form of Swachh Bharat cess.

The revenue department is preparing a list of services which will attract the additional 2 per cent cess provided for in the Budget 2015-16, over and above the proposed 14 per cent, official sources told The Indian Express.

"A one per cent increase in service tax results in an additional mop up of Rs 12,500 crore. The top 10 services – the elite services—generate the maximum revenue and therefore we are considering subjecting them to the additional levy," the sources said.

In order to promote cleanliness of households and environment, apart from increasing the clean energy cess on coal from Rs 100 to Rs 200 per metric tonne of coal, finance minister Arun Jaitley announced in the Budget 2015-16, "an enabling provision to levy Swachh Bharat cess at a rate of 2 per cent or less on all or certain services if need arises," to be effective from a date to be notified.

The minister has said that the resources generated from the cess will be utilised for financing and promoting initiatives towards Swachh Bharat.

The top 10 services including maintenance and repairs; telecommunication including telegraph, telephone, telex, fascimile, leased circuit; manpower recruitment agency; insurance auxiliary services; construction of residential complex; business support; renting of immovable property; information technology software for use in course or furtherance of business; and management consultants contribute over 50 per cent of the total revenue generated from services tax.

The sources said that hotels which charge tariff above Rs 2,000 per day are being considered for inclusion in the list of the services which will attract the Swachh Bharat cess.

Indirect tax revenue collections for 2014-15 stood at Rs 5,46,479 crore as against the revised estimates of Rs 5,42,325 crore. During the April-February period service tax collections stood at Rs 1,34,201 crore, up 8.1 per cent year-on-year.

The proceeds of the Swachh Bharat cess would be first credited to the Consolidated Fund of India and the government would be able to utilise it after due appropriation is made by Parliament by law. A new chapter VI has been inserted in the Finance Bill as per clause 117 to enable the cess which would be in addition to any cess or service tax leviable on such taxable services. To promote cleanliness, the government has also provided for 100 per cent deduction for contributions to the Swachh Bharat Kosh.

BUSINESS LINE, APR 1, 2015
Relocating India's capital
ANJANI KUMAR

There are advantages to a new location in the centre of the country. Better security and a smaller population, for starters

In 1911, the British moved their capital from Kolkata to Delhi. Later, New Delhi was carved out of Delhi. Today, the national capital region of Delhi is one of the most congested places in the world. From a population in 1911 of 2,40,000, it now exceeds 2 crore. ave a population greater than that of New Delhi.

To this high density of population and its damaging consequences especially in maintaining law and order, we must add rainy season woes, lack of adequate public transport and public sanitation, traffic snarls, and dangerous levels of pollution. Property and food prices are sky-high.

Strikes, protests and dharnas have become a part of life in this city. Being the seat of India's President, Prime Minister and Parliament, and their ubiquitous offices, the space left for Delhiites is limited. And, now there is a report that the Centre is considering constructing a new office complex near Ghitorni in South Delhi, adding further to its congestion.

The woeful story of New Delhi does not end here. The presence of such a large number of government offices, both of the Centre and of the State, requires an equally humongous intelligence and security structure. The ever-present threat of terror is high

because of the presence of these authorities and other dignitaries. How long and to what extent can New Delhi survive all this?

Mathematical centre

Therefore, we must search for a new place to be made the capital of India. Mathematics being a perfect science, any solution arrived at with the help of mathematical concepts will surely give a non-controversial solution. One such concept is the centroid. The centroid of a body is the centre of its mass, the point at which it is stable or balanced under the influence of gravity from any side. The centroid of the map of India falls somewhere south of Jabalpur on the banks of River Narmada and near the Tropic of Cancer. We can think of moving the capital to this area.

Climatically, this place may not be very different from New Delhi except that it has not reached its pollution level. Both Jabalpur and New Delhi have same average altitude, a humid subtropical climate and almost equal average annual rainfall. However, the dense fog that routinely occurs in New Delhi during winter disrupting air traffic may not occur in Jabalpur. On seismic considerations too, Jabalpur is comparatively safer. At present, New Delhi is located about 1,000 km from Kashmir and about 3,000 km from the southern end. In the new location, all four corners of India would be equidistant. Since Delhi is tilted geographically more towards the north, politically and administratively (especially at its lower rungs) New Delhi is seen to be more north-centric than pan-Indian.

Many advantages

Making a new smart capital for India will not only give a sense of remaking India for the 21st century but also give a fillip to various economic activities — new airports, railway stations, highways and other infrastructure, giving rise to great employment opportunities. New buildings for government offices, Parliament, courts and foreign embassies may be planned with the help of modern technology making it more secure structurally and electronically. It would be less onerous for intelligence and security agencies to protect the new capital and its VIPs.

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In the process, New Delhi will get full statehood. It can have its own police, and a smaller population will be easier to manageland with lesser population for better management. It can be further developed into a world-class centre for education, technological research, medical science, arts, literature and culture, and tourism. It can become a connecting point between East and West for financial and commercial activities, e-trading and information technology. With better law and order, and city planning, it can provide excellent avenues for international seminars and conferences, and even house some UN offices.

The existing government buildings in New Delhi, the vestiges of the Raj thatremind us of the rule of the British empire, can be rented out to these organisations to help finance the relocation of the capital.

The writer is a retired civil servant

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Grooming women for jihad
PARVATHI MENON

Young Muslim girls in the U.K. are leaving for Syria to ensure the long-term stability ofthe Islamic State by managing the domestic front and bearing children of the fighters

TO SYRIA:"It is the sense of gender equality and freedom — an element of British law — that inspires in young British Muslim women the desire to go to Syria like their male counterparts."

The number of British women who have gone to Syria to join the *jihadist* forces of the Islamic State has been slowly growing. Women are believed to account for around 10 per cent of the approximately 600 British citizens who have left for Syria since the conflict began in 2013. Most of them are young, some no more than 15 and 16. They are won over after a phase of "grooming", primarily conducted online in a parallel world hidden from home, family and school. Though the numbers of foreign women, at least from Britain, crossing over to Syria, are relatively small, they are significant as they point to a new phase of occupation of Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State (IS). For the long-term stability of the new power structure, *jihadist* fighters who have come from abroad must be allowed to start families that will eventually replace the families they have left behind and may never see. Obedient wives who can manage the domestic front and bear children are therefore important for the consolidation of the IS, and must be recruited from the same countries and societies as the fighters come from.

Warnings and escapades

It was the case of the three girls from Bethnal Green Academy, who left for Syria this February in a daring getaway, that underscored the strength of the pull factors that operate on young women. The friends, Shamima Begum (15), Kadiza Sultana (16), and Amira Abase (15), were brilliant students with loving families who had no knowledge of their daughters' plans to leave Britain. Pieces of the jigsaw puzzle fell into place in evidence given by the police and the families before a Home Affairs Select Committee in Parliament in March. It transpired that the police has issued letters to parents warning

them to watch their wards for signs of radicalisation after a 15-year-old girl left for Syria in December last year. Instead of handing over the letters directly to parents, the school management gave the letters to the students to do so. The letters were later found in the girls' rooms.

While much of the "grooming" of women takes place online, there is usually a 'real' figure or contact who plays a decisive role, someone who knows that a person wishes to leave and helps her make the decision. For the Bethnal Green trio, this person, it is believed, was their friend who left for Syria in December. March alone saw three incidents of young people, a majority of them women, travelling to Syria. In mid-March, Jaila Nadra H., a 21-year-old British woman, was arrested by Turkish security services as she waited to board a bus to Syria in Ankara. In late March, High Court judge Anthony Hayden barred five teenage girls — two aged 15 and three aged 16 — from going overseas, over concerns that they would flee to Syria. He confiscated their passports and made them wards of the state, also impounding the passports of their adult carers. More pertinently, he revealed that the girls were all pupils at Bethnal Green Academy and knew the trio who had left the previous month. Around the same time, nine young British medical students — four women and five men from a medical school in Khartoum — travelled to Syria and are believed to be working in hospitals in IS-controlled areas. Their families tried hard to persuade them to come home at the Turkish-Syrian border, but to no avail. All the women who have left have done so at their own free will, although the "persuasion" exerted on girls who are barely in their teens would fall under a different category of online tutelage.

Arzu Merali, a writer and one of the founders of the Islamic Human Rights organisation, warns not to see the outflow of young women as an "exodus". She points to the "growing alienation that young people feel, even those who are bright but who do not have a lot of life chances. The environment in which they are living is really very negative [with] the media making them feel miserable about being a Muslim, and a relentless, anti-Muslim discourse."

Vulnerabilities

Mussarat Zia of the Muslim Women's Network U.K. identifies some of the vulnerabilities faced by young girls in relation to the IS-type grooming. "The first is being approached. For bodies like the IS, the first stage was about insurgency and picking up arms," she told *The Hindu* . "Now they want to become more established, and part of that is that they need women. They want marriages and children. For that they need to entice and lure women." She argues that in the U.K. Muslim youth who already "feel very isolated are not engaged with their society, and have issues around identity." In addition to normal teenage anxieties, they also have to contend with the "Islamophobic rhetoric that is going on all the time."

In the case of young girls, Ms. Zia makes the interesting point that it is the sense of gender equality and freedom — an element of British law — that inspires in young British Muslim women the desire to go to Syria like their male counterparts. "The images of beheadings and executions and torture are not shown to the girls. What they see are images of people doing charity work, or images of girls on horseback with weapons. And I don't doubt that the girls are told that the images we see is propaganda of the West," she said. Professor Kamaldeep Bhui, Professor of cultural psychology and epidemiology at Queen Mary University, conducted a survey of attitudes towards terrorism in order to establish a risk of radicalisation index. He and his team interviewed 600 Muslims in the 18-25 age group from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community in Bradford and London. Those who were attracted to or supported terrorism were likely to be younger, in full-time education and generally financially stable. However, they were also "more likely to be depressed and socially isolated," the study found. Poorer migrants were less likely to be radicalised because they could remember the problems of their homeland, and were occupied with the need to earn a livelihood.

"So, it does seem to be a phenomenon born of people who are at least not poor," Dr. Bhui said. "They are engaged in trying to meet social objectives or haven't really got enough hope and optimism left. They are looking for meaning in their lives in all sorts of place. Take these young girls of 15 and 16. Do they ever know the kinds of restrictions that will be imposed upon them when they arrive? They really have no idea; they want a bit of adventure and they have made bad decisions."

Government's approach

Both Dr. Bhui and Ms. Zia feel that the many government-led interventions to help families recognise and tackle the phenomenon of radicalisation have not been effective enough, although things are changing. Ms. Zia had herself worked with the government's Prevent and Channel strategies. "Rather than saying, you know, we need Muslim mothers to come forward and tell us about behaviour changes in their children, we need to equip those women with how to deal with behavioural changes," she said.

Dr. Bhui feels that there has been a welcome change in the approach of the government — from their initial attitude towards those who fled to Syria as criminals, they have become more sympathetic and sensitive in the programmes they now conduct. "On the whole the aim should not be not to criminalise them, but to safeguard them and realise they are vulnerable," he said.

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Much of the 'grooming' takes place online, but there is usually a 'real' contact who knows that a person wishes to leave and helps her make the decision