

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

March 2025



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 15

Issue 12

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

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

Year 15

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CONTENTS

Appraisal of Some Fundamental Issues in the Present Predicament Facing Humanity	6
Economy, Politics and Society:.....	8
Classical Capitalism and Welfare State.....	8
Government Spending on Welfare Schemes under Successive Governments in India:	10
Nexus Between Global Capitalism and Democracy	12
The Fundamental Flaw: How Economy Serves Bondage to Democracy.....	13
The Social Cost of Externalities.....	16
Decline in Well-being and Consumer Surplus..	17
Technology Acts as a Double-edged Sword	20
The ‘Development’ of Deprivation:	22
Reforming Politics:	26
Conclusion	31
Highlights	35
Developments in Russia-Ukraine War	35
The deadlocked ceasefire:.....	35
European defence consolidation:	36
Developments in Israel-Hamas War	39
Technological Horizon	40
Towards A Nuclear World	42
Geopolitical Insecurity:	42
Climate Change and the Energy Dilemma:	44

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, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

APPRAISAL OF SOME FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN THE PRESENT PREDICAMENT FACING HUMANITY

“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man’s ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites.”

– Sri Aurobindo (CWSA, 2002, p. 1090).

The crisis of evolution that has been unfolding as a part of the progression of Science and Technology within the West-dominated era of modernity has now decisively reached a point of no return. The elaborate systems that have been meticulously developed to cater to politics, economy, social life, culture, religion and our environment show clear signs of crumbling from within, with no recourse or alternative solution

available within the existing means at humanity's disposal. The deeply ingrained understanding – perpetuated by the advancement of the Western civilisation since the 16th century – that modernity, with its rejection of traditional cultures, its embrace of sense-designated reality and its weaponry of scientific knowledge, represents 'progress' has now decisively come undone. It formed the basis on which this civilization executed its colonizing mission across the world and made India's – and Asia's – subjugation its crown jewel. Its contribution to the world was utilitarian selfishness in the name of exalted individualism, despotism in the name of socialist communitarianism and unmitigated extractivism and environmental exploitation in the name of development based on technological advancement.

With the world completely under the sway of forces that form the basis of such an idea of progress, the consequences of this progression are now explicitly visible to the naked eye. These consequences are not simply an expression of the depravity increasingly seen only in the collective fields of human life like politics, economy, society and environment, but even more importantly, in the irreparable damage it seems to have caused to the individual and collective psychological infrastructure that has sustained humanity despite all its travails through time. The minutely thorough blow dealt to collective fields of human life by the catalytic and amplifying effect of technology – which we mistake for progress – has fundamentally impacted human psychology.

The effect of such progress in the collective fields of human life is visible to all who can still see.

ECONOMY, POLITICS AND SOCIETY:

The present relationship between economy, society and politics is dominated by the twin godhead of Capitalism and Democracy, worshipped uncritically by all. Regardless of the actual nature of the political system (democratic or authoritarian) and the economic system (capitalistic or socialistic), it is the deeper nexus between Capitalism and Democracy that dominates universally. In other words, it is the spirit of utilitarian commercialism and its blind public acceptance that has come to characterize the present systems across the world. It is this combination of capitalism and democracy, coupled with ever increasing advancements in science and technology, that has made the destruction of mankind seemingly inevitable, offering no deliverance from within the present framework.

Classical Capitalism and Welfare State

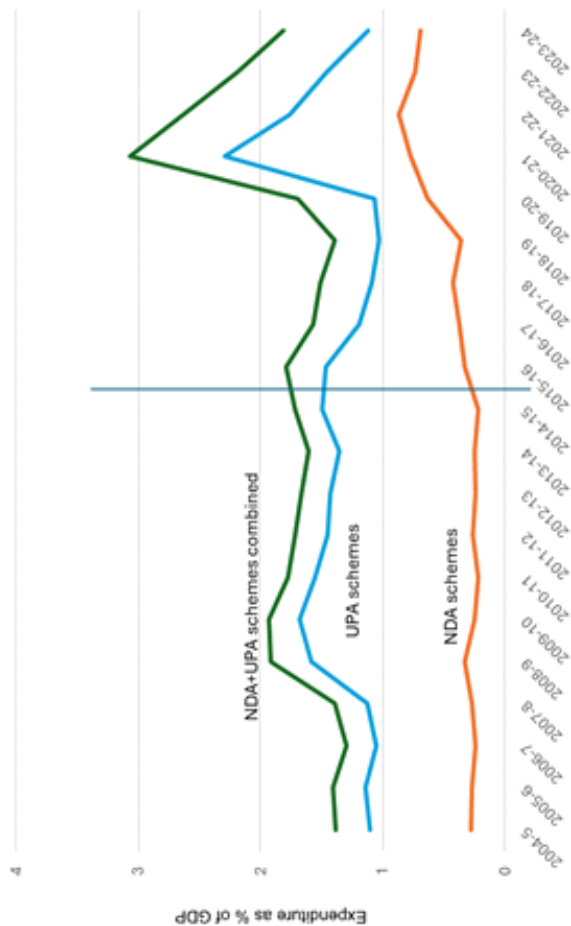
Capitalism – since its systematic advent with the works of Adam Smith during the 18th century – has been based on the explicit logic of the virtues of selfishness, stressing that human selfishness can foster mutual competitiveness leading to enterprise and contributing to the overall growth and development of a nation. It was underpinned by the simple logic that the invisible hand of the market forces will automatically penalize inefficiencies and reward efficiency and hard work. It overlooked the deeper fundamental logic of human nature that greater individualism and concentration on the outer being, as a result of the pursuit of material well-being, leads to a greater and increasing psychological insecurity in the individual and collective existence.

When this model of classical capitalism began to falter

during the 20th century and culminated in the financial crisis-stoked Great Depression of 1929, a different expression was sought to be given to capitalist logic by J.M Keynes. Keynes attempted to address not only the springs of the economic depression, but also the rising discontent with industrial capitalism visible through the working class revolts and the increasing appeal of populist alternatives like socialism and communism. His response was couched in the logic of populism itself.

Advocating an increase in government spending to boost economic activity and encourage investment and consumption during the times of economic downturn/recessions and controlling spending and raising interest rates during times of economic boom, Keynes advocated active government intervention in managing Aggregate Demand – the total demand of goods and services in an economy which depends mostly on the current levels of income and prices and their expected levels in the near future. His theory led to the rise of what has come to be known as the welfare state – a model of active government intervention in society and economy – to shape policy outcomes. This welfare state model was universally adopted across Europe and North America. It appeared to offer an appealing mixture of socialism and capitalism and was able to mitigate working class discontent to an extent. Even when this model was challenged by the rise of neo-liberalism during the 1970s and 1980s due to the former's blundering inefficiencies, it has continued to persist through adaptation, with the budgetary welfare spending of governments only increasing. It was even enthusiastically adopted by developing countries like India after Independence.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON WELFARE SCHEMES UNDER SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS IN INDIA:¹



Source: Khara & Asjad (2024)

¹ 'UPA' includes food subsidy, MGNREGA, Mid-Day Meals, ICDS and PM-Matru Vandana Yojana. 'NDA' includes Swachh Bharat Mission, PM-Awas, PM-Kisan, Jal Jeevan Mission and LPG subsidy.

Table: Government Spending as Share of GDP (%):					
Country	1950	1970	1990	2010	2022
Germany	27.2	39.5	44.7	47.9	49.5
United States	13.4	32.3	37.2	39.8	36.3
United Kingdom	33.2	42	41.1	50.6	44.3
China	-	-	18.2	25.1	33.4
India	5.3	11.7	25.4	27.4	28.6

Source: International Monetary Fund (2023)

Table: Public Social Spending as Share of GDP (%) in 2022:	
France	31.6
Germany	26.7
United States	22.7
United Kingdom	22.1
India	8.3
China	10

Source: OECD (2024); Dar (2024).

While the social spending in countries like India and China continues to lag behind that of developed OECD countries, India has witnessed a rise of 13% in social spending over the past five years.

Nexus Between Global Capitalism and Democracy

During the 1970s and 1980s, a parallel movement of the glamour of neo-liberal globalization began capturing the world. With the collapse of Soviet Communism during the late 1980s, many famously went on to declare that humanity has reached the 'end of history' signified by the ultimate victory of capitalism, arguing that there was nothing beyond capitalist democracy to progress towards. Through the logic of globalization, West-dominated International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) made inroads into developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, leading them to make structural changes to their economic systems. At the same time, the victorious West waged democratic crusades in a bid to impose capitalism and democracy across the world. Many a time, the imposition of democracy throughout the world involved the use of military means by the West. For instance, NATO bombings in eastern Europe and interventions in Middle East became common.

Ironically, this coercive logic was sought to be justified, with many even famously arguing that globalization, universal capitalism and democracy will ensure that wars and conflicts are brought to a minimum, as democracies will be less likely to go to wars with each other and the interlinked destiny heralded by global capitalism will make it too costly to wage wars. The logic of free trade would provide this glue, with the era of global capitalism after the 1990s witnessing the rise of capitalist logic as the foundational basis of multilateral environmental

and trade institutions, like the United Nations Conventions on climate change, to combat desertification, for biodiversity protection and for protection of endangered species, and a trading regime in the form of World Trade Organization (WTO).

The fundamental ideas of capitalism were given increasingly sophisticated expressions – through theories like comparative advantage – to argue that nations should be interlinked through free trade flows and that comparative advantage of nations in their respective fields of production and export strength will ensure a fair system of free trade. In reality, those with monopoly over technology or those who were able to reverse engineer that technology (like Japan and China) dominated the system, while others paid the price. In recent times, for example, Sri Lanka's economic crisis was attributed to such logic, as the country, in a typical textbook fashion, attempted to cultivate exclusive export strength in limited areas like tourism and organic farming and overly relied on importing the rest, precipitating in foreign exchange crisis. India too has not benefitted much from such logic. It has specialized in the export of services, low-cost labour and other labor-intensive sectors' goods and has consistently grappled with the challenge of wide trade deficits. China, in the initial years of its growth, faced the adverse consequences of relying on manufacturing exports alone, leading to decline in consumption relative to investment and forcing China to change course in recent times.

The Fundamental Flaw: How Economy Serves Bondage to Democracy

The modern capitalist economy, whose logic prevails across capitalistic and socialistic societies, functions through the

Keynesian logic of the consumption function, whose trends tend to influence government policy. According to this principle, if income increases above a certain threshold, then the savings rate will also increase. The higher the rise in income, the larger the portion that will be allocated to savings. In India, the country started out with a bare minimum national income of around Rs. 10,000 crore and a savings rate hovering around 5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This subsistence-level type of situation barely left any scope for investment. Therefore, the government policy was focused on increasing the income levels and promoting greater investment, resorting to borrowing loans, increasing deficit financing and expanding government expenditure. Presently, while the country's national income is around \$ 4 trillion, its savings rate is around 30% and investment rate is around 35% of the GDP.

This cardinal rule that savings should equal investment is followed to the letter by policymakers. For, once income exceeds a certain threshold, people prefer to save more. However, if savings exceed investment, then income will also decrease, and savings will decrease until savings become equal to investment. Employment will also suffer. If this applecart is disturbed, then the terror sword of recession comes to haunt the government. Therefore, the emphasis on promoting economic activity and development – through managing aggregate demand – by increasing investment and promoting employment has been the single-minded focus of public policy in capitalistic democracies. Any deviance from this which disturbs investment and employment scenarios are assumed to lead to a consequential dent in the political vote-banks, and a

likely fall of the government. That is why government expenditure also spans substantial focus on welfare schemes.

The massive government expenditure on welfare handouts – due to compulsions of electoral democracy – rarely takes into account their detrimental effects. While the material consequences of welfare handouts have been widely debated, what is more relevant is their psychological effects. For, a policy which systematizes handouts cultivates in its people tamasic inertia and indulgence. In the process, it destroys inner spirit and outer character and ultimately compromises the ability to contribute to nation-building. Therefore, materially, the government may be giving handouts, but psychologically a lot that is valuable is being taken away from the people.

Further, the welfare handouts and schemes of the government often come with strings attached, and do not constitute independent spending, such as seen in the case of medical insurance and health expenditures which lead to a downward spiraling cycle.

In this bid to boost investment and satisfy electoral vote-bank objectives, besides welfare handouts, creating employment is also considered sacred. Here, any form of employment is preferable to no employment. In India, flagship programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) serves this objective well, by providing hundred days of guaranteed employment to low-income families. Usually, the jobs under MGNREGS include low-wage jobs like agricultural labour, construction, repairs and maintenance, plantation works etc. However, it serves the purpose of keeping people engaged in work.

Table: Employment generation and Government Allocations to MGNREGS in India		
Year	Government of India (GoI) allocations (in crore rupees)	No. of households provided employment (in million)
2014-15	33,000	41.38
2015-16	36,967	48.13
2016-17	47,499	51.22
2017-18	55,000	51.16
2018-19	61,084	52.7
2019-20	71,002	54.8
2020-21	61,500	75.5

Source: Rathore (2024); GoI (2020)

The political obsession with preserving vote-banks has led to forms of economic management and manipulation which have resulted in rising hidden costs for society.

The Social Cost of Externalities

As we have seen, in existing models of economic development, the inevitable equation hinges around the reality that an increase in income leads to greater increase in savings, but not a commensurate increase in investment. A lack of increase in investment will then bring the income down and consequently savings will also plummet, leading to equalization of savings and investments of a lower level of income and employment. Therefore, increasing investment in the economy is the main focal area of government intervention. To make

this happen, the rate of return on investment also needs to be increased – a slightly difficult proposition, as rise in capital investment beyond a point tends to lead to decline in the rate of returns on capital. Therefore, to increase the rate of return, the government has to provide concessions of various kinds, in the form of easy, unregulated access to land, forests, water, electricity etc. This will facilitate additional investment – artificial in nature, geared towards generating employment – which need not be optimum even on surface economic calculations.

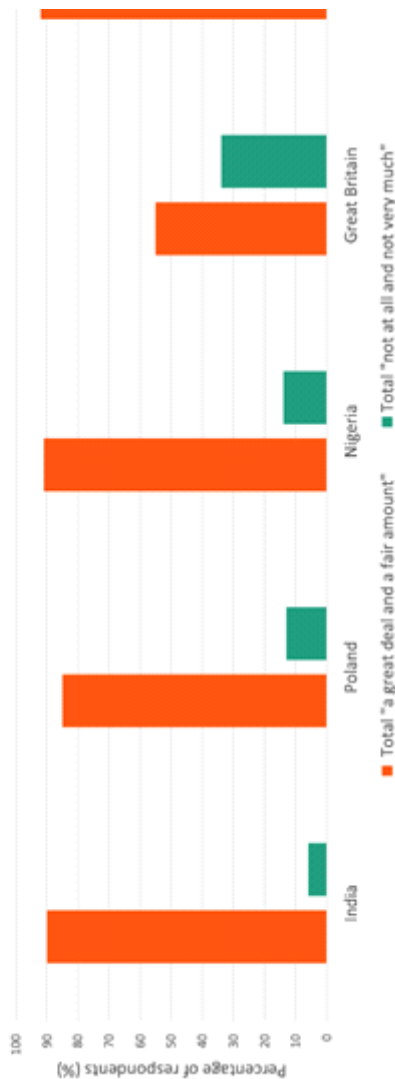
The moment access to these critical natural resources is provided at concessionary rates, the true social cost becomes greater than social benefits. This hidden social cost comes in the form of externalities – or market failures – like water depletion, pollution, forest destruction, species destruction, etc. Further, in most cases, the employment generated constitutes cheap labour that is ruthlessly exploited for production.

Decline in Well-being and Consumer Surplus

The consumer surplus, which denotes the difference between the price actually paid to access a good or service and the price a consumer will be willing to pay. The concomitant social cost in the present model of economic development is designed to completely compromise this consumer surplus, as it has resulted in the near destruction of critical natural resources and goods required for human sustenance. The present situation of human beings is such that there is a near universal willingness to pay almost any price to access critical social and

environmental goods, like clean air, water, food and other necessities, and thus reducing the amount of real consumer satisfaction on the one hand and inflating the estimate of the GDP on the other hand. The GDP contributed by such things should be deducted out of the total GDP, rather than added to it as is actually done. This tends to make the GDP figures more of a measure of the gross deprivation of people than anything else.

Percentage of respondents in each country that recognise air pollution affects their general health "a great deal" or "a fair amount" compared to "not at all" or "not very much"



Source: Clean Air Fund (2020)

With rising recognition that even basic necessities of life like clean air have been sacrificed as the social cost of economic development, there is an increasing recognition of people willing to place a value on this increasingly scarce resource.

Placing a Price on Air: Oxygen Bars in India

In India, which has some of the world's largest number of cities affected by air pollution, there is now a price for consuming clean air. This is visible in the mushrooming 'oxygen bars' across the Indian national capital region. Launched in India in 2019, and prior to that in Canada, these oxygen bars offered 80-90 percent pure oxygen starting from Rs. 300 for 15 minutes. They claim to act as a therapy for depression, headache and many other lifestyle diseases, if taken systematically. With the rise in air pollution, these bars have now become increasingly visible.

For a consumer who thinks of this intake as a necessity due to health or other reasons, they would be willing to pay any price for it.

Right from willingness to pay for breathing clean air to buying expensive mineral water and even maintaining private security for personal safety, people are willing to pay any price for the necessities which have been sacrificed as social cost in the process of economic development. Thus, even if the income increases, such costs have been consistently going up. Economic data does not reflect this hidden cost. Instead of deducting them from any measure of well-being they are being added to the GDP figures, as if these contributed to welfare. The

root of the problem is that GDP figures only include the money measure of all the efforts made that are measureable in monetary terms in the economy during a year. An increasing percentage of total efforts pertain to those that society is obliged to undertake to mitigate the harmful effects of the process of modern economic development. If GDP is to be at all a measure of well-being, then such expenses need to be deducted out of GDP figures and not added to them, as is done today. As diseases, crimes, strikes, depressions, addictions increase due to materialistic values, society has to spend an increasing amount of money to partially alleviate these. This spending must enter at best as negative entry – even though a gross underestimate of actual ill-fare created by them – in the national income accounts. If this were one we may end up having the GDP figures going down at an accelerating rate and the bottom will fall out of the present tendency to take the miscalculated and inflated figures of GDP as indicators of well-being of the people and the country. And in the government's quest for more and more investment, as more compromises are made with our environment, such costs keep increasing. The combination of democracy and capitalism has ensured the perpetuation of this system, which is leading people unwittingly to their psychological and physical destruction.

Technology Acts as a Double-edged Sword

The objective of increasing investment even at the expense of massive social cost is increasingly being exacerbated by the impact of technology. New investments in various projects are relegated to the margins in a matter of time due to the role of changing technology which makes existing products uncompetitive, forcing firms to expand into multiple fields or

risk their survival. For technology not only makes existing products uncompetitive and relegates them to the margins, but also acts as a conduit for the most subtle forms of cheating. As gross human beings, we suppose that if technology, infrastructure and equipment get better, then the goods and services accessed become better. This is far from the reality. For, science and technology are double-edged swords whose use depends entirely on the consciousness that is using them.

Due to the pressure of competitiveness in the face of new technology, the focus on cost-cutting has led to the quality of both goods and services being increasingly compromised in a bid to offer them to the consumers at competitive prices. Therefore, while the packaging of products has become more attractive, they are increasingly being deprived of their quality. Worse still, they are being imbued with negative features in a bid to cut costs further. The latter has been made possible due to advancements in technology.

For example, the recent controversy surrounding the trial of Bovaer, a feed additive, which would be given to the cows to reduce methane emissions, has been instructive. Despite denials by the scientific community that Bovaer is unsafe, it has resulted in much concern among the public on its potential side-effects, making milk unsafe to consume. The controversy shows how far we have come due to the use of technology. Instead of merely mixing milk with water and thus cutting down its quality, the use of sophisticated technology is potentially enabling scientists to change the very composition of milk itself. It is ironic that such measures are being promoted in the name of fighting climate change and cutting down emissions, even as we refuse to make lifestyle changes which are necessary for fighting climate change.

Similar assurances have been provided by the scientific community on the merits of genetically engineered crops, but their controversial aspects and dangers, are for all to see, despite its alleged benefits in addressing food scarcity and insecurity. In India, the government is dangerously implementing the same genetically engineered food formula. Despite all opposition, genetically modified mustard was given a green signal. We already have hybrid tomatoes and potatoes flooding the markets. We are already getting plastic-coated cabbage, plastic rice, pasta and noodles. Soon we will have plastic wheat. ***Thereafter, we will have no need of an agricultural sector at all. We can just set up factories to manufacture our artificial grains. In the process, we will be using better scientific technology, contributing more to GDP and accelerating the process of mass extinctions.*** This had earlier happened in the Green Revolution technology too, when the introduction of cash crops and use of chemicals suddenly catapulted us from food scarcity to food surplus and created a class of rich, powerful farmers, destroying our groundwater and contaminating our rivers and surface water.

THE 'DEVELOPMENT' OF DEPRIVATION:

The present economic system, held hostage to the bogey of democracy, acts to maximize investment and expenditure in a bid to boost employment and social welfare. In the process of creating artificial, additional investment, a huge social cost in terms of environmental degradation has to be borne by society at large, decreasing their consumer surplus and making people pay more for basic goods of sustenance by making these goods scarce. Deployment of technology in this scenario has predictably had the opposite effect to what has been widely expected. It has encouraged people to continue the utilitarian

path of greed, endless consumption and wasteful production with the expectation that technology is the answer to all major global challenges of today, especially climate change and environmental degradation. This simplistic understanding prevents us from grasping the nature of technology as a double-edged sword, which is now being misused and is causing greater damage than ever before.

In this way, the present system of economic development – based on the unholy alliance between capitalism and democracy – has led to what is at best an illusory form of development, which has neither increased real well-being nor real income of people. Ironically, despite the large amount of government investments in public goods and social welfare, the real well-being of people is on a decline. This decline can hardly be captured in any real sense by the inadequate and superficial metric of the GDP, where contribution to the production of goods and services is calculated based on a very limited and perverse set of criteria.

For instance, consider the present debate – in India especially – around the patterns of women’s participation in the workforce. We often extol the rise of female labour force participation in India (around 37% in 2022-23), counting work/jobs that can be easily monetized, such as domestic work, office work, agricultural labour, industrial labour etc. The cost at which this has come about includes government investment in several social schemes to promote work for women. Further, the idea that women have now become a productive human resource because their labour contributes to the GDP masks the disregarding of the much harder work that women had ordinarily been performing since times immemorial in India, something which was more heart-felt and holistic in nature and ranged

from domestic work, child-rearing as well as agricultural and other activities. More importantly, they performed an important psychological role in sustaining family and community life – a conduit through which values can be transmitted. In the present scenario, this psychological role is fast disappearing. In compartmentalizing women as economic resources, their capacity in other aspects of life has been dented.

The expansion of service economy (to around 60-65% of the GDP), the need for more income and rise in inflation across all essential services have further made working women an essential criterion in today's nuclear families, so that both spouses can earn to sustain the family. Instead of mothers, children are mostly being brought up by babysitters or left in daycare. Medical and most other expenses have increased, which makes it difficult even for both working spouses to cover. At the same time, greed and ambition have also increased. Due to their busy working life, instead of home-cooked meals, people are increasingly ordering food from the market. Unreal though it may seem, recent data reveals that ordering food from numerous food aggregator companies in India has added an annual ecosystem cost of ¹ 9,000-11,000 crores for the average Indian household (The Hindu, 2024). Further, India's food delivery segment is expected to cross Rs 2 lakh crore by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 18% (ETtech, 2024). Since the busy working and sedentary lifestyle of both women and men is one of the contributing factors to lack of fresh, home-cooked meals, data from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2023-24) reveals that Indians have been spending more on “convenience foods” like beverages, refreshments, and processed foods than fruits and vegetables every month. This trend has been linked to rising

disease burden of non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity etc. In 2022, India had the highest number of diabetics in the world. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) further stated that 56.4% of India's total disease burden is linked to unhealthy diets (Clarance, 2025). Further, there has been an annual increase of around 14% in healthcare costs, attributed to factors like inflation and rising costs of medical treatments and procedures, putting significant strain on average household budgets. This is even though India's healthcare sector is one of the country's largest employers, employing 7.5 million people, with the sector expected to grow to US\$ 193.59 billion by 2032.

We maybe on track to become a \$5 trillion economy soon and perhaps become “developed” – if still alive – by 2047, but with the present system, this will come at a massive psychological cost and a broken, soulless socio-cultural fabric. The example of ‘developed countries’ is in front of us. In Asia itself, countries like South Korea and Japan achieved the status of developed countries at a massive hidden, psychological cost. In Korea, the family system is thoroughly broken. Despite being a developed country with high per capita income, ordinary people struggle under debt, with both husband and wife forced to work. Incidentally, the Korean government has now brought a policy to reduce the number of working days and hours to incentivize people to spend family time, in a bid to regain some vitality and increase the population. Latest data suggest that an increasing number of Koreans neither want to get married nor have children, mainly due to the high cost of living and inconvenience of bringing up children. It appears, from the present trends, that India is following the same track record in a bid to become ‘developed’.

In the above example in India, only one aspect of the material and psychological impact of the work economy has been discussed – with respect to participation of women in the workforce. But the snowball effect of this one indicator in all other fields from medical expenses to daycare expenses to food expenses has been immense. In negatively affecting family life, health and psychologically severing connection between parents and children and affecting the latter's upbringing, it has had a significant impact on Indian social life. Yet, paradoxically, it is being extolled and promoted by the state and society in the name of its significant contribution to the GDP of the country.

This was only one small example. But similar patterns can be gleaned wherever GDP maximization comes in question. This reflects how the metric of GDP has become an indicator of deprivation rather than development. It acts as a force multiplier in compounding deprivation across most aspects of life. In this way, the most serious impact of the present system of economic development has been on the collective psychological infrastructure of humanity. It has completely damaged collective psychology to an extent from which there is no chance of retrieval unless humanity rises to a higher level of conscious spirit, thought and action.

REFORMING POLITICS:

“Spirituality is India’s only politics, the fulfilment of Sanatan Dharma its only Swaraj. I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed.” – Sri Aurobindo (Purani, 2007).

The role of politics in modern societies is of pivotal importance. For, at the end of the day, economic decisions, resource allocations and distribution are ultimately political decisions. As we have seen above, since the mid-20th century, the defining feature of modern societies has been the nexus between capitalism and democracy which has determined the nature of distribution in societies, has determined international issues like war and peace, and has even influenced what socio-cultural norms shape today's societies. For, ultimately modern societies have sacrificed themselves at the altar of the commercial motive, thereby making the dynamics between capitalism and democracy directly relevant to the development of these societies. For, being fundamentally utilitarian in nature, today's democracies are driven by vote-bank electoral politics and by the economic/commercial calculus. The question of leadership in today's politics is merely illusory; for, given the present human psychological condition, the likelihood of ambitious and greedy and personalizing figures coming to power have increased.

If such is the pivotal role of politics in today's societies, then it is imperative that this field should be driven by the very best statesmen and individuals. However, today's democratic politics is system-driven and law-driven and can therefore be easily subverted and manipulated. Many philosophers of modern politics have hailed law – and its organization – as being transcendent in nature, in that it expresses the 'will' of the collectivity in the form of binding commands. The idea of law is very different from the flexible and organic idea of *dharmā* which was followed in ancient India. Sri Aurobindo has explained the reason for this rigid adherence to laws and systems in times of *Kaliyuga* – the epoch of human

development which characterizes the nature of present humanity. The nature of law and political organization has been shaped, over epochs and ages, by the nature of collective consciousness and the extent to which this collective consciousness has been expressive of the inner spirit or the true nature of the human soul.

Accordingly, in the Hindu classification, there are four epochs of humanity's evolution – *Satya Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dwapara Yuga* and *Kaliyuga* – with each expressing a distinct nature of the spirit, and thereby determining the extent of law and politics. *Satya Yuga* is the Golden Age when men are full of might and wisdom. In this age, Lord Vishnu incarnates as *Yajña*, as the divine Master in man to whom men offer up all their actions as a sacrifice, reserving nothing for an egoistic satisfaction. This is possible because people in this age, live in their inmost being in full harmony with Truth. This age of harmony and a condition of human freedom and natural and spontaneous coordination may have resulted in an entire absence of government. The next age – the Silver Age – is called *Treta*, the age of *Dharma* where Vishnu descends as the *Chakravarti Raja* – the sustainer of society's righteousness, its sword of justice and defence and preserver of dharma. This age is known for its righteousness and is popularly characterized as Rama Rajya. In this age, the Raja's officials sleeplessly look after the good of the people and no elaborate judicial system is needed because there is hardly ever any occasion for disputes. In *Dwapara* – the Bronze Age, the age of doubt – there is a further decline in man's character, powers and capacities. Intellectual regulation substitutes for the rule of Dharma. Ideas, thoughts and emotions assume much greater prominence, and doubt sets in man's heart and mind and he has to seek the aid of

written word or Shastra to properly direct his actions. Vishnu takes the form of King or Ruler who begins to take the help of written word – but only help, there is no mechanical subjection to it like in the present, rather he uses his understanding and intelligence freely along with the highest available recorded wisdom of the race – the Shastra, to guide his actions. In the *Kaliyuga* or the Iron Age, there is a further diminution in man's capacities and powers who begins to be increasingly subject to his instincts, impulses and desires. Written word is not sufficient to maintain order in collective life and subjection to some kind of outward machinery or system – which still remained very simple in oriental societies – becomes necessary.

In the modern Western materialistic cultures – which India is at present trying hard to emulate – system, organisation, machinery seems to have attained their perfection. Bondage to these has been carried to its highest expression and man's inner spiritual freedom is getting increasingly slain in modern societies because of their passion for organising external liberty or/and equality. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty follows it, and a social tyranny more terrible, inquisitorial and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, begins to take its place. Such has become the nature of modern-day politics, driven by the illusion of strong hand of the law and its elaborate organization and machinery. This is true not only for so-called authoritarian systems, but even more so for democracies – as, at the end of the day, politics has evolved in such a way that all systems are, de facto, following the democratic logic.

For, a curious phenomenon in today's politics is the increasingly blurring line between democracies and autocracies.

While the term ‘electoral autocracy’ – used to describe democracies with all the trappings of regular elections, multiparty system, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, but without being substantively enforceable in a meaningful way – has become increasingly common in today’s discourse, the reverse is also true. Today’s autocracies and authoritarian systems are also not purely authoritarian in any sense of the word. Indeed, they follow the implicit democratic logic, as the sustenance of the leader in power depends on a constant exercise of public justification. That is why the leader in today’s dictatorships attempts to cultivate a personality cult to appeal to people, deploys propaganda in an exercise of public justification, and must manage the system and policies in a way that can keep the public satisfied. In so catering to the common population, these leaders – like populist democrats – must resort to average thinking and average action. There is little question of having a larger vision and or enlightened action, as the consciousness is limited to the consciousness of an average person in the mass.

Therefore, be it democracy or autocracy, it is the average democratic logic that dictates the heart of both, making the nexus between capitalism and democracy inescapable. Under the present condition of humanity, there are no loopholes that appear to offer any chances of redemption. As we have already seen, the idea that science and technology can offer solutions is misplaced, as these are merely mediums whose effects would depend on the consciousness with which they are being deployed. For example, if an animal is given access to technology and is given exposure to the universe, it will still not be able to understand it, unless that animal evolves into a human mental consciousness. In a similar way, humanity’s vital

ambitions and desires have far exceeded the level of human consciousness that is capable of dealing with the new realities they have produced and the forces they have unleashed.

Thus, not only are there no available redresses in the field of science and technology, but there is more likelihood of misuse of these mediums having the opposite effect and wreaking even more destruction on humanity. Rather than delivering humanity, if the present path continues, science may hasten the world towards its demise.

CONCLUSION

The effects of the nexus between capitalism and democracy, exacerbated by the rise of technologies beyond human control, have become the defining determinants of modern, present-day societies. These effects are visible in all the important fields of human life, spanning society, economy, culture and religion, education, health and environment. Politics – being the arena for the exercise of power, the centre for the expression of the collective will and the medium through which collective organization takes place – occupies a pivotal role in opening an avenue for starting a process of collective change. In the words of the Mother, it is also one of the most difficult and one of the last fields that would see a change. Since humanity is already perched on the precipice of a looming psychological and material oblivion, that time for change is now upon us. Two important aspects should be recognized:

First, divisiveness, greed for power and commercial motivations that are commonly associated with the political calculus need to give way to the calculus of unification, cutting across caste, class, language, religion and social barriers, and ultimately, across racial and national barriers. For, the nature

of the challenges – such as climate change and environmental degradation, species extinction and the dangerous impact of technology on everyday lives as well as its effects in further accelerating wars and military conflicts – facing humanity at present cannot be dealt with except through a common, shared effort. These are global challenges, whose effects are not circumscribed by limitations of artificially erected human boundaries. They, therefore, need to be dealt with at a global level.

Second, it is also necessary to recognize that their cause – and the fundamental reasons behind the present depraved state of affairs – cannot be gleaned by blaming any agent or idea but lies in the collective failure to prevent the downfall in our collective consciousness. The idea that politics should be limited to narrow goals like electoral success, and that victories in politics require an adversarial approach of blaming particular agents is not a vision of politics that is equipped to deal with the challenges facing humanity today.

The need of the hour is, therefore, to start by changing the very nature of politics itself. India, being a civilizational repertoire of Sanatan Dharma, has already experienced its age of refined politics and the age of dharma. Indeed, Sri Aurobindo had called spirituality India's only politics. Swami Vivekananda had cautioned us against following the models of western civilization, including their depraved and selfish system of politics. Therefore, India alone has the resources to start a process of deeper change and share its awakening with the world. Today, as a culture, various aspects of Sanatan Dharma have spread far and wide across the world through a natural process. Its spread, wherever it has happened, has witnessed a unifying, positive change among the people. With the imminent

oblivion facing humanity, this must now be consciously built upon.

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HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

The deadlocked ceasefire:

The intermediate ceasefire that the Trump administration has been seeking to put in place has now receded into the failed territory. When the ceasefire talks first started out, there was much alignment between the broad objectives of the US, Europe and Ukraine, based on the understanding that Ukraine needs to control as much of its lost territory as possible. However, Russia's recalcitrance – and America's courting of Russian demands – and new set of demands has shifted the talks into uncharted directions, leaving them stuck.

Russia's reluctance to end the war through peaceful negotiations was initially reflected when it, through a series of intensive escalations, intensified the battle in the Kursk region, and in the process, drove out Ukrainian soldiers in the region, as it did not want Ukraine to use a piece of Russian territory as a bargaining chip in any negotiations. Thereafter, Putin rejected Trump's proposal for a ceasefire as a non-starter under present conditions, as that would supposedly leave the 'root causes' of the war unaddressed. Through such a position, the ceasefire talks were back to square one, as Putin circled around to his original demands viz. commitment that Ukraine will not join NATO and demilitarization of Ukraine. He also demanded that elections be held in Ukraine as Zelenskyy had supposedly lost legitimacy to govern. From the European and Ukrainian security perspective, these demands are unsustainable.

As a result of Russia's recalcitrance, US has taken a backseat and the prospective minerals deal with Ukraine has fallen flat, while Europe is going ahead with its own security planning. Russia and Ukraine could only agree to a partial ceasefire in the Black Sea and

in terms of both countries agreeing not to attack each other's energy infrastructure. The partial ceasefire agreed to is also not to Ukraine's advantage, as the Black Sea is already the quietest theatre in the ongoing war, and it is one region where Ukraine has had the upper-hand due to its drone warfare tactics. Since 2023, Ukraine has been able to break Russia's blockade of Greater Odesa's ports, opened a safe and stable corridor for Ukrainian and international shipping, decimated the Russian fleet, and confined the fleet's remainder to the easternmost Black Sea. Given Ukraine's upper-hand and the lack of intensive war in the Black Sea, the present ceasefire is not only a low-hanging fruit, but also limits Ukrainian drone warfare, allowing the still-powerful remainder of the Russian fleet to return to Sevastopol undisturbed. Furthermore, the ceasefire details do not mention any third-party, neutral enforcement of the ceasefire or even a monitoring of ceasefire violations, including through the UN or any other neutral country (like Turkey, which was previously involved in the Black Sea Grain Initiative). The ceasefire's lacunae potentially allow Russia's Black Sea Fleet to return to the Sevastopol base following a ceasefire, well positioned to interfere with commercial shipping from there.

As the situation stands at present, the deadlock seems difficult to resolve, and the ball is now in Europe's court.

European defence consolidation:

The insecurities bred by the American and Russian attitudes have propelled Europe to forge ahead with evolving its alternate security arrangements. The 'Coalition of the Willing' – a group of 30 European countries, led by the UK and France – has already met to discuss the way ahead in Ukraine, and has committed to preserving Ukraine's sovereignty, exploring security options like stationing a combat-ready peacekeeping force in Ukraine once the war gets over. Other options include Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's

suggestion of granting Ukraine security reassurances similar to Article 5 of the NATO Charter, without officially bringing it into the Alliance. While a detailed plan has not been disclosed yet, Europe's quick convergence on the issue of Ukraine's defence may have likely taken even Russia by surprise, especially if it expected Europe to be fragmented and on the backfoot after America's reversals on Ukraine.

What is even more interesting is how the European consolidation goes beyond the issue of Ukraine's security and has triggered a process of defence consolidation not seen since the 20th century. There are several developments through which this has become visible:

First, Europe is rapidly re-thinking its nuclear calculus. France and UK are the only two European powers with nuclear capabilities. Other European nations – especially the Nordic states – have started warming up to the idea of possessing nuclear capabilities. Poland is already preparing for a war with Russia and wants to have its own nuclear weapons, while both Germany and Poland have stated that they must stop relying on the US's nuclear umbrella.

While the UK's nuclear deterrent – consisting of nuclear submarine-based 260 warheads powered by American-made missiles – is already committed to Europe through the platform of NATO, France is now looking for ways to extend its nuclear umbrella over Europe in the event of Russian aggression, and the absence of US's nuclear deterrent. The recalcitrance of US will make the NATO's nuclear deterrent ineffective, including that of UK and US. Therefore, the onus of nuclear deterrence falls largely on France, which has not committed its nuclear deterrent to the NATO and uses French-made rather than American-made missiles.

This new debate on the French extended nuclear umbrella is a revival of the decades-old French policy which states that France's

‘vital interests’ – which determine the use of nuclear weapons – have a ‘European dimension.’ But this has never been clarified due to deliberate vagueness – such vagueness is a key element of nuclear deterrence, as it keeps the enemy guessing. This vagueness is also part of the larger rationale for why France, since the time of Charles de Gaulle, refused to commit French nuclear weapons to collective European defence via US and NATO, as France always believed that US’s nuclear guarantees could not be trusted. Even today, despite the danger posed by Russia, France continues to keep its nuclear policy deliberately vague.

The revival of this debate is already leading to comparisons of the strength of nuclear deterrence, and the stark facts that France’s arsenal of 300 nuclear warheads will be insufficient to protect all of Europe, compared to Russia’s arsenal of 5580 nuclear warheads. America has 5000 nuclear warheads, which alone is comparable to Russia. Further, France also lacks tactical nuclear weapons – less powerful, short-range nukes designed for battlefield use, which can be used for gradual escalation. Both Russia and US possess these. According to projections, Europe would need at least a decade of defence spending at about 6-7 percent of GDP (compared to under 2 percent spent now) if it wants to acquire even an additional 1000 nuclear warheads.

Second, these stark realities have already spurred action on the part of Europe. In its defence review, the European Commissioner acknowledged that decades of lag has led to structural weaknesses in Europe’s defence industrial base. This needs to be corrected. One positive manifestation of this was seen in the form of the movement towards a centralized defence market for the purpose of re-arming Europe. As part of this, the European Commission has decided to establish a ‘European Military Sales Mechanism’ – a strategic reserve of weapons that European countries could purchase from. This will consist of weapons made entirely in Europe. This has lifted up the

spirit of European arms manufacturers, whose sales had not really picked up despite the Russia-Ukraine war, as it was the American arms manufacturers who had profited in terms of defence supplies. As part of this push towards a common defence procurement mechanism, the European Commission has also proposed the steps that individual countries could benefit from – such as, easing EU fiscal deficit rules in the domain of military spending, and redirecting more of EU budget towards military spending.

This is a very significant step, as it represents a consolidation of a common European defence market – something thought of as unviable up till now. For, till now, Europe already had US security guarantees, and also individual European countries wanted to have the last say in matters concerning national security. However, the new common defence purchase mechanism represents a transfer of competencies from individual countries to a Europe-wide level. It would trigger joint procurement of weapons by European countries. This would enable all European armies to scale up together in a compatible, standardized and coherent manner.

Germany was already quick to act on the new wave, as its government and the Parliament sanctioned the infusion of one trillion euro into the country's military and infrastructural spending. This is a landmark move that would loosen up Germany's policy of having strict borrowing limits. This 'debt brake' is enshrined in the Constitution since 2009 and is based on the mandate that the government's structural deficit should not exceed 0.35 percent of the GDP.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The resumption of the Israel-Hamas war has led to the outbreak of full-fledged hostilities. The ceasefire with Hamas now lies in shambles, and even the Lebanon ceasefire with Hezbollah has been violated. Israel is demanding a release of all hostages in one go.

Hamas holds 59 hostages, out of which 24 are believed to be still alive. Israel is also demanding that Hamas disarms, disbands and goes into exile. Hamas, on the other hand, has rejected these demands and is refusing to release the hostages without the release of a substantial number of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. Hamas has also been demanding a complete end to the war and a complete withdrawal of Israel from Gaza. These demands are thoroughly unpalatable to Israel and have been rejected.

Amidst this hopeless mire, one significant development that took place was the outpouring of hundreds of Palestinians on the streets of Gaza to protest against Hamas – a rare display. The ‘Hamas out’ protests mark a rare show of people’s dissent against the terrorist organization which continues to wield substantial influence in Gaza even after more than 17 months of war with Israel. The protestors campaigned for an end to the war and for the release of all hostages by Hamas so that the war’s end could be expedited.

The anti-Hamas protests signify the deep-rooted discontent running through Palestinians against Hamas. In the past too – like last year – Palestinians attempted to protest against Hamas. However, every time, including this time, Hamas violently and forcefully suppresses these forms of protest.

TECHNOLOGICAL HORIZON

In recent times, there have been a series of breakthroughs in quantum science. Thanks to these advancements, the idea of quantum supercomputers is no longer the stuff of academic experiments but is close to becoming a reality. Already, the commercial deployment of quantum computers is being explored. This will have a game-changing impact on nearly every sector, and especially in the fields of climate change, health and food security. Unlike normal computers which represent data using ‘bits’ consisting of ones and zeroes, quantum computers use subatomic particles to create ‘qubits.’ Just

like, according to quantum principle, an electron is neither completely in one position or another, but has a probability of being in each, similarly in quantum computers, a qubit is neither one nor zero but has a mathematical probability of being either.

Based on the principles of quantum mechanics, quantum computing reflects a big advance over traditional computing. Quantum computers would be able to perform in minutes operations that would take even the most powerful computers of today millions of years. Scientists believe that quantum computing represents such a radical revolution that it should not even be thought of as computing at all.

With the quantum computing race heating up, the world's utility-scale quantum computer is expected to be ready for operations by 2027, with big American companies like Google, Microsoft and Amazon announcing significant advances, while others like PsiQuantum are almost ready. Quantum computing applications would allow such a degree of precision in modeling the behaviour of complex molecules that its results in fields like human health and climate change could be extremely revolutionary. In terms of human health, it could yield extremely path-breaking discoveries, such as the development of targeted new drugs with unprecedented efficiency and minimal side-effects. In terms of climate change, it could result in technologies for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by identifying the precise substance to be used for carbon removal, thereby making such prohibitively costly process more commercially widespread.

Its dangers could also be manifold. The greater the power of such new technologies, the more will be the risks if even the smallest thing goes wrong. Commercial application of quantum computing would mean that the modern systems of technology and communication that the world has been functioning on would likely

be turned upside down, as Quantum computers would be able to penetrate even the most secure and encrypted networks, thereby posing new risks of cyber and other forms of warfare and political power.

TOWARDS A NUCLEAR WORLD

The heating up of the global nuclear arms race, with Europe as its epicenter, has brought the role of nuclear technologies to the forefront once again. This revival of nuclear technologies has two dimensions viz. geopolitical insecurity and climate change.

Geopolitical Insecurity:

The geopolitical insecurity bred by Trump's ascendance is refueling a global nuclear arms race. This is visible across countries, especially US's allies.

First, Europe is taking the lead in rearmament, with nuclear calculus now forming a core part of its strategic approach. This turning point for Europe is being compared to Charles de Gaulle's famous distrust of US and his belief in the possibility of a future where US and Russia – the two biggest nuclear states – may even cooperate to divide the world amongst themselves. With that bleak future looking more probable now, Europe has started a drive of remilitarization. This is triggered by Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine, and US's near-withdrawal as Europe's security guarantor as well as leaving Ukraine at Moscow's mercy. From debating the expansion of the French nuclear umbrella to creating a common defence procurement market and relaxing deficit rules, Europe is on a vigorous trajectory to prepare for a security future without US and NATO.

Second, another staunch US ally, South Korea, is itself planning to embark on developing nuclear capabilities. Its calculus is shaped

by mistrust of US, the deepening of Russia-North Korea-China alliance and Trump's relatively soft approach towards North Korea. Under these circumstances, policymakers in South Korea have begun advocating – with a strong consensus emerging, cutting across partisan lines – for “nuclear latency.” It is a capability which falls just short of full-fledged nuclear arsenal. Under threats, countries with nuclear latency can mobilize a full-fledged nuclear deployment at short notice. Policymakers and officials are appealing to the US to allow the country to acquire a critical stockpile of nuclear material which can give it a ‘nuclear threshold’ status. Even the country's foreign minister, recently, stated that acquiring nuclear weapons is ‘not off the table.’ With the highest global density of civil nuclear reactors, South Korea already has the basic technology to make nuclear weapons and experience in processing small quantities of plutonium and uranium.

Third, the scale of insecurity can be gauged by the fact that even passive Japan – with its history of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and civil nuclear disasters like Fukushima – is contemplating nuclear options. The country, despite constitutional limitations under Article 9 of Japan's pacifist Constitution, was able to go around them, and build a powerful conventional military force.

Interestingly, Japan already has sufficient stockpile of nuclear material, due to the advancements made in the field of civil nuclear technology over many decades. Along with that, a key part of Japan's capability is its massive and still vigorous industrial manufacturing base and its leadership in several specialized engineering and technological areas. All these make physical construction of nuclear weapons, at a short notice, very much possible for Japan. Therefore, unlike even South Korea, Japan already possesses nuclear latency. It is estimated that if the political green signal is given, Japan could make a nuclear weapon in just a matter of few months. In the beginning of 2024, Japan held 8.6 tons of plutonium, which is enough

to build several thousand bombs. The only thing that has prevented Japan from doing so is the psychological assurance of US nuclear deterrent and Japan's own constitutional limitations which bind the country to passivity.

Climate Change and the Energy Dilemma:

Nuclear power is also gaining ground as an alternative to combat climate change. The world is now increasingly coming to the realization that renewable energy alone cannot power the energy transition away from fossil fuels, as cost-effective options such as battery storage technologies remain limited. This is driven by the rising demand for power and energy, fueled by energy-consuming operations of Artificial Intelligence ecosystem as well as rising energy demands of the developing countries. This realization has fueled a technology-driven geopolitical race in the field of civilian nuclear power as well. With changes in nuclear technology, the new nuclear reactors – such as the Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) – based on relatively safer design and powered by light water technology, have emerged as a viable option for civilian nuclear energy. Countries are now vying to dominate this market.

The US, UK and South Korea have pledged to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050. Companies such as Microsoft and Amazon are also increasing their investments in nuclear power, for the purpose of operating data centres to power AI technologies. China and India are competing to be early entrants in the SMR industry, while Russia vigorously attempts to dominate this market in the developing countries. Already Russia has more than ten nuclear plants under construction in various developing countries, such as Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran and Turkey. As it attempts to dominate the market, Russia is already involved in more than a third of new reactors being built worldwide. China is not far behind. And South Korea is accelerating its push to

export nuclear reactors to Europe as it seeks to challenge China's and Russia's dominance of the market.

India is also taking new measures to revamp its nuclear industry. Towards that end, the country recently amended its archaic civil nuclear liability law – which was passed by the former United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in 2010 – which stated that, in the event of a nuclear accident, liability would lie with the original equipment supplier and not the operator of the plant. This had prevented many foreign companies from investing in India. As a result, despite the signing of the landmark 123 civil nuclear deal between India and the US in 2008, not a single step forward could be taken in developing India's civil nuclear industry. Now with the threat of climate change looming large over us, India is exploring all kinds of non-fossil fuel options. For now, renewable energy, such as wind and solar, do constitute a significant part of India's energy mix, but it won't be sufficient to meet the country's rising energy demand or alone power the green transition. This is mainly due to the lack of battery storage options, leading to pressures on the grid. Similarly, hydropower too has its limitations, as it can pose dangers in terms of changing the natural flow of river water and create ecological precarity in the event of disasters like floods.

Presently, renewables capacity (including large hydro) is at 212 GW, while coal-based thermal capacity is at 220 GW. India took policy decisions a decade ago to cut down thermal power and ramp up renewable capacity. More recently, in 2022, India's National Electricity Plan (2017-22) banned fresh thermal capacity additions beyond 2022, apart from the 50 GW of already under-construction projects.

However, while thermal power can be ramped up and down when required, renewable energy can be used only when the sun shines or the wind blows, that is, during afternoon hours. In evening,

when the household power demand is at peak, renewable electricity use will depend on effectiveness of battery storage capacity, which continues to be weak. This creates a supply gap, as renewables have not been integrated well into the grid and cannot support baseload power. To meet high demand for electricity, baseload capacity is mainly supported by ramping up thermal power. However, due to policy choices, India's coal-based thermal capacity has grown just 7% from the 205 GW in 2019-20, while solar and wind power has grown from 72 GW in 2019-20 to 150 GW in 2024. Increasingly, thermal power cannot support the supply shortfall, thereby posing risk electricity supply gap, and rising risks of grid instability.

In terms of solutions, there are mainly two options available for renewables storage i.e. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Pumped Storage Plants (PSP). These can store surplus solar power during the day and release it when the power demand rises in the evening. However, India's installed energy storage capacity is very weak at present – 4.75 GW of PSP and 0.11 GW of BESS, as of 2024. As per estimates, in order to fully deploy its renewable capacity within the grid, India needs around 209 GW of BESS by 2030. Given this bleak scenario, India is now realizing that it should not have hastily phased out thermal power and should be exploring more sources of energy, besides working on BESS and PSP without which renewable power will not be of use in meeting the electricity demand.

It is in this context that nuclear power is becoming the preferred option for many countries, including India. The idea is to supplement existing renewable energy sources with nuclear power in the desperate fight against climate change. In recent times, after amending its civil nuclear liability law, India signed an agreement with American company, Holtec, to build and design nuclear reactors in India. The deal was cleared by the US Department of Energy. This is a significant breakthrough, as the agreement entails transfer of technology of SMRs to India. In the past, no American government trusted India

enough to permit such transfer of technology, as nuclear power can have dual use i.e. both civilian and military. Under the present agreement, transfer of technology will take place to three Indian firms viz. regional subsidiary of Holtec i.e. Holtec Asia, Tata Consulting Engineers Ltd, and Larsen and Toubro Ltd. This has come on the back of the Indian government's assurance that this transfer of technology will be for 'peaceful nuclear activities' only.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MODERN CONCEPTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS

As things stand today, an increasing portion of our GDP and other measures of national economic well-being consists of or is made up by expenses incurred on mitigating the problems caused by or associated with an ever novel and increasing variety and volume of diseases, drug addictions, frauds, cheatings and other crimes, corrupt practices, cruelties, communal violence and disturbances, psychological disabilities, wars and natural disasters, etc. The result is that the ever growing GDP levels are accompanied by the ever increasing levels of physical and psychological suffering and degradation of even the human in us – what to say of the divine. We are becoming increasingly oblivious and getting deprived of healthy food, water and air on the physical level; fellow-feeling, sympathy, compassion, and affection at the emotional level; the sense of beauty and harmony at the aesthetic level; the sense of right or wrong at the ethical level; and the capacity to distinguish between true and false at the intellectual level. And yet we hear a constant harping on the desirability of having a five or ten trillion dollars economy to be admitted to the league of developed nations.

And what the modern materialistic and commercial civilisation and its science has to show for itself to compensate for all the above movement towards growing aesthetic and moral turpitude?

Creature comforts, ease, conveniences accompanied by “...a chaos of clashing mental ideas... calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 22: 1091)