

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

June 2017



*“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”
– The Mother*

Year 8

Issue 3

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother 13, p. 124-25)

MODI SETS THE COURSE IN INDIAN POLITICS YET AGAIN: THE NOMINATION OF RAM NATH KOVIND

Over the last three years of the Modi government, the one thing that has become obvious to everyone is that Modi has been dictating not just the agenda of his own party and government, but also of the Opposition. Under Modi, the Opposition has become a merely reactionary entity that ends up responding to everything that the BJP does first.

The latest instance of this is the intensely political contest for the election of the President of the country. Modi clearly caught the Opposition unawares by declaring a simple, unheard-of and sincere Mahadalit BJP leader from Uttar Pradesh – who was, till recently, the Governor of Bihar – as its Presidential candidate. Ram Nath Kovind's choice was a masterstroke that broke up the difficult and delicate Opposition-unity-in-making in one single stroke. Both Mulayam Singh Yadav and JD (U)'s Nitish Kumar gave their support, with the latter having developed a good rapport with Kovind as the CM of Bihar. Even Mayawati was on the verge of extending support, till the Opposition too declared a Dalit as its candidate.

Predictably, the Opposition declared Dalit MP (from Congress and former Lok Sabha Speaker) Meira Kumar as its candidate. It is hardly surprising that here too the Congress – not just declared its Presidential candidate in a haste and in reaction to the BJP, after wallowing in lethargy over the last few weeks – chose to play dynastic politics. It looked towards potential leaders like Gopal Krishna Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi's grandson), Prakash Ambedkar (B.R. Ambedkar's grandson) and Meira Kumar (Jagjivan Ram's daughter).

Contrast this with Ram Nath Kovind – not a famous dynastic heir like the Opposition's Dalit leaders – who rose from humble beginnings as an RSS worker, lost elections, went to Rajya Sabha

and had to face the challenge of BJP's Brahmin lobby trying to scuttle his political rise. He accepted that too and instead devoted himself to party work, without coming in the limelight. He was the one who chalked out a winning strategy for wooing Dalits back into the BJP camp in UP. And the results are visible in the UP assembly elections of this year.

Unlike famous, controversial and self-absorbed personalities like Gopal Krishna Gandhi and Meira Kumar, Kovind commands respect that cuts across party lines. When he was first made the Bihar Governor in 2015 – a Governor's appointment is considered to be intensely political and the office of the Governor is regarded as a figurehead of the centre – Nitish Kumar publicly denounced Modi. But time changed the script and both Nitish Kumar and Kovind developed a close rapport, unlike the previous Governor appointed by the Congress who left no stone unturned to obstruct important bills sought to be passed by the Bihar Assembly.

THE MESSAGE THAT MODI IS SENDING

Modi has hit several birds with one stone. Forging a consensus in the contest for the President's office was supposed to be the first important 'test' of a supposedly 'secular Opposition unity' to thwart the BJP's 2019 election ambitions. Clearly, Kovind's nomination and the developments thereafter have delivered a big blow to all these ambitions.

Kovind's candidature is expected to further propel Dalits and Mahadalits into the BJP camp. ***After all, the Opposition resorted to the most strenuous – and continuing – efforts to poison the Dalits against Modi and to divide the cross-caste Hindu unity that BJP is trying to build, as seen through various Dalit-centric 'movements' that have been publicized over the last three years,*** like the politics on JNU and Hyderabad campuses, the Una flogging, the phenomenon of Hardik Patel and Jignesh Mewani and, the latest, the most ridiculous Jai Bheem Army in UP in the aftermath of the Saharanpur incident.

That all these utilitarian, selfish and short-term movements were politically manufactured was visible in how they fizzled out and how quickly Patel and Mewani have disappeared from public memory or how Dalits voted in the UP elections. These elements have only sought to divide and use the Dalits. Modi is trying to actually uplift them and bring them within the Hindu fold.

This is just one part of the story. Through Kovind's nomination Modi is sending out another message to his party too – ***only people who are quiet, uncontroversial, sincere and honest workers will be rewarded. There is no future for ambitious, loud and selfish workers.*** Ram Nath Kovind falls into the former category. His candidature was decided very secretly and came as a big shock not only to the BJP but even to Modi's close Cabinet colleagues.

This was, perhaps, one of the most intensely political races to the Indian President's office, because of its background of politics of nationalism and implications for 'Opposition unity' in 2019. Otherwise, the office of the President is a mere figurehead – symbolic but powerless. The only notable exception was that of India's first Dalit President, KR Narayanan, who went out of the way to do everything possible to obstruct the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, under the garb of constitutionalism and secularism. ***India's second Dalit President will play an opposite role and work towards fostering Hindu unity.***

Thus, like all other events that have been taking place for the last three years, the seemingly innocent event of Kovind's candidature – which has shaken the elements on the opposite side – reflects ***how the current class of politicians have become mere instruments of a destined higher power which is actively guiding this country's future.*** This is seen in even the minutest political events. Despite the best efforts and applying all possible old 'formulas' of political 'success', everything – all experiments – are ending in an abject failure for the Opposition. On the other side,

everything that Modi is undertaking is hitting the right mark. ***This is not because of capacities or incapacities of politicians, but depends on the extent to which they are receptive instruments towards the spirit of the nation that is very active now. Modi is simply such a receptive instrument. But politicians are no longer in the driving seat.***

UNREST IN MADHYA PRADESH: THE REALITY OF ORGANIZED GREED

The farmer protests going on in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been presented to us as a story of poor debt-ridden farmers, suicide-prone victims of the system, whose dependence on the crisis-ridden agricultural sector has cost them their livelihood. Nothing can be farther from the truth. While the crisis itself has also been politically engineered by the Congress to divide the Hindu community and destabilize the government, its deeper reason lies in the organized greed and selfishness that has come to afflict all political and social groups, including the farmers.

STOP GLORIFYING THE PROTESTS

There is little doubt that glorification of the farmer has run in our DNA since the time of freedom struggle. But now it has obfuscated into blind support, where we refuse to see the real issue, in our haste to appear sympathetic. So, when Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra saw large-scale farmers' protests recently, it was not surprising that public opinion automatically reacted with sympathy, keeping in mind the image of the poor, oppressed farmer – a victim of the fallen fortunes of the agrarian sector and apathy by the government.

What happened in Madhya Pradesh has particularly evoked virulent reactions, with the outrage over the death of the six farmers worrying the BJP about its prospects in upcoming elections in Gujarat and in the 2019 general elections. The fact that five of the six farmers shot dead by the police belong to the powerful Patidar community has the party worried, since it was the Patidar community that has traditionally supported the BJP in both Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Farmers from this community are known to be rich and powerful, and it was the Patidars who Hardik Patel led to protest in Gujarat.

Despite the politically privileged status of rich farmers being known, it is surprising that the popular discourse seeks to analyse

the farmers' agitation simply through the terms being set by a group of rich and politically influential farmer unions. It is well-known that farming unions have been deeply entrenched in the politics of this country since the last 40 years or more, and that, historically, all political parties have had to bend over backwards to please them. That is why we have reached the situation we are in now – a situation where farmers insist on extorting loan waivers from the government. And the more the government gives (like the farm loan waiver given by Yogi Adityanath), the worse does the blackmailing keep becoming.

Yet, we insist on popularly painting protesting farmers in angelic colours. We don't seem to realize that protests are not always a sign of democracy. Nowadays everyone easily resorts to protests. And the moment we see a mob protesting, our automatic reaction is to accept that it must be right. Especially so if it is a group of debt-ridden farmers. This short-sightedness prevents us from seeing ***the politics of falsehood in which such protests – essentially blackmail – are often entrenched.***

What does a group of protesting farmers actually reveal? At the root, it reveals the conflicts and strife in a utilitarian, greed-based society, where organized 'interest' groups are based on nothing but selfishness. What they advocate in the name of granting their 'rights' is essentially an agenda of their petty interests. Such mass groups – farmers or traders or other unions or political or religious groups – can never be expected to work for the national interest. Because that would mean performing duties instead of just demanding 'rights'. If there is ever a conflict between their short-term, petty interests and some national goal, clearly they would end up protesting for their interests and 'rights'.

And the situation is set to get much worse. ***We are already in the thick of a time where scarcity of food and water will commonly make people resort to violence against each other. People will soon begin to kill each other for basic essentials, which we have destroyed by our greed.***

The case is not limited to the farmers only. The country has,

recently, seen agitations by Dalits (recall the outrageous and brazen Jai Bheem Army in Uttar Pradesh – with new evidence of how it has been defrauding people), by Marathas, by Patidars, by Jats, by students, protests over Jallikattu sport and numerous others.

Just like the farmers' protests, even the other protests need to be treated skeptically, instead of being automatically glorified. There is clear evidence of manipulation to subvert national interest. Consider the protests by Tamil Nadu farmers held for several days outside the Rashtrapati Bhawan in the capital, about two months back. Not much heed was given to it by parties, and later there were conspiracies that the protests – where farmers were seen eating rats – might have been funded by some sources. Not surprising, given ***that it has been a historically common sight to see social activists and organizations and parties hobnobbing with farmers and funding them and 'participating' with them in various agitations.***

In the case of Madhya Pradesh, while we are not drawing comparisons with Tamil Nadu farmers, it is important to note that the protests are entirely being led by some powerful unions, with prominent names like ex-RSS person Shiv Kumar Sharma, and, farmer-MP, Raju Shetti, cropping up.

The government has no option but to yield to such blackmails. To give an example from the recent protests, when the BJP got worried about losing the vote of the Patidar farmers, it not only provided crores of compensation to the dead farmers' families, but also ensured that the police looked the other way as rioting farmers engaged in hooliganism, destroyed property and looted lakhs of cash from toll booths. There was also proof being circulated in form of videos, where police officers are seen lamenting that Congress leaders had failed to keep their promise of maintaining peace while organizing farmers' protests. In another video recorded proof, Congress MLA, Shakuntala Khatik, is seen inciting the farmers to violence.

And now it is openly known that the Congress is planning 'farmer agitations' across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and

Gujarat also. Moreover, since the past few weeks, the leader of a powerful farm union, who was a BJP supporter, could be seen campaigning against the party, saying that asking people to vote for the BJP was a big mistake. This shows that seeds of the present unrest were sown well in advance by politically motivated elements. The only thing left was to trigger violence amongst the mob, which the union leaders succeeded in doing.

And all this when the state government had met all the demands of the farmers, except for two – loan waivers and remunerative prices for farm produce. If this is not outright blackmail (with the backing of popular sympathy of course!), then one doesn't know what is.

The fact that the politics behind the protests are clear and that meeting most of the demands also did not pacify the protestors shows that we have entered times where more will always be less.

None of these protests are a good sign – for the society. They do not reflect on the government, but on the fact that organized groups have become more greedy, self-centered and extortionist than ever, necessitating the need to save the country's unity from such attempts to divide by organising the turning away of the country from the gospel of materialism and the utilitarian spirit accompanying it.

THE GOSPEL OF MATERIALISM

I believe in materialism. I believe in all the proceeds of a healthy materialism – good cooking, dry houses, dry feet, sewers, drain pipes, hot water, baths, electric lights, automobiles, good roads, bright streets, long vacations away from the village pumps, new ideas, fast horses, swift conversations, theaters, opera, orchestras, bands – I believe in them all for everybody. The man who dies without knowing these things may be as exquisite as a saint, and as rich as a poet; but it is in spite of, not because of, his deprivation.

– Francis Hackett*

The writer in the quotation says that he believes into materialism and believes in all the proceeds and fruits of healthy materialism for everyone. Further on he says that one who has not experienced and known it can be as exquisite as a saint, and as rich as a poet but that is not simply because of their deprivation of these things. Simply being deprived of material benefits does not make one a saint or poet. You can be one in spite of your deprivation. Here it seems that the writer is implying that materialism and its proceeds do not affect and have not a very important role in your practice towards sainthood or being a poet. You can be any one of them even having materialism and all its fruits. Therefore, he concludes that materialism and its fruits should be for everyone. No one should be deprived of its fruits of *good cooking, theaters, opera, orchestras, bands* etc.

Before saying anything if we make an impartial observation and see the results of such a perception – it's not so hard given that the world has been striving towards this for decades – we find that it has brought nothing but unhappiness, rising dissatisfaction and

* The quotation is taken from the book "Economics" by Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus (18th edition, page 577, publisher: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. Ltd.). As it is placed prominently at the beginning of a chapter, it must have had the concurrence of the late noble-laureate and one of the greatest economists of our times, Paul A. Samuelson.

problems of grave concern that threaten the very existence of the human race. We have been so blinded by materialistic pursuit that we haven't stopped even once and questioned its validity and wholesomeness despite the fact that following after it has brought anything but real welfare. From the most material to the psychological level we are worse off. If we see the state of services provided be it healthcare or education or administration, we are in a terrible condition. The service sector is plagued by an utter utilitarian spirit that does not have any regard for the quality of service being provided. The same is the case in the goods sector – rising degradation in the quality is what is prevalent everywhere. In all the fields, everywhere this utilitarian spirit is leeching away whatever possibility of good is there.

So why has the following after material benefits been so unhealthy and has left a bad taste in the mouth. It is because it is not the complete thing. It is a partial thing and in its center is a core of selfishness that drives this whole machinery. The only reference point that we seem to have is “what is in it for me”? We have built our whole social, political and economic infrastructure only on this principle. As Sri Aurobindo eloquently points it out in the following quotation, *“This economic barbarism is essentially that of the vital man who mistakes the vital being for the self and accepts its satisfaction as the first aim of life. The characteristic of Life is desire and the instinct of possession. Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and the development of physical force, health and prowess his standard and aim, so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim. His ideal man is not the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral or religious, but the successful man. To arrive, to succeed, to produce, to accumulate, to possess is his existence. The accumulation of wealth and more wealth, the adding of possessions to possessions, opulence, show, pleasure, a cumbrous inartistic luxury, a plethora of conveniences, life devoid of beauty and nobility, religion vulgarised or coldly formalised, politics and government turned into a trade and*

profession, enjoyment itself made a business, this is commercialism. ...his idea of religion at best a pietistic formalism or the satisfaction of certain vitalistic emotions. He values education for its utility in fitting a man for success in a competitive or, it may be, a socialised industrial existence, science for the useful inventions and knowledge, the comforts, conveniences, machinery of production with which it arms him, its power for organisation, regulation, stimulus to production. The opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist and organiser of industry are the supermen of the commercial age and the true, if often occult rulers of its society.

The essential barbarism of all this is its pursuit of vital success, satisfaction, productiveness, accumulation, possession, enjoyment, comfort, convenience for their own sake. The vital part of the being is an element in the integral human existence as much as the physical part; it has its place but must not exceed its place. A full and well-appointed life is desirable for man living in society, but on condition that it is also a true and beautiful life. Neither the life nor the body exist for their own sake, but as vehicle and instrument of a good higher than their own. They must be subordinated to the superior needs of the mental being, chastened and purified by a greater law of truth, good and beauty before they can take their proper place in the integrality of human perfection. Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest. If it persisted too long, Life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion. Like the too massive Titan it will collapse by its own mass, mole ruet sua.” (CWSA 25: 80-81)

Francis Hackett clearly sees a human being as just this surface body with a vitalistic emotional being behind. His sight and ken do not go beyond this surface appearance of the human being. And hence he stresses on its wholesale satisfaction and believes that every person should have this. But in reality a human being is not just his

physical and vital and mental parts. He is infinitely more than that. He is the soul behind, the divine in him. And the satisfaction and joy that the inner part, the soul brings is boundless and infinite and not like the enjoyment that comes upon satisfaction of vital part which is tepid, shallow and momentary. Even the satisfaction of a part little deeper in us brings infinitely more joy than all the materialistic fruits put together. The joy of serving the person you love. The joy of serving the nation. Thousands of freedom fighters laid down their life without a blink of the eye for their Motherland. Maharana Pratap rather than making a deal with Moguls, which would have given him a materially royal life of the palace, chose to stay in jungle and fight for his whole life. The revolutionaries, idealists lay down their life for their cause, for what they believe into. What drives them? What makes them leave behind all that the “materialistic pursuit” brings. It is that greater joy, that Ananda which is impossible to experience if we are limited and concentrated on this physical body and its satisfaction. This joy, this satisfaction is the result of following after a part only a little deeper in us, that is just behind this surface sheath. What greater joy and satisfaction the soul, the innermost part in us would bring!

As Sri Aurobindo says, *“If mankind could but see though in a glimpse of fleeting experience what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all & never rest till they had gained these treasures. But the way is narrow, the doors are hard to force, and fear, distrust & scepticism are there, sentinels of Nature, to forbid the turning away of our feet from her ordinary pastures.”* (CWSA 12: 423)

Now here we can find the greatest fallacy in the argument of Hackett. When we are so very engrossed in materialistic pursuits how can we hope to have all the joy that our higher parts bring us. Following after it bars us from following those higher pursuits and satisfactions. Both these things are not, if we can use the word, “compatible” with each other. And this, the writer has obviously failed

to understand and hence he says that you can be on your way towards your sainthood even while having and enjoying the fruits that materialism brings us. The sane perception escapes him. Following after it will only add to the economic barbarism that is rampant everywhere, which is responsible for all the degradation around. The corrosion of moral and deeper values, naked barbaric selfishness has been the cost of such an endeavor. And such a system is ultimately bound to collapse; if we think that science can help us here we are fools. If anything, it is an agent to bring about a speedy end to things because its use and helpfulness entirely depends on the consciousness using it. And to expect a better outcome from an economic barbarian who is running after materialism is stupidity. And this is what meets our sight when we look around. Under such a scenario it is impossible that anything other than what we are seeing can happen. Even the materialistic fruits that the writer wishes for everyone is an impossibility now. Neither healthy goods nor services are possible now. If anything, they have become tools to deprive you of your well-being and happiness even of your outer physical being. If we see the above quotation in this light then we clearly see that, though very cleverly crafted, it is a stupid and false assertion that has nothing of the truth into it.

For a person seeking a deeper inner life, these things cannot be an attraction. These things fall into their right place as one moves towards that true thing. In themselves they can never be a source of attraction. It is only in the higher consciousness that one can have the capacity to properly handle even such things. When the soul is in the front, these things may become simply instruments for its play and manifestation unless their rejection altogether is deemed necessary in the case of some individuals.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (2)

III. THE FUNDAMENTAL WORKING AND THE PROGRESSION OF THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT AND ITS INVASION OF THE SERVICE SECTORS OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND JUSTICE

In the previous article, we explained how, under the current economic system, economic development and welfare is an illusion. Under the present conditions, people's incomes are actually falling in real terms and they are becoming worse-off, as the costs of all goods and services go up and the quality deteriorates. By increasing deprivation, you are actually contributing to the GDP and measuring that as economic development.

In this chapter we look at the psychological forces underlying progression of the utilitarian spirit behind the deceptive surface appearances of things and its likely consummation if it is allowed to persist undeterred. By way of a concrete demonstration of our psychological findings we take the example of the working of the utilitarian spirit in the three most essential services, namely, education, health and the administration of justice.

A. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When the British fully took over India, they set upon establishing an intermediary race of Indians whom they could entrust with their work at middle and lower levels of government and administration. In the words of Macaulay: "We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellects." (Francois Gautier, *India's Self-Denial*, page 43)

Most of our pre-independence leaders belonged to this class and at independence not only the British education system, but the whole of their constitutional, judicial, legal and administrative system

was blindly adopted and remains in effect even today virtually unchanged. Our post-independence leaders too, having been educated and groomed under this system, show little or no true appreciation or even understanding of the genius of India – its great culture, its Sanatana – because eternally true – Dharma and its soul.

(i) The Socialistic Economic Planning

In 1951, our country, with its leaders drawing inspiration from the Russian economic model, embarked upon a course of planned economic development which took the form of five year plans. Our leaders of the time believed that with the help of Science, Socialism and Economic Planning and the Indian people's own government – after seven centuries of most painful subjection to foreign rule – they will be able to take the country to an ideal state superior to anything that might have been achieved in the ancient past. The initial concentration of the economic planning was on the construction of big multipurpose hydroelectric power projects, steel plants, a network of roads, etc. The big steel plants and huge hydroelectric power projects like Bhakhara-Nangal dam were declared to be the true and fitting places of worship for all forward looking spirits in the new India.

The concentration on infrastructure and heavy industries coupled with stiff exchange controls, Licence Raj and other **ill conceived and misdirected efforts at detailed “regulation” – which it may be more apt to call “strangulation” – of the economic system stifled all initiative and resulted in a stagnant economy. In fact, the economic system was saved from complete collapse only because of the significant leakages – termed corruption – that developed in the application of rigorous economic regulations due to the interaction between the robust built-in survival instinct of an economic system and an inefficient and corrupt (or always corruptible for a price) government machinery.** The supply of consumer goods, especially of the consumer durables, was restricted and with the stagnant agriculture of those days, the supply of food grains was proving

inadequate to feed the growing population. The situation on food front became especially acute in the mid-sixties.

(ii) The Green Revolution

It brought about a significant increase in the production of food grains in the late sixties and early seventies of the last century. The “begging bowl” country soon became self-sufficient in food which freed it from the necessity of seeking degrading foreign hand outs. Improved hybrid seeds, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides were the main elements of this sudden turnaround in agricultural production. Later on, the introduction of improved breed of cows from West brought about the so called “White Revolution” which quickly led to a breakthrough in the supply of milk and milk-products in the country.

The “green revolution” has been far from being – what it initially looked like – an unmixed blessing. It is now increasingly beginning to be realised that the increased volume has come not only at the expense of the quality which has been declining all along but also has a hidden and ever growing price tag attached to it which is fast reaching levels which will be too high for us to pay. The underground water table is running dangerously low, the surface water sources are drying out and the land – which has been ruthlessly raped using chemicals – is so fast losing its fertility that even our increasing doses of fertilizers and pesticides will not be able to keep the production from going down and that too even if and only if we can continue to pour sufficient water out of the fast depleting stock that was accumulated over thousands of years. Not only this, but in addition to all the above the chemical food is playing havoc with the health of our people because now, not only the taste and nutritive value of our food grains, fruits and vegetables and milk is nothing compared to what it was even two-three decades ago, but the level of harmful chemical substances present in these food items is, at times, dozens of times more than what is considered safe for human consumption. In short, the indiscriminate use of chemicals in various

products which is playing havoc with the health of humans and cattle in particular and flora and fauna in general, is leading us towards an ecological disaster.

(iii) The Economic Liberalisation – Adoption of the Western Capitalistic Model

By the late seventies our big neighbour Communist China started moving towards a gradual privatization and liberalization of its economy. Still, we continued with our restrictive economic policies and kept talking about socialism and removal of poverty through its agency. It was only the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that fully brought home – at least to a leading section of the policy makers – the foolishness of the restrictive economic policies which we had stubbornly continued to follow even though the country had been reeling under the suffocating and utterly corrupt bureaucratic machine that had been growing in size and crookedness as a result of our elected government's efforts directed at a more and more detailed regulation of the economy. It was plain that the Asian countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore who had subscribed to the open market model had grown very fast and the other Asian and East European countries who followed the socialistic model simply stagnated and some even collapsed under the weight of a corrupt government machinery. To hold back was impossible in the face of these facts. Shri Narshimha Rao's government took the first step towards economic liberalization by initiating a cautious and gradual but progressive deregulation of the economy. The non-Congress governments that followed continued this policy and our economy was increasingly opened to foreign goods and capital. Our domestic industries which were known for their poor quality products were now getting increasingly exposed to competition from abroad. This has led to a lot of changes in the structure of private sector industries which are now getting increasingly better equipped to meet the challenges of globalization under which an increasing number of MNC's are entering the Indian markets on their own or in

collaboration with Indian companies.

Where is all this leading us? We are clearly moving towards becoming a modern socio-economic machine which will be geared towards meeting, primarily, only the vital and physical needs of man. **The overriding concern that the modern societies show for the fulfilment of physical desires of man, and the prominent part that money plays in the fulfilment of such desires has brought in such a short-sighted spirit of utilitarianism that everything is judged from the monetary angle and success has become synonymous with greater command over resources. In other words, money has become the supreme lord in fact, if not in name.**

B. THE WORLD IS VERY ILL

Things are much worse today than when the Mother said, “The latest scientific discoveries, applied to life, have put within the reach of everyone all kinds of things which formerly were reserved only for the intellectual and artistic elite; and to justify their effort and profit by their work, they have made things which can sell most, that is, the lowest, most ordinary, most vulgar things, the easiest to understand because they require no effort and no education. And the whole world is drowned under these things, to such an extent that when there’s someone who has written a good book or a fine play, there is no longer any place for him anywhere, because the whole place has been taken up by these things.

Naturally there are sensible people who try to react; but it is very difficult. First of all the commercial mentality should be driven out from the world. This will take some time.... there is yet the golden calf, there, reigning over the world; before it is pulled down some time will yet go by, I am afraid. This has so perverted men’s mind, that it is for them the criterion. You see, in America when someone is spoken about, it is said: “He, oh, he is worth a million dollars!” This indeed is the greatest compliment one can pay. And it is this: someone asks, “Do you know this person? What is he worth?” – “He is worth a hundred

thousand dollars”, “He is worth five hundred dollars.” So this means that he has a position which brings him this. “Is he intelligent, is he stupid? Is he...” This is not at all important. “Is he a good man or a bad one?” That makes no difference at all! “Is he a rich man or a poor one?” If he is rich, ah, ah! “I would like to know him very much! If he is poor, I have nothing to do with him.” There! Naturally America is a young country, so its ways are those of a child, but of a fairly ill-bred child. But the older countries have become too old and can no longer react, they shake their heads and wonder if after all this youth is not right. Everything is like that. **The world is very ill.**” (CWM 7: 311-12)

C. THE HIDDEN SPRING

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have repeatedly told us that in our surface human nature we are usually the unconscious slaves of many undivine and anti-divine powers of the vital and mental worlds whose very purpose is to block the descent of Divine Love, Light and Force so that they can continue to keep this evolving earth-nature subject to their yoke of falsehood, suffering and death. A person or a society which blindly pursues – as we have been doing ever since we have been in a position to do so – a surface vital-mental objective comes increasingly under the influence of these powers with predictable consequences. This has always been well understood and recognized in India, but under the influence of the Western materialistic and utilitarian spirit we have nationally forgotten it and as a result have gotten ourselves into the present precarious and dangerous situation. **The hostile powers not only invade and try to bring under their sway the life of the individuals but also the psychological infrastructure of the collectivity which under such an influence progressively loses its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong or true and false.** A successful possession of the collective infrastructure makes them virtually irresistible for individuals – even for such individuals who have a developed inner being and who, in a normal collective atmosphere, would have been successful in countering the evil influence of these beings to a large extent. Fear and Desire are the two powerful levers that the hostile powers use to take increasing possession of individuals in a utilitarian society.

D. THE PROCESS OF THE PROGRESSION OF THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT AND ITS CULMINATION

The nature of the hostile vital powers is such that they are never satisfied – theirs is an insatiable thirst, it is the distorted reflection of the hunger of the Infinite. This is the reason why the human vital afflictions like greed and lust resulting from the action of these powers have a similar character. The utilitarian or the commercial spirit (a narrower form limited to the field of finance and money) which is a powerful and willing instrument in the hands of the hostile powers is never at rest. If left to itself – and it is a very big “if ” because there are divine powers in the depths of our being who counter it and keep humanity from going to perdition – it will ever progress towards an increasing possession – approaching ever deeper and wider levels – of the being of whatever comes under its evil influence. **In appearance the action of the utilitarian spirit is like that of a canker which leaves the outside appearance of a fruit practically unscathed even while eating the core. In reality the action of this spirit is much more like the rust which not only spreads or expands laterally but also digs into ever deeper and deeper layers of the metal and stops only when it has turned it to dust.** All this becomes very clear when we take practical examples of its twofold action in individuals and collectivities.

(a) At present the famous dictum “a bad coin drives the good coin out of circulation” is becoming true in practically all walks of life due to the relentless action of the utilitarian spirit. More and more individuals are increasingly finding that the situation in their life and the field of work has become such that they must consent to the use of more and more unethical and degrading means to succeed or even to survive. Even people who begin with good intentions in any business or profession are either thrown out or begin sinking to ever lower levels in ethics and morality. At present things have reached such disgustingly low levels that one hears of big drug companies producing and having ready large

stock of necessary medicine for containing an epidemic before they secretly disperse the microbes that would spread it. Aren't we truly getting ready to destroy each other?

(b) The utilitarian spirit not only digs deeper, it also expands laterally and quickly spreads and has not remained confined to the area of business and finance. **It has already made deep inroads in the area of services that practically must remain – as they traditionally have been – free from the commercial spirit if they are at all going to be able to perform their sacred task.** Education, health and medicine, justice and not even philanthropy and religion are any longer immune from the corrosive action of this rust of the human soul. Politics and Government has become so thoroughly contaminated with this spirit that modern politicians and leaders have only a one point program – to somehow or anyhow acquire power and to keep it at any cost. People have become so cynical that they cannot believe that a person in politics could be really honest even though what they call honest is far from the way honesty has traditionally been understood. So low have become the standards of honesty in public life that if a politician manipulates his office (or status) and uses it exclusively for the sole object of staying in power, but, if he refrains from indulging in glaring financial irregularities for pecuniary gain, he will easily pass the test of public ethics and will be considered honest. **In all the areas where the utilitarian octopus spreads its tentacles, it starts digging deeper and deeper and consequently more and more ingenious discoveries are made in ways to cheat others for one's personal gain.** Close family ties and intimate personal relations have so far remained largely free from the grosser forms of this commercialism because India has strong family ties and a spiritual tradition. However, a turn towards it has already been made – particularly in the urban areas – and it may not be too long before it spreads and India begins to catch up with the Western gospel of each man for himself.

(c) All this is frightening enough but actually things are still more serious and dangerous. **Given the deep permeation of the hostile powers in the collective psychology, it is not surprising that, even in the presence of such imminent danger, most people are so oblivious that no large scale collective action to tackle the problem has yet been organized anywhere.** The surface reason or reasoning that may be coming in the way of any organized action may perhaps be based on some popular but false notions about the true nature, power and future role of science and its potent discoveries and their real value for the race.

In the face of an unrepentant and triumphant march of western Science and its dazzling success in almost every field during the last two centuries, the whole of the human race has become so enamoured of the power of Science and its machinery to solve all its pressing problems – even those pertaining to the perfection of man and his society – that not only is it lax in addressing serious outer ecological and environmental problems looming large, but is even neglecting the serious inner psychological and moral problems which are assuming such alarming proportions as to pose a serious threat to its very existence. Our eyes are turned outside while the root of all the problems lies in our own inner constitution.

It is urgent that humanity at large comes to understand and realize clearly that what science can do for it is very limited and even that does not come without a heavy price to be paid in terms of a lower consciousness which invariably leads to the diminution of our inner peace and happiness. For, science is a double edged sword which may be used both to help and hurt. Today, perhaps the most dangerous thing that is happening is that the rapid advances in Science and Technology are progressively putting ever more and more potent and dangerous new instruments in the hands of individuals and collectivities infested with the spirit of utilitarianism. The future is full of very grave dangers. Even as it is, these advancements have

become an instrument in the hands of uncontrolled human greed which has led to a progressive and ruthless exploitation of physical elements, flora and fauna and all forms of life on earth. There is another possibility that has recently arisen on the horizon – the possibility of manipulation of mighty cosmic level forces to man's advantage. And this is not the end; many more such things may in future confront the human midget who may end up causing irreparable damage to himself and to other life forms on the planet. **We hope that by the intervention of the divine Grace humanity will soon begin charting a different route without having to go through the experience of another round of devastating physical afflictions, because if things keep on moving as they are, human beings face the sure prospect of a devastation both at the physical and the psychological levels of their existence.**

E. THE UTILITARIAN SPIRIT IN THE SERVICES OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND JUSTICE

(a) *Education*

As explained and enumerated above, the ever growing spirit of utilitarianism has invaded the hearts and minds of most actors in all the fields of human endeavour. In the most important field of education it has so seriously affected the actors – parents, teachers, students and management that it has become practically very very difficult – except in a few exceptional institutions and most of these are also on their way to pay homage to the growing utilitarian spirit – to impart any education worth the name. In the class rooms, a worthwhile meeting and interaction between teachers and students is becoming more and more uncommon. In fact, in the case of a great number of institutions, particularly the government run institutions, the teachers and students may see each other only a few times – in some cases never – during the whole academic year. In the case of courses with lucrative job prospects the teachers – some of whom may be receiving a regular salary from the government

– teach students only at privately owned or rented accommodations after charging high tuition fees in advance.

In India, the process of determining whether the student has acquired enough proficiency in the prescribed courses, consists of the setting of question papers, organizing examinations to enable the students to answer these question papers, getting the answer books of copies examined by an examiner, preparing marksheets and delivering these to the students. Each of these stages requires many micro-steps to get completed and such is the genius of modern India that each micro-step in this journey has been subjected to such corruption, outright deception, cheating and fabrication that the whole scenario is utterly disgusting, very painful to look at or even hear about.

Even if all the above were alright or even organised with excellence – as it is in some dedicated institutions – still, the whole thing is so permeated with the spirit of utilitarian materialism that the education is bound to be soulless and, therefore, inoperative for anything worthwhile.

(b) Medicine and Health

Healthcare is one of the key services with high government expenditure and private investment, around the world. It is also not simply one of those services that affects our income when we spend on it, but also determines questions of life and death, immediate psychology and overall well-being of a person. And yet, today, healthcare has become such a complex and utterly utilitarian business industry that it caters to everything to promote its own selfish ends but cares little for the well-being of the patients.

Till about a few years ago, the information on corrupt practices in the health sector used to be gleaned from the word of the mouth and experiences of people close to us, but today, it has become the obvious subject of headlines and investigative research. Indian private hospitals recently made headlines due to their refusal to

treat poor dengue-afflicted children who consequently succumbed to death and led their parents to commit suicide. However, these are only some of the most obvious cases of greed in the medical sector. The starker reality is that corruption pervades every level right from getting referred to a doctor to the aftermath of the treatment.

The scenario in this sector is often the most frightening and extremely painful and devastating not only for the patient but also for his family and all those who love and care for him. A very high proportion of hospitals, their management and their medical staff, doctors and other medical practitioners and drug manufacturers and sellers are solely interested in making money, with more or less scruples (often without any), out of the patients and their families. All the advancements in the diagnostic procedures and treatment are, more often than not, used simply to get more money out of the sick and the wounded and their families. The story is full of such horrors that the less one thinks, hears or talks about it, the better it is for one's physical and psychological health and balance.

(c) The Present State of Our Judicial System

The Judicial system is the backbone of the socio-economic and political structure of a society. An efficient judicial system is the foundation of an efficiently functioning judiciary which automatically tends to ensure efficiency in the functioning of all the other organs of government, important institutions and socio-economic groups and organisations in the country. The more efficient the system, the smaller will be the size of its judiciary because less elaborate and time consuming will be the process by which it will be able to deliver justice. This swiftness in delivering justice will in turn tend to reduce the number of cases that are brought before the courts because justice delayed is justice denied and serves as an open invitation to certain kinds of delinquency. In our case, some of the laws themselves have been psychologically unsound and so defectively framed, with loopholes and ambiguities, that prolonged litigation has become the norm rather than an exception.

A prolonged misrule of over six decades to which the country has been subjected to even after Independence has progressively brought the functioning of all the organs of government to such low (and perverse) levels that, at present, our politics and administrative machinery seems to be taking on, increasingly, the appearance of a real nemesis for the country. The present state of our judiciary, like the functioning of the government machinery in general, is what it is because the principal actors in this field – the judges, lawyers and judicial staff – have become, in all the three instrumental parts of their nature (the mind, the life and the physical) utterly tamasic. In their normal poise, these three parts tend, respectively, to be predominately sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. But at present only the last dominates the mind, the heart and the physical functioning of all the actors in the field as must be well known to anyone who has had the misfortune of coming into even an indirect contact with any of them. The judges, in general, with their hearts and minds firmly set and concentrated on the satisfaction of their physical self and its animal appetites are not able to give either their full time or their full attention to their onerous and difficult work and tend to be procrastinatory, particularly when not dishonest in the popular and narrow sense of honesty. With the lawyers, the situation is ten times worse. It has become very very difficult to find a lawyer – especially in lower courts – who will not, if opportunity presents itself, betray his client for the sake of money or favours from the opposite party. Moreover, the lawyers also tend to be much more interested in having or at least making a show of having a ‘setting’ with judges or their agents than in honestly practicing law. Also, the lawyers, invariably, tend to be hugely procrastinatory unless they have an axe to grind or are under pressure for some reason or the other to have a speedy resolution of the litigation.

Although entirely moved by the same psychological forces, the story of the staff of the courts is something of its own kind. This organ of our judiciary is so entirely tamasic that it operates, almost entirely like a coin-operated machine. Every time one needs to get

even the most trifling work done, i.e., every time one needs this machine to roll ever so little, fresh cash is needed, for these machines also tend to have such a short memory that even the most generous dealings or payments of the most recent past would not carry any weight with them. Each time fresh cash is needed.

According to Transparency International global survey (2007), as many as 77% of Indians believe the country's judiciary is corrupt, and 36% paid bribes to the judiciary last year. According to the Global Corruption Report (GCR) 2007, an estimated Rs. 2,630 crore was the amount Indians coughed up as bribes to the judiciary, higher than the bribe paid out in any other sector. The lower rung of the judiciary is most prone to corruption, where, according to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) study, a majority of the bribe money went to lawyers (61%) followed by court officials (29%) and middlemen (5%).

According to the above GCR report, as of February 2006, 33,635 cases were pending in the Supreme Court, with 26 judges; 3.34 lakh cases in the high courts, with 670 judges; 2.5 crore cases in 13,204 subordinate courts. According to the National Crime Research Bureau, the rates of convictions in crimes such as murder, kidnapping, robbery which were 53%, 48% and 47% respectively in 1953 have come down to the level of 35.6%, 20.8% and 28.6% in 2012.

From all our discussions above, it should be apparent that the thing of fundamental importance and panacea of all the utilitarian ills is the national character. Unless people are willing and able to stand for the truth rather than their narrow self-interest, no edifice of laws and ingenious judicial structure can be of much help. Given the low level to which the national character has sunk, especially during the last fifty years, none of the proposed reforms in our judicial system – short of an evolution of it towards a system based on deeper values – can be expected to lead to any lasting improvement. Undoubtedly, they may change and even slightly improve things in the short-run, but it is only a matter of time before the actors in the judicial arena are able to learn new tricks or rather dig new holes –

the digging getting easier and easier as the layer of national character supporting the whole edifice gets thinner and thinner – to circumvent or bypass the obstructions created by the new rules and procedures (implementing the reforms) which soon end up making the judicial system even more cumbersome without making any substantial improvement in its actual functioning. What really counts is the actual character or psychology of the individuals and not any outer structure of rules and regulations and professed – only professed, never sincerely believed – norms of morality or generally agreed upon propriety. And we all know what has become of our character and psychology and how its core – just behind the veil of our acts and deeds and professions – has gotten stuffed with selfishness, greed and lust leading to an unrepentant pursuit of personal interest and desire by the individuals and the groups. We must realise, once and for all, that in such a scenario no outer machinery, however ingenious and supported by “all-powerful” Science and its progeny – Technology – can in the end prevail against the craftiness of human nature which can be controlled and overcome only by an appeal to something deeper (soul or spirit) in it than the surface mentality, never otherwise.

(d) The Summing-up

As we have seen before, since a modern economy consists predominantly of services, its growth depends largely on the service sector. After our above discussion of the conditions in the three most important services, it should be apparent to our readers that under the present conditions, not only can there be no increase in welfare and income of the people, but people will progressively become worse-off and real incomes will actually decline as the current utilitarian system spreads its tentacles further.

It is the experience of every man on the street that the everyday costs of basic commodities and services are becoming overwhelmingly expensive and, as a result, the real incomes are going down. With the quality of the goods also deteriorating, the situation becomes even worse. As we eat contaminated food, be it

home-cooked or outside, breathe polluted air and fall ill, even our ever growing nominal income brings us no relief in our continued struggle for meeting our basic needs.

The three services of education, health and justice are the core services of the economy. With their rapid utilitarian commercialisation, their traditional purpose of 'serving' the people is no longer operative. These three fields, which play a key role in shaping the future of a country's outer vitality, have become nothing more than rigorous engines of money-making. In all the three fields, the costs are rapidly going up, while there is absolutely no relief or returns on our efforts in these fields which continue to become more and more cumbersome and painful.

“The future of the earth depends on a change of consciousness.

The only hope for the future is in a change of man’s consciousness and the change is bound to come.

But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or if it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances.

So, wake up and collaborate!

Blessings.”

– The Mother

(Collected Works of the Mother, 15, p.66)